

Psychomotility therapy

A special educational service offered by the City of Zurich

What is psychomotility therapy?

This therapy is a form of support for children with movement behaviour difficulties. Psychomotility therapy sees a child's development as a whole that is made up of **moving, experiencing, thinking, feeling** and **acting**. In play, the child places his or her movements, emotional world and thinking in relation to one another. The concept of "psycho-motility" emphasises the connection between motor skills and mental processes. When people are moving, their whole personality is bound up in the action of their movement.

1.1.1 What kind of children receive psychomotility therapy?

Not all children are the same. The development of movement in children shows a wide range of variation. Every child has strengths and weaknesses, special interests and skills.

Some children display unusual features in their movement, perception and behaviour, such as:

- Delayed development of movement
- Clumsiness
- Hyperactivity and excessive impulsiveness
- Motor impairment
- Abnormal writing development (graphomotor skills)

Unusual features in movement behaviour are often associated with problems in the area of social, emotional and cognitive development, and can be expressed as follows:

- Difficulties in dealing with failure (low frustration threshold)
- Difficulties in dealing with other children
- Aggressive behaviour
- Infantile behaviour
- Low self-confidence
- Difficulty in focusing concentration
- Learning difficulties and low achievement in some areas

For children whose development is impaired by the above-mentioned difficulties, psychomotility therapy offers support that is aimed at their needs.

What do children experience and learn in psychomotility therapy?

In the wide range of play and exercise materials on offer, children find a stimulating field of learning. In psychomotility therapy, children convert their strengths and specific interests into concrete forms of play and action.

They learn in a self-determined and motivated way. Experiences of success strengthen their self-confidence and motivation to learn.

Active and passive experiences of movement and independent **exploration** and **trying things out** are important elements of promoting development.

Sight, hearing, touch, but also bodily perception and motion perception and the sense of balance are closely connected with movement and play a central role in the therapy.

In posture, facial expressions and gestures, children **express** their **feelings**.

Play forms an important basis for self-determined, appropriate action in everyday life, and is an important element of psychomotor support.

The therapist offers stimulating therapy that is tailored to the individual child, in which the child can **practice and improve** movements. This occurs in the areas of gross motor skills, fine motor skills and graphomotor skills.

Graphomotor therapy supports the child's handwriting development and improves his or her writing skills. This also includes: instruction and advice in the case of problems associated with left-handedness or problems with the development of handedness.

Objectives: psychomotility therapy offers children support in the area of movement and perception, and supports them in developing their social skills. The children develop new strategies and find their own solutions for dealing with problems. Their self-confidence is boosted and they cope better with everyday life.

2. What are the psychomotility therapist's spheres of activity?

Assessment: the psychomotility therapist records the developmental levels of the enrolled children for gross motor, fine motor and graphomotor skills, as well as for behaviour. She conducts a complex assessment procedure, observing the child during directed and independent play and movement situations. Exploratory discussions with significant people in the child's life (parents and teachers) are also held.

The therapist explains her observations and assessment to the child's parents and teachers. Together they discuss and establish the support goals.

Therapy: on the basis of the assessment, together with the parents and teachers, the therapist establishes the goals for the psychomotility therapy. She bases the therapy on these goals. Together with the child's parents and teachers, she looks for ways to support the therapy.

Specialist advice, prevention: the therapist makes her specialist knowledge available to individual teachers or entire schools. She works with the teaching staff or carries out support projects with entire classes or with groups of children (prevention).

How is a child enrolled for psychomotility therapy?

After a discussion with the parents and with their agreement, the teacher applies to the relevant psychomotility therapy centre for a specialist assessment. The child and his or her parents are then invited by the therapist for psychomotor assessment. This is then followed by a further discussion at the school, where the therapist explains the results of the assessment and makes a suggestion regarding **therapy** or **integrative support**. After the parents' agreement and the head teacher's approval have been obtained, therapy or support can begin. Psychomotility therapy is financed by the City of Zurich, as part of its special education service.

Further information is available from:
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www.stadt-zuerich.ch/psychomotorik-therapie