

## Imagination in Motion: Using Young Children's Creativity to Guide Active Play

### ***Activity #1: I'm so Glad You Came***

**PURPOSE:** Fun way to generate a sense of playfulness while allowing children to work on their listening and responding skills

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** No equipment needed. Students scattered in personal space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Recite the poem, filling in the blank with any type of movement you desire. Have the kids count with you as they do the designated movement. When you get to eight – they should freeze in whatever position they are in and hold that position until the poem is read again with a new movement.

*I'm so glad you came, I almost couldn't wait. Can you \_\_\_\_\_ as we count to eight? 1, 2 ... 7, 8*

### ***Activity #2: Hey Every Body, Let's Make a Shape***

**PURPOSE:** Use body in creative ways to communicate various shapes, while working on muscular strength and balance

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** No equipment needed. Students scattered in personal space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** This is a call back type game. Teacher begins by saying: Hey Every Body, Let's Make a Shape. The students respond by saying: Shape, Shape, what Shape? The teacher then says, Square, 2 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – as students create the shape with their bodies.

**EXTENSION:** Add descriptors to the shape such as big, small, high, low, wide, narrow etc.; see if they can work with a partner to use both of their bodies to make the shape; allow a child to play the role of the teacher

### ***Activity #3: Jumping Jack Freeze***

**PURPOSE:** Use body in creative way to communicate animals, objects or story characters, while working on static balance and muscular strength.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Hand drum. Students scattered in personal space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** The leader calls out the name of an animal, object, or story character, then beats the drum three times. On the third beat everyone must freeze in whatever shape was called out (i.e., giraffe, bear, toothbrush, chair, Buzz Lightyear).

### ***Activity #4: Emotional Movements***

**PURPOSE:** Move through space communicating various feelings and emotions without words.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Word signs that have the various emotions on them. Students are scattered in personal space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Teacher identifies a locomotor movement and an emotion. Students then use that movement to communicate that emotion without using any sounds or words.

**EXTENSION:** Play a guessing game where the teacher tells only a few students the movement and emotion. These student then do the movement and emotion as the rest of the students try to guess the emotion and name the movement.

### ***Activity #5: Home Dance/Playground Dance***

**PURPOSE:** Use movement as a tool to communicate chores that are done around the home; exploring movement patterns and sequences

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** No equipment required, but could use paper to list the names of the chores

**HOW TO PLAY:** Begin by brainstorming a list of chores that children do at home. Try to get them to come up with chores that require a variety of different types of movements. Create a movement to go along with each of the chores. Choose two of the chores and create an AB movement pattern. Choose four chores and create a sequence of movements doing each chore for four counts.

**EXTENSIONS:** Create various other patterns; use a hand drum or tambourine to add the concept of tempo or rhythm; instead of the home dance do the sports dance, or playground dance using movements that are done in these environments.

### ***Activity #6: Shape Shifting***

**PURPOSE:** Static and dynamic balance, while using body as a creative communication tool

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Cards that have two animals on them – picture and name. Try to make the combinations very different – small and large, fast and slow – for example a snake and giraffe, a butterfly and cow, a cheetah and mouse.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Begin by showing the entire class one card. Students begin acting out the first animal. When the teacher says shift, they transform themselves into the second animal.

**EXTENSIONS:** Give three or four students one card, they do the activity and when they have done both movements (i.e., shifted) the rest of the class attempts to guess the two animals.

### ***Activity #7: Yes Game***

**PURPOSE:** Verbal communication and creative movement

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** No equipment needed

**HOW TO PLAY:** Begin with the teacher making an offer, “Let’s shake hands.” The group yells, “yes!”. Everyone then moves around and shakes hands until the teacher says something new, such as “Let’s fly”

– everyone yells “yes!”, and they all pretend to fly. After a few teacher-led rounds the teacher can ask a student to make an offer of a different movement and the game continues.

### ***Activity #8: Secret Movement Bag***

**PURPOSE:** Identify objects and use the body to act out these objects, while working on body and space awareness.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** A set of pictures of objects that are found around school or the home that move either when turned on or when someone uses them (i.e., blender, washing machine, scissors, eraser, crayon, tweezers). Place the pictures in a pillow case or other type of bag.

**HOW TO PLAY:** There are many ways to organize this activity. It can be a full class activity where the students take turns pulling out a card and everyone acts it out, or a student acts it out alone for the class to guess.

### ***Activity #9: Moving with my Monkey***

**PURPOSE:** Explore moving body parts and entire body through space using different forces, speeds, and relationships.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Sock puppet monkey

**HOW TO PLAY:** No rules for this activity. Each child with a puppet responds to the teachers challenge. Can you move your monkey really fast, really slow, really high, really low; can you move your monkey zig zag, straight and curvy; can you move your monkey over, under, around, through; can you move your monkey by running, skipping, hopping, or leaping ... etc... get creative with the movement challenges.

### ***Activity #10: The Great Alphabet Hunt*** (Adapted from Clements & Schneider, 2006.)

**PURPOSE:** Enhance balance, strength, and stability while exploring imaginative movement and the alphabet

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Create a binder book of the ABC’s. Each page has the letter and a picture of something that starts with that letter. Students are scattered in front of the teacher.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Teacher reads and shows the book as she/he describes a journey of moving through the alphabet. Each picture can have its own little story that provides opportunities for a variety of movements. For example A is for apple, can you stand on your tip toes and reach for the highest apple on the tree, can you throw the apple as far as you can, can you pretend to be the apple, now you are the apple rolling down a hill, now you are applesauce.

### ***Activity #11: Magical Zoo***

**PURPOSE:** Exploring personal and general space, enhancing static and dynamic balance, while 'becoming' animals in a zoo.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Task cards of different zoo animals, placed on cones that are spread out around the playing space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Begin with a conversation about going to the zoo, letting children share their favorite animals. Next introduce the idea of a magical zoo... each time you look at an animal, poof, you become that animal, and can only move and sound like that animal, until you get to and see another animal. Let them explore and move through the zoo. *Variations include ...* ask students to hold the shape of the animal before moving on through space, ask them to travel in different levels or pathways, use music of varying speeds and ask them to move like the speed, pair students up and ask them to work together to become one of the animals using both of their bodies, have one student secretly choose an animal and move like it while a friend guesses...

***Activity # 12: If I were a \_\_\_\_\_, I would move like this \_\_\_\_\_!***

**PURPOSE:** Use imagination and problem solving to turn body into something.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** None

**HOW TO PLAY:** Get creative and fill in the blank (i.e., a deflated balloon being blown up, an eraser being used to erase, a soccer ball in a game). Children act out the phrase

### ***Activity #13: What's on My Feet***

**PURPOSE:** Explore personal and general space, while interpreting the journey in the book

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Story and pictures – students are scattered in their own personal space (To get the story contact Kristi Mally at [mally.kris@uwlax.edu](mailto:mally.kris@uwlax.edu))

**HOW TO PLAY:** Read the story and hold up the matching shoe for each part of the journey. Students listen and then interpret the journey through their motions.

### ***Activity #14: Indoor Nature Journey***

**PURPOSE:** Bring nature indoors, while children explore the many movements associated with being outdoors in nature.

**EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION:** Task signs with different outdoor objects, places on them (i.e., floating/falling leaves, rolling stones, fluttering butterfly, leaping frogs, blowing wind, bubbling brook). Spread the task signs scattered throughout the playing space.

**HOW TO PLAY:** Students travel along the indoor nature trail as they perform the motions associated with the task signs.