Physical Activity

> *"Physical activity enables young children to feel at home in their bodies; developing bodily control may lead to greater emotional control".*
>
> *(Melanie Peter)* 11

Dance Yourself Dizzy – Making Up Dances with Children.

This is how we prepare for dance:

1. Observe children to identify strengths and next steps. This helps to focus movement for dance, considering:

- Body awareness; different parts of body and shapes.
- Basic actions; travelling, jumping, turning, being still, gesturing.
- Use of space; high, low, around, directions.
- Dynamic qualities; speed, strength, pathway energy, start, stop.
- Relationships; joining movement together, repetition.

2. Then we choose the theme of the dance and the music. A CD of Classics or 'chillling out' music is really useful (Classic FM). We also try to think of props or toys that support the theme. Linking to stories and story sacks can really help.

3. This is how we put our plans together into a dance:

- Experience the theme; play through, visit, observe, touch etc...
- Warm up and revisit; re-introduce props and theme.
- Experiment with movements – crucial that you join in.
- Join movements together.
- Cool down and reflect.
- Revisit and rehearse; Make opportunities for independent use of music and props. Set up a role play dance studio. Set some space aside.

We always join in with the children and use their ideas, giving them freedom to explore their own body movements as much as they can.

Digger Dance

A really successful dance which we all enjoyed was based on the movements of a digger. We wanted the children to be more aware of direction, by moving in a stiff way, arms outwards and hands curved like a digger scoop. This helped the children to focus more acutely on the direction they might be moving in. Fortunately there was a building site near by, where we could watch these huge machines in action together. Back at the setting we played with diggers etc... in the sand pits. Eventually we used them again to introduce our dance, where movements and pathways combined to work together on our imaginary building site.

Did you know...

If children are asked to write before their hand muscles are strong enough for comfortable manipulation of a pencil, this could cause pain.

Leicestershire County Council

Role Play Ideas:

- Emergency services
- Rescue centre
- Gingerbread man's trail
- Bear hunt trail
- Rabbit warren
- Duke of York's castle
- Jack & Jill's hill
- Performing circus
- Lighthouse
- Hot Air balloon
- Humpty Dumpty's wall
- Dance Studio
- Jewellers' shop
- Jungle
- Dinosaur land
- Fitness Gym
- DIY shop
- Toy factory
- Fairy Castle
- Pizza delivery
- Drive through
- Olympic Stadium
- Seaside
- Ball pool/Leisure centre
- Pop Stage
- Hairdressers'
- Old McDonald's farm
- 3 Billy Goats' bridge

Resource links:

Beaumanor hall (Outdoor Learning Projects, 'Itchy Bear' etc...) tel: 01509 890 119 (Jan Bunker)

Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre, tel: 01509-621579 Email: BLofthouse@leics.gov.uk

Toy libraries: contact: Children's Information Service, tel: 0116 265 6545 Email: childcare@leics.gov.uk

> *"It is actually painful for (young children) to be still for long periods. Teaching methods should allow children to move freely and imaginatively as well as to control and refine physical skills."*
>
> *(QCA, 2002)* 2

Large Scale Play

To add a physical aspect to role play use the climbing frame. Think large scale, outdoors and combine small world and imaginative play together. For example turn the climbing frame into a tractor, place next to the small world farm, and add dressing up gear, large stuffed animals, even a farm house? Mobile phone, note book pencils, maps and information books about animals and farming etc..., seed packets, gardening tools, tough spot with compost and place the whole lot outside. This gives opportunity for fine and gross motor skills to develop, outside in a multi-sensory environment.

Follow-My-Leader

Everywhere! Out or in! Whatever equipment – big or small – it really gets children moving and thinking in new ways.

Planting Seeds

This is great for fine motor skills. The more able the child, the finer the seed used!

At the Track

Set up an obstacle course for vehicles – ramps, chicanes, rumble strips and a tough spot puddle. If traffic is two-way then the rescue services from the role play den may well be needed!

Mini Beasts

Finding and handling delicate creatures is a fantastic way to use fine motor skills.

Funky Footprints (Early Learning Centre)

This is one of the best things we've ever bought! We put it in the most unexpected places and the children have used it to move on hands, feet, bottoms, elbows, toes and not to mention wriggling!

Cutting Edge

We have a large storage box of packaging; children can cut all types of paper, foil, different types of fabric, wool, cardboard and plastic. We also have a range of scissors: ordinary, pinking shears, wavy/patterned blades etc... We present the two together so children can just snip-snip-snip as much as they want. It really helps to develop their skills for when they want to cut something special.

Funky Foam

Use this light weight craft foam for threading activities. If you cut shapes and pierce holes, rather than just threading or lacing, children can actually sew something together, which can be kept.

Cake Decorating

Fine motor skills can be used to delicately place 'Smarties', chocolate buttons, angelica, raisins etc... on cakes or biscuits. However, add an icing bag and nozzles or icing pens and it's a new challenge!

Pen Pals (Cambridge University Press)

We must take care not to focus fine motor skills on writing as not all the children are even at the stage of having a dominant hand. Our mentor teacher showed us 'Pen Pals' which we bought and is brilliant. It really shows you how to develop gross motor skills, before fine motor skills are ready.

Top Start (Sport Youth Trust)

We asked our mentor teacher to give us a 'TopStart' training session. This is a great way to use P.E. equipment and think up games for small children. Our mentor teacher showed us some ideas on 'Top Start' (2) cards and now we've got the hang of it.

> *"We all have our preferred movement starting points and natural tempos!"*
>
> *(Melanie Peter)* 11

Creepy Crawlies

We went on a meaningful movement workshop put on by Foundation Stage Team. (Elaine Cowley) It has completely reshaped our thinking about physical development and the use of space in our setting. One of our favourite activities is using a long piece of Lycra-type material that the children and adults hold down. Children (and adults) take it in turns to crawl underneath the cloth to reach the other side. Not only is it a great movement activity but good for trust building and confidence.