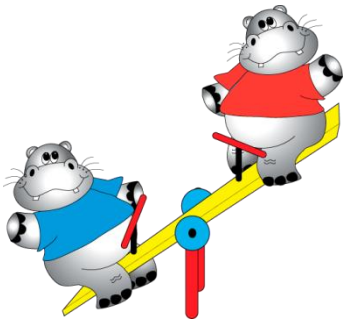




# Can't Sit Still!



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# Introduction

Research has shown that a large percentage of our youth are not healthy. Poor posture, obesity, a lack of flexibility and upper body strength, and heart related diseases, represent just a few of the health related problems that are now recognized as having a pediatric origin.

Developmentally appropriate physical activities for the young child are designed with the child's intellectual, emotional, and social capabilities in mind. The primary focus is on increasing the young child's understanding and appreciation for movement. This awareness of movement should be reinforced in related classroom activities and on the playground.

The session today is to assist teachers of young children create and use activities to convey the importance of movement for a healthy lifestyle throughout the curriculum.

# The Basics of Movement Experiences

## Movement activities are important because

- Physical development is an integral part of whole child development
- Just as the foundation for intellectual development starts in the early years, so does the foundation for physical development and being physically educated.
- 1/3 of the nation's children are physically fit and obesity is increasing in America's children.
- Increased physical fitness is linked to academic success.
- Increased physical fitness is linked to positive self concept.
- Developmentally appropriate physical fitness for preschoolers is based on movement theory, not competition or calisthenics.

## The goal of movement activities

- To increase the fitness level and movement potential of young children
- To develop in children an enjoyment and appreciation of physical movement and activity

# Planning Movement Experiences

When planning developmentally appropriate movement activities, keep these points in mind.

- Provide opportunities that promote physical, cognitive, and social-emotional learning development.
- Provide opportunities for active learning and success for all children.
- Provide movement activities which integrate concepts from the academic curriculum.
- Provide opportunities for children to explore and experience a variety of activities.
- Provide opportunities for daily play periods during which children choose the movement skills they wish to practice.
- Provide for movement activities indoors and outdoors.
- Provide ample opportunities for meaningful movement practice and for creative expression through movement.

# Facilitating Developmentally Appropriate Movement Activities

*Developmentally appropriate movement activities allows the teacher to meet the current and emerging needs of the whole child.*

## Active Participation for Every Child

- All children are involved in activities that allow children to remain continuously active.
- Activities are designed to meet a child's need for active participation in all learning experiences.

## Development of Movement Concepts and Motor Skills

- Children are provided with frequent and meaningful age appropriate practice opportunities that enable individuals to develop a functional understanding of movement concepts and build competence and confidence in their ability to perform a variety of motor skills.

# Facilitating Developmentally Appropriate Movement Activities

## Cognitive Development

- Physical education activities are designed with both the physical and the cognitive development of children in mind.
- Teachers provide experiences that encourage children to question, integrate, analyze, communicate, apply cognitive concepts, and gain wide multi-cultural view of the world, thus making physical education a part of the total educational experience.

## Social Emotional/Development

- Teachers intentionally design and teach activities throughout the year that allows children the opportunity to work together to improve their emerging social and cooperation skills. It also helps to develop a positive self-concept.
- Design activities to help all children experience and feel the satisfaction and joy that results from regular participation in physical activity.

# Movement Activities Throughout the Curriculum

Incorporating movement through the day can be done in various classroom areas.

## Dramatic Play

- Role playing allows children to understand and try out new situations in a safe way. Role playing helps children learn social skills and reinforces positive behavior.
- Dramatic play activities allow young children to learn from firsthand information. By trying to recreate characters in stories and books, children record in their minds what they have learned.
- As children act out dramatic play roles, teachers can see their thinking processes and how they interpret what adults are saying or doing.

# Using Beanbags, Balloons, and Bubbles

Activities that use beanbags, balloons, and bubbles are important because

- The materials appeal to young children and encourage them to touch, toss, experiment with their capabilities, and have fun.
- The activities involve the children in running, jumping, stretching, and moving, all of which promote the development of the large muscle groups.
- Even though beanbags, balloons and bubbles are not new materials to preschools, it may be the first opportunity some young children have to use them. These children may not realize how many ways there are to play with these materials, and will need opportunities to explore them.

# Dance, Music and Marches

Dance, Music and Marching activities are important because:

- Children love to dance and move to music. Young children particularly like music activities because they are less concerned about how they should look or act, and they allow themselves to enjoy movement.
- Music related activities help develop young children's coordination between arms, legs, head and trunk.
- Developing patterns in dance and marching helps children look for and understand patterns in numbers and reading.

# Games

Playing games is important because:

- Games encourage children to use their thinking skills while reasoning about the consequences of strategies.
- The rules games are played by provide young children with a structure that seems fair and reasonable. When children choose to abide by game rules they have a sense of fitting in with the other children.
- Games encourage children to negotiate with other children and many games help children practice flexibility by taking turns and following directions.

# Problem Solving

Problem solving activities are important because:

- Much of what young children learn they learn by solving problems for themselves. When adults try to help children avoid problems, they keep the children from finding solutions that can translate to other situations.
- Problem solving helps children learn to depend on themselves to find solutions and to become more self-reliant. Activities structured to allow children to work in small groups also help the children learn the value of working out solutions with a team.
- Problem solving activities develop decision-making skills in young children that will carry over in many other areas of development.

# Closure

This is by no means all the possibilities for movement throughout the day.

Additional ideas may be gained from [dr.jean.org](http://dr.jean.org), Don't Eat Cactus Cookies plus numerous internet websites. Our goal is to provide our children with early exposure to physical activity and the enjoyment of movement.