

***MOVING MATTERS:
Enhancing Classroom Management
and Creativity Through Movement
NAEYC 2007 Annual Conference***

Friday, November 9, 8:30-9:30, Room S401

Presenter: Connie Bergstein Dow

OPENING ACTIVITY

Introduction

Elements and Practical Benefits of Creative Movement (Handout #2)

More Benefits of Movement for Children (Handouts #3, 4 and 5)

I. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

I have three main guidelines for children during movement activities. These will be explained and demonstrated:

1. Listen carefully to and follow movement instructions
2. Respect personal space of others, and the shared space of the group
3. Obey the stop signals

1. Listening To and Following Movement Instructions

The next activities will be an opportunity for the children to begin to respond to instructions about movement. The activities will also help with classroom management when using movement. Volunteers from the audience will be invited to participate.

2. Personal Space

One of the most important concepts for the successful management of a movement class is to convey to the children the idea of personal, versus shared, space. Once the children become familiar with the concept, they can begin to move more freely and creatively, while respecting the personal spaces of the other children. This can be accomplished through movement games, which allow children to practice moving within their own personal spaces, and then moving through the shared space with the other children. The activities give them a concrete idea of where their boundaries are, and just as importantly, where other children's boundaries are.

Activity: *Find a personal space, where you have room all around you, and you do not touch another person when you extend your arms. Each of us will begin on this very small spot.*

Stretch arms up, reach down, then side to side, and repeat several times in different directions while staying on your small spot. Now, take a step forward from your spot, and then back. Repeat this in many different directions.

Imagine you have paint on your toe when you get to the end of your step in each direction, and make a mark each time at the furthest point. After you have done this in many different directions, it will make an imaginary circle around you. This is your personal space for this activity.

Can you walk on your imaginary paint circle now? Can you walk it backwards, looking over your shoulder? You should not be close enough to any one else's space to touch anyone. Can you jump over your spot, landing on the other side of your circle? Hop across it? Crawl? Make a bridge across it? Make a bridge with three supports? Two? Four?

Now, the personal space is not just the spot on the floor, is it? It is also all around you. Imagine that you have a bubble of space around you, which reaches out to where your toe painted the circle on the floor. Explore the sides of your bubble; is it round, and smooth? You can reach the top of it by standing on your toes and reaching up with your arms, and bend low to feel the lower part of your personal space.

3. Shared Space and the Stop Signal

Activity: *Remember that everyone else has a bubble around them too; thinking about every one else's bubbles will help to keep you from bumping into each other. Imagine everyone's bubble is the shape of a car. What color is your car?*

*Before we drive, we want to learn about the stop signal. Stop cues can be audible (clapped hands, a drum or tambourine beat), or visual. For this activity, we will use a visual sign (smaller version of a real stop sign). When the stop sign is held behind the teacher's back, the children can "drive," (slowly), and when the stop sign is visible, they must freeze (try not to move a muscle!). Music used: The Playmates, *Beep-Beep**

*Next, show the traffic lights. The children will move while obeying alternating signs: green means walk at a normal pace, yellow means walk in slow motion, red means stop. Children "drive" while watching for signals. Music used: The Playmates, *Beep-Beep**

Suggestions: Repeat the above activities often, until the children have a basic understanding of the guidelines for moving throughout your particular space together. If the group is large, divide the children into smaller groups if necessary: "drivers" and "audience." Once the children have practiced these activities, and are gaining a basic understanding of the need to listen to instructions, respect their personal spaces and that of others, and recognize the stop cue, you have a world of movement possibilities to explore together.

II. MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

Here are three movement activities, each of which will be engaging, fun, and educational for young children. The learning standards addressed span the domains of language development, literacy, science, math, creative arts, and physical health and development, based on the Head Start Framework (following page). All three can be done in a limited space. They will be demonstrated with participant volunteers as time allows.

1. Tambourine Game (Early Learning Standards 1B 15B, 25A)*

Children learn to recognize movement cues associated with the tambourine sounds and rhythms, and perform the corresponding motor skill. Appropriate for a small or large space. If the space is small or obstructed, have the children perform the skills in place. If you have a large, open area, the children can move together in the space, but remind them often of their bubbles of personal space, and use the stop cue whenever needed (for this activity, the stop cue will be one sharp tap on the tambourine).

Basic Movement Elements Explored: Large Motor Skills, Moving to Rhythms

Music used: Tambourine

2. Found Objects (Early Learning Standards 1C, 10C, 11B)*

Children improvise movements based on different everyday objects, and learn to recognize how different objects have specific characteristics that elicit movement ideas. This activity can be performed with children staying within a personal space, or while moving together in the shared space.

Basic Movement Elements Explored: Listening to and Following Movement Instructions, Control of Energy, Control of Speed

Music used: Carl Orff, *Schulwerk*

3. The Snowy Day Story Dance (based on the book *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats) (Early Learning Standards 4C, 12A, 16B)*

Children will hear the story read aloud, and then move in the shared space, taking cues from the instructor. Movement ideas will be inspired by images in the story. Music and props will be incorporated throughout the story dance.

This activity can be performed with the children each in a personal space, or moving throughout the shared space if the room is large enough. If needed, divide the group so that there is one group participating in the activity, and one or more groups as the audience. Option: Build on the story for a few minutes each day, culminating in an informal performance.

Sections of the story dance:

1. Wake up on a snowy morning: Yawn, rub eyes, stretch different parts of the body while, sitting, then while standing
2. Put on snowsuit, boots, mittens
3. Walk through the snow: Walk, trudge, stomp, tiptoe, point toes in, point toes out, create walking patterns in the snow
4. Play in the snow: Roll snowballs, melt like a snowman, make snow angels, make your body into snowflake shapes, jump over a snow bank, twirl like the swirling snow, ice skate.
5. Create your own movements: Children dance freely, using any of the above ideas, or anything else from the book. Optional props for this section: netting snowflakes, sparkly fabric streamers. Conclusion of activity: Make your body into a snowflake shape to end the dance.

Music used: Matthew Smith, *On the Day You Were Born* (Sections 1-4); Respighi, *Ancient Airs and Dances* (Section 5, *free dance*).

*Early Childhood Learning Standards, Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.
List of cited standards on last page of this handout

III. CONCLUSION

Questions, Discussion

Concluding Activity

Early Childhood Learning Standards Addressed in MOVING MATTERS Workshop Activities

The standards cited in the activities are based on:
Head Start Child Outcomes Framework
**Early Childhood Learning Standards: Domains, Domain
Elements, and Indicators** (Released in 2000, updated in 2003)

1. TAMBOURINE GAME

Domain: Language Development, Element: Listening and Understanding. Indicator: 1B, Shows progress in understanding and following simple and multiple-step directions

Domain: Creative Arts, Element: Movement. Indicator: 15B, Shows growth in moving in time to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music

Domain: Physical Health & Development, Element: Gross Motor Skills, Indicator: 25A. Shows increasing levels of proficiency, control, and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping

2. FOUND OBJECTS

Domain: Language Development, Element: Listening and Understanding, Indicator: 1C, Understands an increasingly complex vocabulary

Domain: Mathematics, Element: Patterns and Measurement, Indicator: 10C, Begins to make comparisons between several objects based on a single attribute

Domain: Science: Element: Scientific Skills and Methods, Indicator: 11B, Develops increased ability to observe and discuss common properties, differences, and comparisons among objects and materials

3. THE SNOWY DAY

Domain: Literacy, Element: Book Knowledge and Appreciation, Indicator: 4C, Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play, and to predict what will happen next in a story

Domain: Science, Element: Scientific Knowledge, Indicator 12A: Expands knowledge of and abilities to observe, describe, and discuss the natural world, materials, living things, and natural processes

Domain: Creative Arts, Element, Dramatic Play, Indicator: 16B: Shows growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations

