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Active Learning

A Resource Guide for Designing and Implementing
Developmentally Appropriate Movement Experiences for
Young Children Ages 3 to 5 in Home, School, and
Community Environments

Developed by the
Minnesota Developmental Adapted Physical Education Leadership Committee
and the
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Intended Audience and Purpose

Adults in our audience may include administrators, parents, daycare providers, preschool teachers, Head Start teachers, Early Childhood Family Education teachers, Early Childhood Special Education teachers, physical education teachers, Developmental Adapted Physical Education teachers, occupational therapists, and physical therapists.

The purpose of this resource guide is to support adults in designing, implementing, and teaching developmentally appropriate movement activities to young children ages three to five. These children include those who are typically developing and those who have special needs.

The philosophy and content of this movement resource is based upon current appropriate best practice principles.

For DAPE teachers, this guide is intended to be used as a supplement to the more conclusive Minnesota DAPE Best Practice Manual.

Introduction

Young Children are Movers!

This resource guide recognizes that learning how to perform movement skills is a vital part of every young child's life. *When children are moving, they are developing physically as well as mentally, socially and emotionally.* The field of early childhood movement has a “best practice” that supports these principles. It emphasizes that young children learn movement skills best when instructional strategies are exciting, attractive, and well-planned; thus affording children opportunities to be successful in learning movement skills. Success positively impacts the child's motivation to participate in physical activity and it also increases the value that physical activity has for the child. This sets the stage for individuals to be physically active throughout their lifetime.

Content Overview

This guide provides details for creating and implementing movement programs for young children. It defines the importance of movement, the components of movement, and provides a basis for offering structured and unstructured movement opportunities in homes, schools, and communities. Best practice and lesson planning are presented. The guide provides readers with information on equipment suggestions, evaluations, and strategies for modifying activities and adapting equipment. There is also a section on movement opportunities outside the more formal educational setting. The roles of motor specialists and special education law for children with disabilities are also addressed. Finally, there is a listing of valuable resource materials to support teachers and caregivers who interact daily with young children.

Importance of Movement for Young Children

In the early stages of life, the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical developmental domains are intertwined. Therefore, when young children move, they are learning about being physically active AND are also developing their social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Given a new experience, these children are learning in multiple domains.

Movement is Learning

Over 50 years ago the Swiss psychologist, Piaget, explained that play is the work of children and that the child's “job” is to explore his/her world. This early exploration occurs as the child moves. The University of Minnesota motor development scholar, Dr. Allen Burton, explained that a movement performance is the product of the unique qualities of the child, the environment in which the activity takes place, and the task that is asked of the child. Change any one of these variables, and the movement performance will most likely differ.

Learning how to move is more than just engaging in recess or free play. Instead, the important task of learning how to move benefits from guidance and opportunity. The Russian child psychologist, Vygotsky, influenced modern thought on child development with the report that adults provide scaffolds by which children learn about their world. When a child needs help in making it into the next stage of learning, the adult is there to facilitate their new movement experience. For example: When grasping the hand of a

toddler learning to step up on a curb for the first time, the child will pass through a series of stages from dependence to independence. Examples of the stages may include demonstration, physical assistance, and verbal cues, along with many opportunities for practice.

Early Brain Development and Sensory Stimulation

Early brain stimulation through early life experiences is important and shapes the later life of an individual. Much has been written regarding brain development and early childhood (e.g., National Research Council, 2000) and one important outcome emphasizes that, if a child needs help due to lag in development, it is critical to identify it early so creative interventions can be applied successfully to boost the positive development for the child (Bailey, Bruer, Symons, and Lichtman, 2001). This information counters the notion that, if the child hasn't experienced certain skills at a specific time in development, they will not develop that skill. But rather, if a developmental lag is discovered, early intervention will help promote the maximum development of these skills.

Brain development literature supports the notion that when a child's brain is stimulated at these early ages, they are learning in multiple domains: language, social, cognitive and movement. Thus, when a child is engaged in movement activity that is developmentally appropriate they are learning in all the domains and their sensory system (sight, taste, touch, hearing, seeing) is also being stimulated and developed. It is important to teach at developmentally appropriate levels because it breeds the child's participation and affords an opportunity for success. For example, it is not appropriate to teach young children highly organized sports or competitive games because they do not have the cognitive, physical, or social skills at this age. This guide provides examples of developmentally appropriate movement activities that consider the cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development of young children.

Conclusion

As their caregivers and educators, we acknowledge that children ages 3 to 5 are on an exciting journey when they develop knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes for learning how to move and make healthy lifestyle choices. The following chapters provide all the necessary ingredients to create and implement a dynamic movement program for young children.

Quality Movement Programs for Young Children

The best practice for creating movement programs for young children is often referred to as *appropriate practice*. In 2000, two organizations published a list of appropriate practice for teaching young children movement skills: the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the Council on Physical Education for Children (COPEC). And, in 2002, recognizing the work of COPEC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in cooperation with Human Kinetics Publishers, published Active for Life: Developmentally Appropriate Movement Programs for Young Children.

The following guidelines are adapted from the position statement of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the Council on Physical Education for Children (COPEC), which are published as Appropriate Practices in Movement Programs for Young Children Ages 3-9 by the American Alliance of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) (2000).

Why? Because physical activity classes for young children should be taught differently than physical activity classes for older children. The end result is a quality program where young movers are successful because instruction matches developmental level.

Premises of Quality Movement Programs for Young Children

1. Teachers of young children are guides or facilitators.

Young children learn through involvement, observation, and modeling, which requires teachers to facilitate children's active involvement in learning. Teachers construct the environment with specific outcomes in mind and then guide the children toward these goals. By carefully observing the children's responses and interests, teachers are able to adapt the learning experiences to best meet each individual child's needs. Children are allowed to make choices and seek creative solutions. They are provided the time and opportunity to explore appropriate responses. Teachers show interest and participate in movement activities, engaging the children in the activity, thereby extending the children's learning.

2. Children should engage in movement programs designed for their developmental levels.

Young children need a variety of experiences that will lead to mature fundamental motor skills. The development of fundamental motor abilities is age related, not age determined. Teachers of 3, 4, and 5 year old children need to fully understand the continuum of motor development from infancy through age 5 as it differs from that of elementary school-aged children.

3. **Young children learn through interaction with their environment.**
This well-established concept has been stated in many ways—children learn by doing; children learn through active involvement with people and objects. Developmentally appropriate movement programs for young children are designed so all children are active participants.

4. **Young children learn and develop in an integrated fashion.**
Motor, cognitive, emotional, and social development are interrelated. Learning experiences in movement should encompass and interface with other areas of development. Regularly scheduled movement experiences should focus on the development of fundamental motor skills while incorporating these experiences in the child’s total development. Movement is a primary medium for young children’s learning.

5. **Planned movement experiences enhance play experiences.**
A combination of play along with planned movement experiences specifically designed to help children develop fundamental motor skills, is beneficial in assisting young children in their development. Regularly scheduled and appropriately designed movement experiences are enhanced with regular indoor and outdoor play experiences giving children an opportunity to freely practice and develop skills.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)’s position on the importance of physical activity for children ages 3-5 is as follows:

“All children ages three to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills.”

The following five guidelines were written by NASPE in Active Start (2002) to address questions such as: What kind of physical activity is best for young children? In what environment should the activity take place? What individuals are responsible for facilitating the physical activity?

- Guideline 1. Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity.

- Guideline 2. Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

- Guideline 3. Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.

- Guideline 4. Preschool children should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.
- Guideline 5. Teachers responsible for the well-being of young children should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child’s movement skills.

Appropriate Practice in Movement Education Programs

1. **Making Curriculum Decisions**
The movement curriculum has a scope and sequence based upon appropriate outcomes for children’s motor, cognitive, emotional, and social development.
2. **Facilitating Total Development**
Movement activities are designed to enhance the total development of the child: motor, cognitive, emotional, and social skills.
3. **Designing Learning Experiences**
Direct (e.g. task instruction, task stations, guided discovery) and indirect (e.g. free play, structured free play) teaching methods are used to provide young children with instructional models to replicate and to encourage children to challenge themselves in their environment.
4. **Developing Movement Skills and Concepts**
Children are provided with adequate practice sessions within the context of their daily educational experiences, allowing them to develop a functional understanding of movement concepts and fundamental motor skills.
5. **Implementing Assessment**
Motor skill tests that are formal (standardized), and informal (non-standardized) plus ongoing observations of the young child during movement activities, are used to identify children with special needs, plan objective-oriented lessons, individualize instruction (when needed), communicate with parents and care providers, and evaluate the program’s effectiveness.
6. **Facilitating Maximum Participation**
Young children need sufficient equipment, brief rest periods, and modifications (when necessary), to enhance maximum participation in movement activities. Children need to be physically active and should not be waiting their turn to participate in movement activities.
7. **Allowing for Repetition and Variation**
Within a lesson, the teacher focuses on the desired skill(s), while providing adequate opportunities for practicing and learning the skill.

8. **Promoting Non-Competitive Success for All Children**
In a comfortable setting for the children, non-competitive opportunities to practice skills are provided by the teacher, taking into account the varied skill levels of all children in the group.
9. **Developing Health-Related Fitness**
Teachers convey the concept that lifelong fitness is a by-product of participation in movement activities. To achieve fitness, young children only need to be participating regularly in a wide variety of age-appropriate physical activities.
10. **Encouraging Individual and Free Expression**
Teachers plan movement opportunities that allow children to express themselves freely, ask questions, and challenge themselves to find solutions to puzzling situations via the medium of movement. For example: “How can you get the ball to the hula hoop?”
11. **Teaching Rhythmic Experiences and Dance**
Teachers encourage children to use their imaginations in a movement program that includes a variety of rhythmic, expressive, creative, and culturally appropriate dance experiences.
12. **Teaching Tumbling**
Teachers plan opportunities for exploration in the skill areas of balancing, rolling, jumping/landing, climbing, as appropriate to age, ability, and confidence levels of young children.
13. **Teaching Games**
Teachers reinforce planned objectives by selecting, designing, sequencing, and modifying games to maximize children’s learning and enjoyment.
14. **Integrating Movement Programs and Play**
The total educational program includes daily indoor and outdoor movement experiences planned and organized by teachers.
15. **Scheduling Activity**
Both structured learning experiences and free play are included in 30-60 minutes of daily developmentally appropriate physical activity of a moderate nature.
16. **Providing an Adequate and Safe Environment**
The teaching environment is physically, psychologically, and acoustically safe and offers a choice of equipment geared toward the children’s level of competence. Equipment and activity choice allow for the development of positive feelings, self-confidence, and self-worth.

17. **Limiting Class Size**
Developmentally appropriate class size is limited to no more than nine to ten children (age 4-5) assigned to one adult. Younger children require smaller groups.
18. **Facilitating Gender Equity**
Both boys and girls in this age group should be given the same opportunities to achieve success in all realms of movement activities. For the most part, there is no gender difference in motor skill development at this age.
19. **Fostering Parent-Teacher Communication**
Teachers give information to parents about the importance of daily movement experiences. Parents are given a variety of suggested movement activities that can be employed at home to enhance a child's development in all areas of learning.

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Movement Content Areas

Movement programs for young children should include activities from the following eight movement components:

- Locomotor Skills

- Object Control Skills

- Body Awareness

- Spatial Concepts

- Body Actions

- Rhythmic Activities

- Play Participation Skills

- Group Games

Movement Component Description Chart

Movement Component	Identification of Skills
Locomotor Skills	<p>Rolling, crawling, creeping, walking, marching, running, climbing, jumping, hopping, galloping, skipping;</p> <p>Ability to imitate animal movement actions: elephant, bear, cat, alligator, dinosaur, frog, monkey, kangaroo, giraffe, snake, seal, bird, dog, rabbit, lion, ducks.</p> <p>Ability to move through obstacle courses (moving through a pre-planned space that contains sequenced activity centers)</p> <p>Tumbling (log roll, forward roll)</p>
Object Control Skills	<p>Rolling, throwing, striking, catching, bouncing, dribbling, kicking balls of different sizes and textures (nerf, plastic, cloth, rubber, vinyl, yarn, newspaper).</p> <p>Throwing and catching objects (scarves, bean bags)</p> <p>Ability to move through an obstacle course</p>
Body Awareness	<p>Ability to identify (touch and/or move) a specific body part: head, ear, nose, eye, mouth, neck, back, chest, stomach, shoulder, elbow, arm wrist, hand, finger, leg, knee ankle, toe; Examples:</p> <p>“Show me your _____” “Where is your _____?” “Move your _____.” “Move like I am moving (simple imitation).” “Tell me where your _____ is.”</p>
Spatial Concepts	<p>Ability to demonstrate concepts of: near-far, forward-backward, above-below, up-down, over-under, slow-fast, loud-soft, apart-together, in-out, around, through, between; Ability to move through an obstacle course.</p>
Body Actions	<p>Ability to demonstrate moving without locomotion: turning, bending, stretching, twisting, shaking, bouncing, and swaying.</p>
Rhythmic Activities	<p>Ability to move body rhythmically to various tempos created by instruments such as drums, tambourines, lummi sticks; or, by listening to musical selections (children’s music, popular/ classical music) on radio, tapes, or CD’s.</p>
Play Participation Skills	<p>Climbing up/down stairs and ladder, swinging on swing or ropes, sliding down slide, crawling through a tunnel, hanging with arms from a bar, pulling an object, pushing an object, riding a tricycle, riding a scooter board, moving about on a playground structure.</p>
Group Games	<p>Ability to participate in structured activities performed with a small group of children with few rules, no competition, and no elimination: parachute play, musical hoops, “Clean Out your Backyard”, What Time Is It, Mr. / Ms Fox”?</p>

Instructional Format

Young children need the security of a familiar routine and sequence during movement activities in the gym. Try to keep the **Opening, Warm-up Activities, and Closure/Cool Down** constant. Most of the movement experiences should be individual or small group, child centered activities. Use both direct and indirect teaching methods.

Include equipment with a variety of shapes, colors, sizes, weights, textures for safe and active participation. Offer activities with maximum participation. Do not include elimination games. Have a balance between success and challenge activities. Provide opportunities for practice and repetition of skills. Include safety reminders for children and staff. Encourage expression, play, and fun!

1. **Opening** – Children sit down on floor markers such as polyspots, carpet squares, or floor tape in either an organized or scattered formation.
2. **Warm-up Activities** – Movement activities and rhythmical activities performed to music.
3. **Movement Skill Development** – (Activity/Lesson Focus) Include movement activities from the Movement Content Areas:
 - locomotor skills
 - object control skills
 - body awareness
 - spatial concepts
 - body actions
 - rhythmic activities
 - play participation skills
 - group games
4. **Closure/Cool Down** - (Children return to opening formation)
 - Children lie down on floor, close their eyes, and relax.
 - Adult reviews movement activities experienced in lesson.
 - Ask children to acknowledge, in some manner, if they had fun.
 - Ask children which activity they enjoyed the most.
 - Use positive comments when giving feedback.
 - Participate in a closing song?
 - Tell children: “We are all done”.
5. **Dismissal** -Dismiss in an organized fashion.
 - “If your name is ____, line up at the door”
 - “If your name is ____, you can tiptoe (or other locomotor pattern) to the door.”
 - “If you’re wearing the color red, line up at the door.”
 - “If you are sitting on a yellow polyspot, please line up on the black floor line.”

Appropriate Instructional Methods to Use When Teaching Movement Activities to Young Children

The teacher should provide...

- developmentally appropriate movement experiences
- daily movement experiences
- a positive fun learning environment
- a safe environment
- boundaries (to indicate where children can and can not go)
- exploratory activities
- novelty in choice of activities/equipment
- routine (beginning/ending of class)
- activities involving maximum participation for all children (avoiding elimination and competitive activities)
- activities that apply to multiple environments (homes/communities/schools)
- activities oriented to success and challenge
- opportunities for individual expression and creativity
- an integrated concept approach (using cognitive, social/emotional, communication approaches)
- a child-centered approach to teaching (child initiated and adult facilitated)
- sensory experiences (learning through the senses)
- child's choice of activity (occasionally)
- visual demonstrations with instruction
- enthusiasm, interest, and caring attitude when teaching
- praise, encouragement, and feedback to children

Equipment Suggestions for Movement Education Programs

Listed below are some suggestions for equipment/materials that can be used to teach preschool movement activities in each of the eight movement component areas. (See the Resource section of this guide for a listing of the equipment suppliers.)

Locomotor Skills

- Boundary/destination markers (vinyl or plastic cones)
- tunnel (crawl)
- ladder (step over rungs when placed flat on floor/climb up)
- mats (jump/top/crawl)
- stairs (climb up/down)
- hula hoops (jump/hop/crawl)
- mini-trampoline (jump)
- jump rope (jump over rope/crawl under rope)
- hopscotch mat (crawl/hop/jump)

Object Control Skills

- balls (a variety of sizes and textures)
- velcro mitt/tennis ball
- hula hoops
- parachute
- scooterboards
- bean bags
- deck tennis rings
- Frisbees
- tether ball
- targets (variety of shapes/sizes)
- bowling pins

Body Awareness

- bean bags
- hula hoop
- scarves
- lummi sticks
- ribbon sticks
- polyspots

Spatial Concepts

- ladder
- hula hoops
- tunnel

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- barrel
- jump rope
- mat (flat and inclined)
- balance beam
- bowling pins
- rebounder (mini trampoline)
- cones (markers)

Body Actions

- floor markers (i.e. polypots, carpet squares, tape)
- hula hoops
- ribbon sticks
- scarves

Rhythmic Activities

- ribbon sticks
- scarves
- lummi sticks
- musical instruments (cymbals, drums, etc.)
- boom box/ CD Player
- CD's, tapes

Play Participation Skills

- swings
- slides
- ladders
- push toys
- tricycles
- bicycles (training wheels)
- wagons
- balance beams (2x4 board)
- ramps

Group Games

- boundary/destination markers (vinyl or plastic cones)
- polypots
- bean bags
- balls (a variety of sizes/shapes/textures/weights)
- mats
- hula hoops
- parachute
- scooterboards

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Movement Skills Curriculum Template

(This template is to be used as a resource for planning movement activities for young children.)

Movement Component Area:

Movement Skill(s):

Description:

What Children will Experience:

Equipment/Materials:

Developmental Progression: (list)

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How Can Adults Help:

Safety:

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

Communication:

Social/Emotional:

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Sample Lessons from the Eight Movement Component Areas

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Movement Area: Locomotor Skills

Movement Skill: Jumping

Description:

A child will propel body in the air from both feet, followed by a brief flight in the air, and a two foot landing.

What a Child Will Experience:

Jumping up, down, and over objects.

Materials/Equipment:

Objects to jump into/onto:

- Hoops
- Olympet rings
- Swimming pool
- Styrofoam peanuts
- Pile of leaves
- Sheets of packing bubble wrap

Objects to jump over:

- Lines on floor
- Ropes on floor
- Foam noodles
- Bean bags placed in a row
- Stuffed animals
- Small boxes
- Grooves/cracks in sidewalks and floor tiles

Objects to jump off:

- Folded mats
- Wedge mats
- Sturdy boxes
- Curbs
- Playground surfaces (i.e. side of sandbox or stairs)

Developmental Progression:

- Jumping up off floor
- Jumping down from low object
- Jumping forward one time
- Jumping over low object
- Jumping in different directions (i.e. sideways, backwards)
- Jumping for distance
- Jumping forward many times

How Adults Can Help:

- Encourage bent knees on take-off and landing.
- Encourage a balanced landing with feet apart.
- Encourage use of arms to increase height and length of jump and to assist with balanced landing.
- Use simple verbal cues such as “bend knees, swing arms, and jump”.
- Assist a child having difficulty by standing in front of the child, holding the child’s hands, and guiding the child forward on the signal, “ready, set, jump.”

Safety:

- Provide soft surface to cushion landing.
- Vary height and distance of jump based on skill level of child.

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning Colors: Place “Twister” game’s vinyl mat on floor. Child stands on jump box or mat. Have child jump off box and land on specified color such as one foot on green and one on yellow.
- Learning Numbers: Place numbers 0-9 on the floor. Have child jump on a specified sequence of numbers such as 2-4-5.

Communication:

- Learning directions (forward, backward, sideways)
- Learning new words (over, under, on, in, between)

Social/Emotional:

- Learning to Play “Leap Frog”

Movement Area: Locomotor Skills

Movement Skill: Galloping

Description:

A child will step forward with lead foot followed by step with trailing foot, to a position adjacent (or slightly behind) the lead foot (i.e. a galloping horse).

What a Child Will Experience:

Galloping at different speeds, in various pathways, to different auditory cues, and using dominant and non-dominant foot leads.

Materials/Equipment:

- Drum: Beat a drum to facilitate an uneven rhythmic pattern.
- Music: Gallop to music.
- Horse-head stick: Children ride (place stick between legs when galloping).

Developmental Progression:

- Perform foot movements (step-behind) in slow motion.
- Gallop at slow speed in a straight pathway to music.
- Gallop at a fast speed in various pathways (i.e. circle, zig zag) or around obstacles.
- Gallop with non-preferred foot in front.

How Adults Can Help:

- Hold hands with a child who is having difficulty and gallop with them.

Safety:

- Provide ample space for movement

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Galloping at different speeds, i.e. slow and fast

Communication:

- Working with a partner i.e. sharing horse-head stick
- Taking turns deciding where to gallop
“Let’s gallop to the door” “Let’s gallop to the windows”

Social/Emotional:

- Playing “Follow the Leader” when galloping around the play area

Movement Area: Object Control

Movement Skill: Throwing

Description:

A child will propel objects through the air using forward motion of arm and hand.

What a Child Will Experience:

- Throwing objects of different sizes (big to small)
- Throwing objects of different shapes (round, flat)
- Throwing objects with different textures (yarn, foam, rubber)
- Throwing objects of different weights (light to heavy)
- Throwing objects different distances (short to long)
- Throwing overhand
- Throwing underhand

Materials/Equipment:

Examples of objects to throw:

- Bean bags
- Crumbled paper balls
- Yarn balls
- Beach balls
- Nerf balls
- Whiffle balls
- Tennis balls
- Stick-a-ball
- Frisbees
- Deck tennis rings
- Playground balls
- Basketballs

Developmental Progression:

- Sit and roll ball to partner.
- Stand and roll ball to partner.
- Throw small ball with one hand using elbow extension.
- Throw medium size ball with two hands.
- Throw at targets.
- Throw for distance.

How Adults Can Help:

- Encourage children to look at target or person when they are throwing.
- Use cue words such as “hand by ear” and “step throw”.
- Use objects such as yarn balls that don’t roll a long distance to ensure increased practice time.
- Have children practice throwing to a target or to a wall to guarantee a steady, dependable “partner”.
- Encourage children to say the name of partner before throwing objects to them. This helps ensure that partner is ready and is paying attention.

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Safety:

- Allow sufficient space so objects thrown will not hit breakable objects or will not rebound in an unsafe manner.
- Use objects that accommodate the developmental skill level of the child. Use softer balls or objects (i.e. nerf, yarn) for the less skilled child and higher density balls/heavier balls (playground ball) for the higher skilled child.

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning to count (number of times child hits a target or throws a ball)
- Learning colors, shapes, and various sizes of targets
- Learning about speed (fast, slow)

Communication:

- Talking to a partner while playing catch
- Telling partner how you would like them to throw the ball (fast, slow, rolled, bounced)

Social/Emotional:

- Taking turns throwing and catching objects with a friend

Movement Area: Object Control
Movement Skill: Catching

Description:

A child will use hands or an object (scoop, mitt) to stop and control a moving object.

What a Child Will Experience:

Catching a variety of objects of different sizes and shapes which have been thrown by self or a partner.

Materials/Equipment:

Objects to catch:

- Balloons
- Balzac balls
- Punch balls
- Beach balls
- Crumbled paper balls
- Scarves
- Feathers
- Bean bags/Beanie Babies
- Foam balls
- Grab balls
- Gertie balls
- Playground balls
- Foam Frisbees
- Foxtails
- Flingsocks
- Geodesic balls

Catch objects in:

- Both hands
- One hand
- Velcro mitts
- Scoops
- Stick-a-ball mitts
- Loop ball mitts

Developmental Progression:

- Catch large rolled ball.
- Catch large suspended ball.
- Bounce and catch a large ball with two hands.
- Catch large ball that is bounced by another person.
- Catch large ball that is gently tossed from another person.
- Catch small rolled ball.
- Catch small suspended ball.
- Catch small ball that is gently tossed from another person.

How Adults Can Help:

- Encourage children to watch or visually focus on stationary or moving objects.
- Use cue words such as “hands ready” or have children clap hands to help them position hands correctly.
- To decrease the amount of time children retrieve objects in the play area, position children close to walls to provide a natural backstop.
- Select equipment appropriate to the size and skill level of the child.
- Position the child facing the wall to decrease the amount of visual distraction.

Safety:

- For less skilled children, use lighter weight, softer, larger, slower moving objects. For more highly skilled children use dense, heavier, and smaller objects.
- Allow ample space for catching activities.

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning to count: Count the number of times children catch objects.

Communication:

- Talking to a friend while playing catch
- Learning to use cue words: “Ready?” “Catch”

Social/Emotional:

- Playing catch with one or more friends
- Taking turns: Choosing what type of objects to catch

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Movement Area: Object Control

Movement Skill: Kicking

Description:

A child will contact or strike an object with foot.

What a Child Will Experience:

Kicking a variety of objects for accuracy and distance using both left and right feet.

Materials/Equipment:

Examples of objects to kick:

- Balloons/Punch Balls
- Jingle Balls (with bells inside)
- Soap bubbles
- Crumbled paper balls
- Beach balls
- Gertie balls
- Foam balls
- Playground balls

Examples of targets:

- Cardboard boxes
- Buckets
- Wastepaper baskets
- Foam pins
- Bowling pins
- Cones (placed various distances)
- Hoops (suspended or in hoop stands)
- Milk carton crates (placed on sides)
- Tunnels (made with mats)
- Lightweight soft tetherballs

Developmental Progression:

- Kick large stationary ball
- Walk forward and kick stationary ball
- Kick slowly moving large ball
- Walk forward and kick slowly rolling ball
- Kick for accuracy
- Kick for distance
- Kick with non-preferred foot

How Adults Can Help:

- Encourage children to look at the object that will be kicked.
- Have children place non-kicking foot next to the object.
- Emphasize making contact with the object, not where the object will travel.
- Encourage children to kick the object forcefully so they practice moving, kicking legs from back to front.

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- Provide support by holding child's hand or by allowing child to grasp a table, a chair, the wall, or other stationary objects.

Safety:

- Allow sufficient space so objects kicked will not hit breakable objects or rebound unsafely.
- Use balls that accommodate the developmental skill level of the child (softer balls such as nerf balls and beach balls for the lesser skilled child and the higher density playground balls and soccer balls for the higher skilled child.)

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning letters, colors, numbers, and shapes:

Attach letter, color, number, or shape to each target (foam pin, soda bottle, etc). When the child kicks the object and it falls down, the child identifies the letter, color, number, or shape on the target.

Child can kick green object into green targets, blue objects into blue targets, etc.

- Learning to count. Ask child:

“How many attempts does it take to make the object fall down?”
“How many objects fell down?”

- Learning spatial concepts and directions

Kicking objects: forward, backward, sideways, over a suspended rope, under a rope, through a hula hoop, into a container

Communication:

- Telling a partner: “It is your turn.” “Kick the ball to me.”
- Kicking objects: over suspended rope (1-2 feet off floor), under suspended rope, through hula hoop, into a container

Social/Emotional:

- Learning to take turns
- Playing “Follow the Leader”

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Movement Area: Body Awareness
Movement Skill: Identifying Body Parts

Description:

A child will indicate the ability to identify specific body parts such as head, ear, nose, eye, mouth, neck, back, chest, stomach, shoulder, elbow, arm, wrist, hand, finger, leg, knee, ankle, toe.

What a Child Will Experience:

- Locating various body parts on another person by pointing to specific body part on that person
- Locating a variety of body parts on self by touch
- Locating specific body parts on self by movement
- Locating a specific body part on self by placing objects on the body part (bean bag, small yarn ball, scarves)

Materials/Equipment:

- Bean bags
- Small yarn balls
- Scarves
- Small stuffed animals
- Pictures of boys, girls

Developmental Progression:

No specific progression of learning to identify body parts, but usually shoulders, ankles, elbows, chest, and wrist are some of the more difficult body parts for young children to learn. Young children most often learn to identify facial parts before any other part of the body.

How Adults Can Help:

By using a variety of commands and questions to facilitate a verbal or physical response:

- Can you touch your knee?
- Can you move your feet?
- Put the bean bag on your toes.
- What is this (point to body part)?
- Touch your stomach.
- Put the scarf on your wrist.

Safety:

If a child has a disability and cannot move or point to specific body parts either on himself or on others, the child can communicate his/her knowledge of specific body parts verbally to the adult.

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning action words: point....; touch....; move....; find....;

Communication:

- Understanding an adult request and responding to it using either a physical or a verbal response

Example: Adult: “This is my.....?” Child Response: “arm”.

Example: Adult: “Touch your nose.”

Child: Child touches nose by pointing to it with finger.

Social/Emotional:

- Interacting with other children during activity
- Listening
- Imitating others

Movement Area: Spatial Concepts
Movement Skill: Moving Through An Obstacle Course

Description:

A child will demonstrate the ability to move through a variety of pre-planned movement activity centers at a preferred pace.

(See Appendix A for an Illustration of An Obstacle Course)

What a Child Will Experience:

- Crawling through a tunnel (or under a table)
- Climbing up a box or a sturdy object
- Jumping down from a box or a sturdy object
- Walking on a 4" - 6" wide board
- Rolling on a mat or carpet
- Jumping into hula hoops positioned flat on the floor

Materials/Equipment:

- Play tunnel (or table)
- Sturdy wooden boxes or a wedged mat
- Beam (2x 4' or 2x 6" board which is approximately 8-10' long)
- Hula hoops (jumping)
- Mat or carpet (rolling)
- Bell (ring when finished course)

Developmental Progression:

Place the movement equipment in a sequence that requires the child's body to continually go from a low to a high position and then back to a low position to require child to be more active. Example: rolling on a mat, climbing up on sturdy box, jumping down from the box, crawling through a tunnel, jumping into hula hoops, etc.

How Adults Can Help:

- Indicate starting line (floor tape or a plastic cone).
- Give verbal cue to start course: Ex: "Ready, set, go!"
- Demonstrate the movements before the child attempts the movements.
- Allow practice sessions at the activity areas and for transitions between the sequenced areas to encourage success.
- Encourage child to attempt all movement activities.
- Give verbal cues, if necessary.
- Praise child when movement skills are attempted.
- Let child ring bell when s/he completes all activities in the obstacle course.
- Occasionally reverse the direction of the course.
- Use music (records, tapes, CD's) to cue the starting and stopping of the child's movements through the course.

Safety:

- Allow enough space between individual activities to avoid injuries.
- Stay within close proximity if the child is not independent on the course.
- Allow only one child on each piece of equipment at a time to avoid accidents.
- Monitor speed of children going through the course (remind them goal is to complete the course, not to race through the course!)

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Learning action words: jump, crawl, climb, roll, walk
- Learning names of equipment in the obstacle course: tunnel, table, box, beam, mat, hula hoops
- Learning where various body parts are located on self and others

Communication:

- Learning the words: down, up, through, over, on, into, climb, around, circle, all done

Social/Emotional:

- Taking turns
- Following directions
- Listening

Movement Area: Body Actions
Movement Skill: Non-Locomotor Movements

Description:

A child will demonstrate the ability to move and control body in a variety of ways without traveling in environment.

What a Child Will Experience:

- Bending
- Stretching
- Twisting
- Turning
- Curling
- Swinging
- Rocking
- Shaking
- Balancing
- Learning to start and stop moving

Materials/Equipment:

- Allow adequate personal space for children to move in one place without touching other children.
- Floor markers - carpet squares, poly spot floor markers, floor tape, or Velcro strips on carpet forming a large circle or scattered formation to visually define where the child's "space" is located.
- Music from CD's, tapes, records, CD/tape/record player.

Developmental Progression:

- Child imitates a non-locomotor movement that is suggested and demonstrated by an adult.
- Child identifies and demonstrates to the group a new and different way to move body when prompted by an adult.
- Child spontaneously creates and demonstrates a movement while staying in personal space.

How Adults Can Help:

Group Warm-Up:

Integrate a variety of body actions into the warm-up activity for the day. Demonstrate the actions listed by asking children to move their bodies to the music using various actions.

- Stretching up high
- Bending and touching toes
- Swinging arms back and forth
- Stomping feet
- Turning around
- Shaking hands

- Twisting body from side to side (left to right)

Create Imaginative Play:

Pretend to move like an animal or object using one or more of these body actions.

- Can you pretend to flap your arms and fly like a bird?
- Can you sway your body like a tree moving in the wind?
- Can you stretch your body like a cat?
- Can you rock forward & backward like a rocking horse?
- Can you rock side to side like a rocking horse?
- Can you make your body look really BIG? Really small?
- Can you move your arms like you're swimming in the water?

Challenge children by asking questions to initiate body actions: Ask Children: "Can you move your body _____?"

- Side to side
- Up and down
- High /low
- In a circle
- Fast/slow
- Gently/forcefully
- Forward/backward

Challenge children to think of different ways of moving.

"Can **you** think of another way we can move our body?"

Safety:

Allow adequate personal space for each child to move freely without touching other children. The designated formation and space for each child should be clearly marked by a visual marker such as poly spot floor markers, Velcro, carpet squares or floor tape.

Integrated Concepts:

Cognitive:

- Listening, watching, and imitating adults and other children
- Understanding movement vocabulary and concept development
- Developing sense of imagination when pretending to move like an animal or object
- Developing an awareness of what it *feels* like to move the body in a variety of ways
- Motor planning
- Understanding of movement elements of quality, effort, force, and relationship between body parts

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Communication:

- Developing movement vocabulary
- Expressing how bodies are moving

Social/Emotional:

- Learning to create and demonstrate new body actions with peers