

Motor Planning

What is Motor Planning?

Motor planning is a skill that requires students to **remember** and **complete steps** to perform motor tasks. We use motor planning for all physical activities. Riding a bike, playing a musical instrument, cutting with scissors, catching a ball and forming a letter of the alphabet all require motor planning.



How can poor motor planning impact function?

You may notice the following when students display poor motor planning:

- Slower to achieve developmental milestones
- Difficulty learning to form letters.
- Poor handwriting legibility
- Slower to complete classwork
- Avoids tasks requiring hand coordination (eg. puzzles, building toys, and cutting)
- Difficulty coordinating both hands together (eg. managing fastenings)
- Clumsy (eg. constantly bumping into things or falling over)
- Takes longer to learn to ride a bike
- Difficulty imitating movements
- Slower to start tasks
- Difficulty following instructions (particularly multi-step instructions)
- Difficulty completing tasks efficiently or in a timely fashion
- Takes a long time to learn new tasks

Can poor motor planning be improved?

Efficient and effective motor planning takes practice. Practice the actual task, for example, writing letters of the alphabet, riding a bike, and cutting. Repeat motor tasks often to **build motor memory** and the task will become **automatic**. Time, patience, and support are needed. Your occupational therapist will give specific suggestions and recommendations to improve motor planning skills for student success. The use of **accommodations** to support students with motor planning challenges is often helpful.

Info sheets created with ❤️ by occupational therapists for parents and teachers.