

# Get a Move On:

## Integrating Movement in the Early Childhood Classroom

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### Benefits of Movement

1. Motor coordination, development of body awareness
2. Use of large and small muscles, can be aerobic
3. Addresses needs of kinesthetic learners
4. Provides variety to the day, releases endorphins
5. Fun! Improves aesthetic development

### Movement During Transitions

Tips: Practice procedures, clear expectations, rehearse, use cues such as “freeze.”

Ideas:

1. Use **prompts** such as “Move like a soldier to your cubby” or “Slither like a snake to the sink.”

### 2. **I Spy Movements**

When you say, “I spy,” children stop, listen, and respond with, “What do you spy?” Say something like, “I spy children dancing in one place,” or “I spy a rock star silently playing a guitar.” The students act out that idea until you say, “I spy.” Then all the students stop what they are doing and respond with, “What do you spy?” The game concludes with, “I spy students sitting down quietly.”

### 3. **Yes, Let’s**

One person calls out, “Let’s all pretend to be statues” (or a similar suggestion).

The group then responds with great enthusiasm, “Yes, let’s!”

Then someone calls out a new request, such as “Let’s all hop like bunnies!” The group then responds again, “Yes, let’s!” They hop up and down until a new suggestion is made.

### 4. **Marshmallow Toes** (Children line up quietly like marshmallows.)

Walking through the hallways,

Everyone quietly goes...

Being respectful all the way...

Walking on our Marshmallow Toes...

### Movement Just for the Sake of Movement (Make and Take Activity)

Tips:

- Can be creative movement, dance, skill building, or games.
- Consider age and developmental level. Allow time for creativity. Use music.
- Great for centers. Hallways, gym, clear space in classroom, or go outside. Avoid cement if possible.

Ideas:

- a. Imagine your foot is a paintbrush and that you need to cover the ground with a beautiful painting.
- b. Pretend you’re a zookeeper giving a bath to the giraffe. Make sure you reach all the way up to wash behind his ears!
- c. Pretend you’re leaves on a tree. Break away from the tree and float down to the ground.

### Movement Centers

Tips:

- Set up in six to eight stations, with enough equipment and materials at each station to limit waiting.
- Set up so that children can use them independently.

Ideas:



1. Scarf movement (use bandanas too)
2. Velcro whiffle ball with Velcro glove
3. Indoor obstacle course (use recycled boxes)
4. Mini golf (make putter from wrapping paper tube)
5. Pool noodle baseball
6. Bubble wrap popping (best to do outside)
7. Walk the line (put colored duct tape on floor in zigzags)
8. Serving Tray Pom Pom Toss (label sections with numbers, colors, shapes, animals, children's names, sight words)
9. Balloon hockey (use several balloons at once)

### Integrate Movement with the Curriculum

#### Tips:

Use PreK guidelines but make the task more movement-centered. Pump up the movement!

Example of DAP science tasks that include movement:

- Have children go outside and gather a variety of rocks.
- Sort rocks by size, color, texture, and surface.
- Identify rocks by name (if possible).
- Take a walk to see how stone is used in buildings.
- Hunt for fossils in limestone.

**Remember:**  
If the bum is numb, the  
brain is too.

#### Ideas:

1. "Let's go outside to look at the clouds before we paint them. Can you use your body to make the shape of your favorite cloud?"
2. Hokey Pokey Shapes
3. Find 4 things longer than your shoe
4. Construction Flagging Shapes (available at Lowes and Home Depot)
5. Shape Walks, Letter Hunts, People Hunts

### Adapting Movement Activities for Children with Special Needs

- Children participate at their own level
- Sense of belonging to group
- Focus on what the children *can* do
- Large motor activities are important for strength, endurance, and coordination
- Integrate gross motor activities into daily schedule
- Follow with quiet activities

### Goodbye Cheer (from Dr. Jean)

I say up, you say down. Up- down... (Point up and down.)

I say fast, you say slow. Fast – slow... (Run fast and slow.)

I say open you say close. Open – close... (Open and close fists.)

I say beginning, you say end. Beginning – end. Beginning – THE END! (Wave goodbye.)

### Make Four Elbows

Children form a circle and begin slowly walking in one direction. At a signal from the leader, they stop and listen to instructions. When the leader states, "Make four elbows," the children touch one or both of their elbows to other children's elbows to make a total of four connected elbows. Each group then shares their methods for accomplishing this task. Other directions might include: make 12 fingers, make four knees, and make 12 fingers.