

## MOVEMENT

Movement activities are natural ways to release and express energy. Children learn by doing. If children are involved in activities, they will learn each time they try something. Physical movement is the child's first way of communicating. They close their eyes, cry, shake, etc. Physical movements provide an important way for a child to form impressions about him/herself and the environment.

Movement activities contribute to the physical, mental, social, and emotional growth and development of the child. It is as vital as art or music because it helps a child understand how his/her body works. Movement activities involve the entire child and not just physical fitness and recreation. Creative movements help children express their creative abilities in a very natural way.

Personal movement shows the mood or inner state of an individual. In creative movement, children express their personalities in their own way. Creative movement can occur anywhere the children feel free and want to move their bodies. It can be done to poetry, music, rhythm, or even silence. Children's bodies become instruments of expression by feeling a pulse, beat, idea, or emotion.

Through regular movement activities, children learn:

1. Relaxation
2. A means to express space, time, and weight
3. How to creatively express feelings and ideas
4. An increased awareness of the world
5. Improvement of coordination and rhythmic interpretation

Creative movement activities benefit the large and small muscles and promote healthy growth.

### PLANNING MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Movement activities should match a child's current developmental stage. An activity for a three-year-old is different than an activity that would benefit a five-year-old. The teacher must know a child's level before planning activities. The teacher should provide activities that challenge the child and teach greater skill and expression. Activities must be presented in a developmental sequence (teaching easier movements before more difficult movements).

**KINDS OF MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Movement activities are generally divided into two types: gross motor and fine motor. Both types of activities need to be used with young children. Large motor skills should be developed in young children prior to fine motor skills. Examples of each type are listed below:

**GROSS MOTOR**

1. Climbing
2. Jumping
3. Running
4. Walking
5. Throwing and catching
6. Skipping
7. Physically oriented games
8. Dancing
9. Calisthenics
10. Walking in steps
11. Muscular strength
12. Kicking

**FINE MOTOR**

1. Balancing
2. Eye movement
3. Ability to stop an action
4. Near point and far point vision

**CONDUCTING MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES:**

1. Get the attention of all of the children before beginning.
2. Explain the game clearly.
3. Have equipment ready before you begin.
4. Explain what the signal to stop and listen will be.
5. Tell children what to do with equipment when they receive it.
6. Remind children to be careful and not bump into one another.
7. Have children wear appropriate clothing and shoes.
8. Do not demonstrate how to do the movement--this limits the children's imaginations.
9. Allow time for practice and creativity.
10. Let the children select a partner. Change partners often.

**IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Movement interpretations:

The life cycle of a butterfly  
 Popcorn  
 Bicycle  
 Water  
 Kite  
 Laundry  
 Fishing  
 Airplane

**SUGGESTED GAMES:**

**JUMP OVER THE RIVER:** Two long sticks act as the banks of the river. Children jump from one bank to the other. The sticks can be moved further apart to make a wider river. Children can use different ways to get from one side of the river to the other side (sliding, crawling, rolling, etc.).

**CALL AND ROLL:** Children sit in a circle. Two large rubber balls are used. The balls are handed to two children on opposite sides of the circle. Each child with a ball must call the name of another child in the circle and roll the ball to that child.

**COPY CATS:** Gather the children into a small circle. Select a body part to emphasize (hands, feet, head, etc.) and ask the children to think of a way to move that part of their bodies. The group will copy the movement. When all ideas for moving that body part are exhausted, change to another part of the body. All the children will have a chance to demonstrate their ideas. Teachers should participate and join in the activity. You could have the students use two different parts of the body at once. This helps develop further coordination.

**BODY ROLL:** Each child will need a large ball. They should place and/or roll the ball on different parts of their body. For example, have the children roll the ball from their toes to their waist. Roll your ball up your arm. Can you find a way to hold your ball without using your hands? If a small ball is used, it will take a long time to cover the length of the body.

**PASS THE BALL:** Gather the children into a large circle. Have the children pass the ball to the next child without using their hands. They can use their necks, upper arms, and legs, but not their hands.