

Mixing Things Up: Building a Movement Foundation through Repetition & Variety

A. LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENTS

Activity #1: See it ~ Say it ~ Spell it ~ Do it

PURPOSE: Make a connection between the locomotor vocabulary and the action

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Each locomotor movement is written on a piece of poster board

HOW TO PLAY: Students are shown the word as the teacher reads the word. Next students say the word and then spell the word out loud (could add asking the children to put their bodies into the shapes of the letters of the word). Next students do the motion with the teacher modeling, as they say the motion to a steady tempo that also guides the tempo of their movements. It really helps if the teacher uses a hand drum or shaker to provide auditory stimuli for the desired tempo of the motion.

Activity #2: Recycle Locomotion

PURPOSE: Repetition of any of the locomotor skills. This game also works on matching colors.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Roll up sheets of construction paper – about 20 of 4 different colors. Four buckets – each colored to match one of the four colors used to make the construction paper rolls. Place one bucket in each corner, and scatter the paper rolls all over the space in the middle.

HOW TO PLAY: Students use a locomotor movement to sort the paper into the correct bucket.

Activity #3: Locomotion Scavenger Hunt

PURPOSE: Connect the word with the motion while practicing the locomotor movements; also a way to work on matching colors.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: A variety of colors of cones or poly spots (I like to use red, blue, green, yellow, orange, purple). Each cone/spot has a strip of construction paper – the color can be anyone of the colors that you are using for the cones, it should not match the cone color it is under. Each strip of construction paper has a locomotor movement written on it. This is a great activity to set up outside, using a lot of open space.

HOW TO PLAY: With the teacher, the children begin all together at one cone. One child picks up the cone and looks at the paper under the cone. Together the children identify the color as the teacher helps them read the locomotor movement. Together they find a cone that matches the color on the paper and move to it using the locomotor movement that was on the card. When they arrive at the new cone they read the new slip of paper and continue moving through the scavenger hunt.

Activity #4: Movement Maps (Locomotion + Balance)

PURPOSE: Identification of letters, colors and/or shapes, repetition of locomotor movements, opportunity to work on static balances in various positions.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Letters of the alphabet around the outside of the play space; or task cards that have a shape and a color. Movement maps – slips of paper that have 2-3 letters written on them or 2-3 shapes/colors, indicating the letters or the shapes/colors that the child will visit when moving around the space.

HOW TO PLAY: Begin with the teacher showing one movement map and having the children identify what is on the map. Next students find the matching items around the room. Lastly children use one locomotor movement to travel to that item. When they get to that item, they can either go directly to the next item or they can perform a balance activity before moving on. Continue practicing the locomotor movements as the children travel to the items found on their map.

Activity #5: Let your _____ Take you for a _____

PURPOSE: Identification of body parts and relationship awareness, while practicing the locomotor movements throughout general space

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: big dice, body part cards labeled with numbers from the dice (i.e., 1 = elbow; 2 = shoulder; 3 = knee; 4 = head; 5 = hand; 6 = foot)

HOW TO PLAY: Begin with an active story where the child pretends to take their dog for a walk. Then pretend that their dog is really excited to go for a walk and therefore begins taking the child for a walk. Next pretend that the dog does not want to go for a walk so the child has to work really hard, pretending to pull. Say goodbye to the dog and introduce the idea of letting different body parts take them for a walk. Roll the dice, identify the body part, and then have the children walk with that part of the body leading. Continue changing body parts and changing locomotor movements.

EXTENSION: This game can also allow children to work on moving in pathways, levels, and different speeds.

B. NON-LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENTS & BALANCE

Activity #6: I can do this – Can you?

PURPOSE: Listening and responding skills. Awareness of what body can do while remaining in personal space.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: No equipment needed. Students scattered in any organization with teacher. Can be played in any size of space.

HOW TO PLAY: Teacher says a movement skill and then does it, saying I can this, can you? The students then repeat the movement the teacher demonstrated.

Activity #7: Hold it – Mold it – Shape it – Make it

PURPOSE: Putting body into interesting shapes that foster body awareness, along with strength, stability and balance.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Cut outs of a variety of different shapes – geometric and abstract.

HOW TO PLAY: Hold up a shape and ask the children to put their body into that shape. Change the plane the shape is held in and ask the children to make the shape in this new plane. Continue by showing different shapes. Once they get the hang of this, spread the shapes out around the space and encourage the children to explore the shapes.

EXTENSION: Put two shapes side by side, connected, and see if they children can work with a friend to build the new bigger shape.

Activity #8: Statues

PURPOSE: Body control in static positions, while working on relationship awareness with a friend.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: No equipment needed.

HOW TO PLAY: One student makes a shape with their body and holds it still. Help them figure out how to create shapes and poses with their body that they can hold without wiggling or falling over. The rest of the class attempts to make the same shape.

C. OBJECT CONTROL – MANIPULATIVE MOVEMENT

Activity #9: Newspaper Throwing Fun

PURPOSE: Repetition of overhand throwing, while also working a bit on fine motor control in the hand and whole body strength.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Newspapers and bins that can be used to collect the ‘garbage’ when you are finished.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Rip – Crunch – Throw – Go
 - Each child has their own sheet of newspaper...rip strips of paper, crunch each strip into a ball, throw that ball as far as they can, chase that ball to retrieve it
2. Newspaper Javelins
 - Roll up strips of paper and throw them across the space
3. Shooting Stars
 - Make a crunched up newspaper ball, attach strips of newspaper to one end of the ball so it looks like a tail ... or a shooting star
4. Pick Up Trucks ~ this is played after the area is full of paper balls and it is time to pick up
 - Children crab walk around the space as if they are a pick up truck (their tummy is the bed of the truck). When they get to a paper ball, they pick up the ball and put it on their

tummy (in the truck). After collecting a few paper balls they take them to the dumpster. By the way it is always OK for their dump truck to get a flat tire and to scoot on their bottom 😊.

Activity #10: Clean up the Farmer's Field

PURPOSE: Repetition of underhand tossing while exploring the concept of force.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Make a mess in the middle of the playing space – spread out stuff, anything that can become a target. I like to use hoops, spots, boxes, towels, etc. Each child needs a spot around the outside of the playing space (good idea to mark this with something so they know where they are supposed to go back to), and a bean bag or yarn ball.

HOW TO PLAY: The goal of the game is to underhand toss the bean bag out into the mess so it lands on a piece of 'junk.' If it lands on an object, the child gets to go retrieve the item and their bean bag. If they miss they just go get their bean bag. The game continues as the children are figuring out how to change their tossing form to hit targets that are near and those that are far.

Activity #11: Recycling Colors

PURPOSE: Matching colors while working on throwing – either over or underhand

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: This game requires that you have matching colors between ... objects to throw and spots to throw from. The game starts with a huge target in the middle of the playing area – bunch of boxes or laundry baskets all connected together, sheets or towels – the key is to make the target visible and large so children are successful. Spread out spots that match the colors of the objects you are throwing throughout the playing space at different distances from the center target. Lastly collect as many 'balls' as I can find that are the same colors of the poly spots. (i.e., if I use red, blue, yellow and green poly spots I make sure to have red, blue, yellow and green objects to throw).

HOW TO PLAY: The goal of the game is to clean up and recycle all of the balls. The children find a ball, identify its color, find a matching color on the floor, and throw at the big center target from that matching color. Extra Fun Idea: Put a child at the target whose job is to throw the balls back out into the playing space.

Activity #12: Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes (Volleying)

PURPOSE: Tracking an object through space, hand-eye coordination, body part recognition, and body awareness. Could also use this to work on force.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Every child needs a balloon and his/her own space. For safety purposes, place the balloons inside pantyhose and tie them closed.

HOW TO PLAY: Begin by singing and doing the song head, shoulders, knees and toes. Then introduce the balloons and explore hitting it hard, soft, up, down, forward, backwards etc. Next challenge them to

hit it up trying to keep it from hitting the floor. Now combine the song and the volleying ... first they hit it up trying to touch their head in between each hit. Once they are comfortable with this see if they can hit it then touch their head, hit it then touch their shoulders. Progressively add on until they are ... hit, touch head, hit, touch shoulders, hit, touch knee, hit, touch toes. They will struggle with this but it is usually a lot of fun and generates a lot of laughing while they work on very important perceptual skills. Added fun = change the body parts but keep the tune of the song.

Activity #13: The Great Exchange

PURPOSE: Repetition of self toss/catching skills, while exploring using a variety of different sizes, textures, shapes, and weights of objects.

EQUIPMENT & ORGANIZATION: Depending on number of children, I collect a variety of different items that can be self tossed and caught. It is best to find items that are really different from each other. Collect 2-4 of each item and place like-items in a hoop or box, and spread the hoops/boxes around the perimeter of the playing space.

HOW TO PLAY: Children choose any item and begin self tossing and catching in their own personal space. On signal students are asked to take their item to its home, and exchange it for a different item to self toss and catch. The value of this activity is that they get to really explore the movements associated with self toss and catch for a variety of types of objects.

EXTENDING CHALLENGES: If the children are ready and if the items you are using have high floatability you can add some fun challenges: clap before catching, jump to catch, touch your tummy before catching, spin a circle, look away...they can be pretty creative with coming up with challenges.