Reception Gross Motor Development

Six-week BEAM-style programme and lesson plans

For children aged 4–5 | Suggested delivery: one 20–25 minute small-group session each week plus short practice opportunities during the week.

What is BEAM?

BEAM (Balance, Education and Movement) is a school-based programme developed by physiotherapists, organised into six weeks of graded activities and requiring minimal equipment. The intent of the programme is to assess children's gross motor skills and utilse this to plug gaps in their abilities, with all children ready to start KS1 with the gross and fine motor skills to succeed. Interventions are conducted throughout continuous provision to target the development of children's gross motor skills.

Implementation

- Group size: 4–6 children so each child has repeated turns and close supervision.
- Session length: around 20–25 minutes. Keep instructions short, model the action, then let children practise.
- Adults assess children against gross motor skills
- Interventions are used during continuous provision to target gaps and close them
- The programme runs over six weeks, with each week assessing a different gross motor skill.

Impact

- Through identification of underdeveloped gross motor skills and targeted intervention, all children will develop gross motor skills that support the development of their fine motor skills.
- Development of gross motor skills directly affects development of fine motor skills and children's ability to access activities such as writing, mark making and using scissors. Through improving gross motor skills in EYFS, children will be able to access and succeed in KS1 and throughout their time in school.

Six-week overview

Week	Focus	Learning intention	Equipment
1	Baseline and body awareness	Copy simple movements; move and stop on a cue; observe starting points.	Floor spots, picture/action cards
2	Balance and control	Hold a balance briefly; walk along a floor line; step between markers.	Tape line, flat spots
3	Jumping and landing	Bend knees, jump forward with two feet, land safely and regain balance.	Hoops or floor markers
4	Ball skills	Roll towards a target; throw a soft ball towards a large target; begin catching.	Soft balls, box/basket
5	Coordination and movement sequences	Combine two movements; change direction; copy a simple action sequence.	Cones/spots, music optional
6	Practice, review and next steps	Repeat selected baseline activities; celebrate	Same resources as Week 1

	progress; record support still needed.

Week 1 — Ready, steady, move!

Learning aim: Observe starting points in body awareness, moving safely, stopping and copying simple actions.

Equipment: Floor spots; picture cards if helpful; soft ball.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Traffic Lights (3 minutes): green = walk, amber = slow steps, red = freeze. Model each cue and allow extra processing time.

Copy the Leader (4 min)

Adult models reach up, crouch, twist gently, march and stretch. Children copy at their own level.

Observe: Can the child watch and attempt a familiar movement?

Find a Spot (4 min)

Walk around the space; on a cue, stand or sit on a floor spot. Try different directions at walking pace.

Observe: Can the child move around others and stop with support?

Move Like an Animal (5 min)

Choose bear walk, tall giraffe stretch, frog crouch or penguin steps. Demonstrate before each turn.

Observe: Can the child change body position and imitate an action?

Roll to a Friend (4 min)

Sit opposite a partner and roll a soft ball back and forth. Use a closer distance if needed.

Observe: Can the child direct a roll towards a partner?

Finish and record

Ask each child to choose a favourite movement. Record baseline observations using the spreadsheet.

Ways to adapt

Use photos/visual cue cards, demonstrate rather than rely on verbal directions, offer seated versions, reduce waiting time and provide a predictable turn-taking routine.

Week 2 — Balance explorers

Learning aim: Practise balance, controlled walking and stepping between floor-level markers.

Equipment: Floor tape/line; flat spots; beanbags optional.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Wake up your body: march, reach, tiptoe if comfortable, then freeze.

Follow the Path (5 min)

Walk along a taped straight line or between two parallel lines. Arms can be out for balance.

Observe: Can the child follow a short path without rushing?

Statue Challenge (4 min)

Make a wide-footed statue, then feet closer together. Try a one-foot lift only if safe and achievable; allow a hand support.

Observe: Can the child hold a stable position briefly?

Step to the Islands (5 min)

Step from one flat spot to another. Increase spacing slightly only when successful.

Observe: Can the child plan and place feet onto a target?

Beanbag Delivery (4 min)

Carry a beanbag from one spot to a basket, turn and return at a controlled pace.

Observe: Can the child walk, turn and place an object with control?

Finish and record

Celebrate controlled movements rather than speed. Record whether each task was independent, prompted or supported.

Ways to adapt

Widen the path, bring spots closer, allow hand-holding or a stable support, and avoid unstable surfaces.

Week 3 — Jump, land, balance

Learning aim: Develop two-foot take-off, safe landing and control after jumping.

Equipment: Hoops or flat floor markers; soft lines made from tape.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Bunny warm-up: crouch and stand; practise tiny bounces only if appropriate; march and freeze.

Over the River (5 min)

Jump or step over a narrow tape line. Start with stepping; model bending knees and landing with feet apart.

Observe: Can the child attempt a two-foot jump or an appropriate step-over?

Jump to an Island (5 min)

Jump forward from one spot to another. Begin with spots close together; children may step instead.

Observe: Can the child take off and land with control?

Jump and Freeze (4 min)

Jump or step, then hold still like a statue for a count of two.

Observe: Can the child regain balance after moving?

Animal Trail (4 min)

Move between spots using a choice of frog jumps, giant steps or bear steps.

Observe: Can the child coordinate movement across a short sequence?

Finish and record

Children choose the movement they would like to practise again.

Ways to adapt

Keep gaps small, offer stepping as a valid starting point, use visual demonstrations and do not insist on jumping if it is not yet accessible.

Week 4 — Rolling, throwing and catching

Learning aim: Practise visual tracking, aiming and controlling a soft ball.

Equipment: Large soft balls; basket/box; floor spots.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Ball familiarisation: hold, pat, pass around the body or roll along the floor.

Roll to the Goal (5 min)

Roll a ball towards a wide box or between two cones from a short distance.

Observe: Can the child send the ball towards a target?

Partner Roll (4 min)

Sit or kneel opposite a partner and roll the ball. Encourage looking towards the partner.

Observe: Can the child take turns and adjust direction?

Throw into the Basket (5 min)

Underarm toss a soft ball or beanbag into a large, close basket. Move it farther away only when ready.

Observe: Can the child attempt an underarm throw towards a target?

Ready Hands (4 min)

Adult gently tosses a large soft ball from very close range; child may trap it against their body or catch after one bounce.

Observe: Does the child watch the ball and attempt to receive it?

Finish and record

Each child chooses a ball activity to repeat once.

Ways to adapt

Use larger/lighter balls, shorten distance, roll instead of throw, allow trapping against the body and reduce background distractions.

Week 5 — Move, remember, coordinate

Learning aim: Combine movements, follow a simple sequence and change direction with control.

Equipment: Flat spots/cones; picture sequence cards optional; music optional.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Copy a 1-step action: clap, reach, march or crouch. Repeat with a clear visual model.

Two-Move Copycat (5 min)

Adult demonstrates two actions, e.g. clap then reach. Children copy; add a third action only if ready.

Observe: Can the child imitate a two-part movement sequence?

Around the Cones (4 min)

Walk around spaced cones or spots, then return to the start.

Observe: Can the child change direction without colliding with equipment or others?

Go, Stop, Turn (5 min)

Walk to a marker, stop, turn around and walk back. Use visual cues alongside words.

Observe: Can the child respond to a stop cue and turn?

Movement Story (4 min)

Tell a short story: reach for an apple, crouch under a branch, step over a puddle, walk home.

Observe: Can the child join in with several movements in order?

Finish and record

Review the sequence with action pictures or demonstrate it together.

Ways to adapt

Teach one action at a time, use now/next visuals, repeat the same sequence and allow children to observe before joining.

Week 6 — My movement challenge

Learning aim: Repeat selected activities from Week 1 and notice progress, confidence and support needs.

Equipment: Use the same floor spots, tape line and soft ball as Week 1; assessment spreadsheet.

Session plan (20–25 minutes)

Warm-up: Children choose a familiar warm-up movement from the previous weeks.

Balance Path (4 min)

Repeat the Week 2 floor-line or spot path. Keep conditions similar to previous observations.

Observe: Compare with earlier observation; note any change in support.

Jump or Step (4 min)

Repeat the Week 3 short gap or line. Accept a safe step-over as progress if that is the child's current stage.

Observe: Has confidence, control or independence changed?

Ball Target (5 min)

Repeat rolling towards the same target from the same distance as Week 1 or 4.

Observe: Compare aiming and participation with earlier observations.

Child's Choice (4 min)

Let each child choose one activity to show or practise again.

Observe: Which activities motivate the child? What should be practised next?

Finish and record

Praise effort and specific progress. Complete the end-point assessment and agree next steps with the class team.

Ways to adapt

Keep the assessment conditions as similar as possible to baseline. Record prompts, equipment changes and absences so comparisons are fair.

Simple assessment guidance

Use the companion spreadsheet at baseline (Week 1) and again in Week 6. If useful, make a brief check-in in Week 3.

- Moves around a clear space safely
- Stops on a simple cue
- Copies a simple body movement
- Walks along a floor line or between markers
- Maintains a steady standing position briefly
- Steps between floor markers
- Attempts a two-foot jump or appropriate step-over
- Lands or finishes a movement and regains balance
- Rolls a ball towards a partner or target
- Throws a soft object towards a large target
- Watches and attempts to receive a ball
- Follows a two-part movement sequence

Suggested scale: 0 = not yet observed / unable to attempt today; 1 = completes with modelling, prompts or support; 2 = completes independently in this activity. Use N/O if the child was absent, declined, or the skill was not assessed. Scores are observations in this context, not a diagnosis or a measure of a child's overall ability.

When to seek advice

Discuss persistent concerns with the SENCO/inclusion lead and family, using your school's procedures. If difficulties significantly affect participation or there are concerns about pain, frequent falls, asymmetry or loss of previously acquired skills, seek advice from the appropriate health professional. The spreadsheet should not be used on its own to decide whether a child has a developmental condition or requires a referral.

Official information

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust — BEAM and Jump Ahead:

https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/physiotherapy/beam-and-jump-ahead/