Galloping is a forward slide movement: front foot steps forward with a little spring followed by the transfer of body weight to the back foot. As the back foot receives the body weight, the front foot repeats the forward step movement. The same lead foot always stays in front throughout the gallop.

Galloping is used commonly in dances (e.g. children's, folk and line dances). Children enjoy the fun and light movement as it gives them the feeling of riding a horse.
Developmental Phases

Galloping

**Initial**

- Back leg often comes in front of lead leg.
- Lead leg takes off only after back leg has landed.
- Contact with ground is made with flat-foot landing.
- Ineffective use of arms to balance or to produce body lift.
- Irregular pace with pauses between steps.

**Transition**

- Back leg may lead during flight phase but lands next to or behind lead leg.
- An exaggerated upward lift (feet off the ground) can be seen.
- Contact with ground is made with both heel-toe and toe-toe combinations.
- Movement gains moderate speed but still appears stiff and awkward.

**Mature**

- Back leg lands behind lead leg.
- Both legs bend slightly at the knees. A low-flight phase can be seen (i.e. both feet are off ground).
- Contact with ground is made with a heel-toe pattern.
- Arms are not needed for balance; may be used for other purposes (e.g. in front holding onto ‘horse reins’).
- Movement is smooth and rhythmic with a moderate tempo.

**Approximate Age of Development (in years)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>
Teaching Strategies

Galloping

What to do if your child...

... needs practice in the movement sequence?
- Demonstrate “step, together behind, step, together behind”, complete with verbal cues. Get your child to follow. Ensure correct landing and take-off with balls (front) of feet.
- Begin slowly, picking up speed gradually.

... needs a rhythmic pattern in his gallop?
- Provide visual and verbal cues for rhythmic movement: “click-clock, click-clock…”
- Vary cue speed to suit your child’s ability. Use songs or music.

... is not able to change speed quickly?
- Get your child to imagine he is riding a horse that is going very slowly at first.
- Introduce speed changes and ensure your child responds accordingly. Narrate different scenarios (e.g. muddy ground – gallop slowly; tiger is chasing – gallop quickly).

... needs to gallop more quickly?
- Have a ‘horse race’. Two to three children to race over a distance using only galloping movements.
**Variations**  
“Can your child gallop...?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the body moves</th>
<th>Force/Effort</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• like a runaway horse</td>
<td>• slowly as if a heavy cowboy is sitting on him</td>
<td>• as if being pulled back by a rider/jockey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• up or down a hill</td>
<td>• quickly as if he is being chased by a lion</td>
<td>• as if his back leg is injured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• on toes as if on a bed of hot coal</td>
<td>• to the beat of a drum or to rhythmic claps</td>
<td>• as if racing on a racetrack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Direction/Pathways</th>
<th>Levels/Extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• around the cones placed at four corners of the room/ space</td>
<td>• across the room/field</td>
<td>• low to the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• within a rectangle drawn on the floor</td>
<td>• around a circle</td>
<td>• over a ‘fence’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• and change directions according to signals given</td>
<td>• with an upright body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self (body parts)/People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• with right or left foot leading</td>
<td>• weaving in and out along a row of cones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• as if being led by you jogging slowly in front</td>
<td>• pick up an object along the way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• towards another ‘horse’ and then turn to avoid collision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMBINATIONS**

- Weaving in and out along a row of cones, and on toes as if on a bed of hot coal
- Slowly down a hill as if his back leg is injured
Activity 1
Galloping

HOW TO PLAY

Gallop alongside your child, playing “Monkey See, Monkey Do” at the same time. Gallop in different pathways for your child to follow.

Pathways
- Straight
- Curved
- Zig zag

- Make shapes and numbers while galloping together. Ask your child to guess what you are tracing with your gallop.
- Role play as ponies galloping together across a vast grassland. Act out different scenarios to vary galloping speed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tired ponies, heading back to the stables for the night</td>
<td>Gallop slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirsty ponies, rushing towards a stream for a drink</td>
<td>Gallop fast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Challenge your child to change direction after every three gallops. He will need to count while galloping.

BE AWARE

- Start by getting your child to take a step forward with one foot, then have the other foot catch up. Explain to him that the duty of the back foot is to catch up with the front foot.
- Gradually increase the speed. Eventually, the galloping movement will happen.
Activity 2

Galloping

WHAT YOU NEED

- Rope or a hula hoop
- Objects found at home, such as stuffed toys, cushions or stationery

HOW TO PLAY

- Role play with your child. He is a “horse”, and you are its “rider”. Use a hula hoop or loosely tie a rope around your child’s waist.

- Hold the hula hoop or rope and stand behind your child. Gallop around together. Switch roles at some point.

- For a younger child, you can be the horse and your child the rider first. This will put him behind you, allowing him to follow your galloping.

- Randomly place objects within the play area. “Horse” and “rider” must overcome the obstacles as they gallop around.

- Challenge your child to pick up the objects as you gallop around together.

BE AWARE

- Remind your child to hold his arms forward at shoulder level. This will help him maintain his balance and move forward.

- Teach your child to gallop lightly. Ask him to imagine he is a bullet being blasted from a pistol. He must spring off for quick take-off and land lightly.
Activity 3
Galloping

HOW TO PLAY
• Have your child gallop to your cues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue</th>
<th>Gallop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here</td>
<td>Gallop towards you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There</td>
<td>Gallop in the direction you point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everywhere</td>
<td>Gallop around randomly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BE AWARE
• Ensure that the play area has sufficient space and is free of obstacles.
• Remind your child of the importance of staying within the play zone prior to the activity to prevent accidents from happening.

- Ensure play area is free of obstacles to avoid collisions, especially when changing directions.