

JUMPING BEINGS  
MOTOR SKILLS AND FITNESS PROGRAMS FOR  
CHILDREN



Presents

MOVEMENT WITH MEANING  
WORKSHOP  
Carers Booklet



Active children for life

Mob:0411200427

[jumping\\_beings@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jumping_beings@yahoo.com.au)

### **Why movement programs?**

- In the past, free play was a major part of children's daily life. It was natural to crawl, jump, hop, run, throw, etc. Today, some children are not spending as much time engaged in physical activity as children in previous generations. Even young children are spending a lot of time being inactive by watching T.V., or playing computer games. Children are driven to school and shops rather than walking. Children do not play around the neighbourhood anymore because of safety. Children are starting structured education at a younger age, spending many hours in a classroom where it is not possible for them to run, jump and move freely.
- A diet rich in sugar and carbohydrates and a more sedentary lifestyle is producing a new generation of overweighted children. There is a greater variety of junk food available and advertised directly to children.
- Television, magazines, movies, the internet create the image of the 'perfect' body. Children are frequently bombarded by these stereotypes and from early age they are learning to feel bad about their bodies.
- Children are suffering chronic diseases (like hypertension and diabetes) that in the past were related mainly to adults. For the first time in human history this generation will die at a younger age than the previous generation.

### **Consequences of our way of living**

- Consequently, our present generation has a low performance on fundamental movement skills. Children are reaching school age, clumsy and uncoordinated. It impacts school performance where fine and gross motor skills are required.
- Children as young as nine are deciding that sport is not an activity that suits them, and many more teenagers are doing the same so chances are high that physical activity will not be part of their adult's life.
- Low motor performance and lack of exercise has a negative impact on children's health and well-being. Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to have health problems like chronic diseases.
- It affects children's self esteem and self image. Eating disorders and stress are becoming part of our society.
- Obesity and chronic diseases are reaching a harmful point not only for individuals but for society at large. The nation's economy feels the effects of our way of living. Lost of productivity, disability, premature death, and strain on health-care resources. The burden of illness, disability, and death is caused by too many people eating too much and moving too little over their lifetimes.

### **The value of movement**

- Movement is one of the most important aspects of a young child's life. During movement activities, children use multiple sensory modalities (visual, tactile, kinaesthetic etc), thus creating new neural connections across the pathways in the brain. These connections will shape the brain and all future learning.
- A learning environment enriched with movement experiences can lead to a healthier long term motor, cognitive, emotional and social development. Exercise helps children to:
  - Develop communication skills and social interaction (such as sharing, taking turns, cooperating and learning about winning and losing).
  - Develop physical skills such as balance, posture, coordination
  - Get a sense of belonging as they do things with other children.
  - Relief stress and burn out extra energy, consequently helping with behaviour.
  - Keep a healthy weight and make children fit and strong.
  - Have a more positive body image. It helps children feel that their bodies are capable and competent.

- Movement programs help to prevent sedentary life and an unbalanced diet. Thus, rising a healthier generation that will be a valuable asset to the community.

### **Motor Skills Programs Appropriate practices**

When planning and implementing motor skill programs for children bear in mind that:

1. Children create their own meaning for their educational experiences.
2. Children's learning is the focus of child-focused teaching.
3. Content is organised around big, general ideas and viewed as flexible and adaptable.
4. Content is relevant to the children.
5. The children are seen as a community of learners
6. Diversity enhances the potential for children's shared learning.
7. Children have an important role in assessing their own learning.
8. Teachers are guides and facilitators.
9. Teachers learn from children as children learn from teachers.
10. Young children learn through interaction with their environment.
11. Young children learn and develop in an integrated fashion.
12. Planned movement experiences enhance play experiences.

## **1. SKILLS OF MOVEMENT**

### **1A. Locomotor Skills (basic travels)**

Skill using the feet that moves you from one place to another.

- **WALK:** A form of locomotion in which the body weight is transferred alternately from the ball (toe) of one foot to the heel of the other. At times one foot is on the ground and during a brief phase both feet are on the ground. There is no time when both feet are off the ground.
- **RUN:** A form of locomotion much like the walk except that the tempo and body lean may differ. Moving at a rapid pace with springing steps so that, for an instant during each step, both feet are off the ground. There is no time when both feet are on the ground simultaneously.
- **LEAP:** An exaggerated running step. There is a transfer of weight from one foot to the other and a phase when neither foot is in contact with the ground.
- **JUMP:** A form of locomotion in which the body weight is projected from one or two feet and lands on two feet. Basic forms: for height, from height, distance, continuous, and rebounding.
- **HOP:** springing lightly upward on one foot, taking off with ankle extension and landing lightly on the ball of the same foot.
- **SKIP:** A locomotor skill which combines a hop and a step (walk or run). The rhythm is uneven.
- **GALLOP:** A form of locomotion which is a combination of an open step by the leading foot and a closed step by the trailing foot. The same foot leads throughout. The rhythm is uneven.
- **SLIDE:** The same thing as the gallop except that the direction of travel is sideways instead of forward. The rhythm is uneven.
- **DODGE:** To move quickly to evade or mislead an opponent, or to avoid being hit by the ball or other object.

## **1B. Balance Skills (weight transfer)**

### **Dynamic balance**

It is the ability to control and maintain the body's position as it moves through space.

### **Stationary balance**

Movement that does not involve locomotion but still provides weight transfer from a part of the body to another.

### **STANDING (Posture)**

Assuming an upright position with the weight supported on the feet. Standing position should be erected but not stiff. When standing with the weight on one or the other foot, the body weight should be centred over both feet. Knees should be straight but relaxes and not in a locked position.

Children can exercise dynamic and stationary balance when moving in these different ways:

### **TWISTING AND TURNING**

Twisting is a rotation of the body or any part of the body while maintaining a stable base of support.

Turning is a partial or total rotation of the body and a shifting of the base of support

#### **Teaching Suggestions**

##### **(games, mimic, role play)**

- Maintain balance while twisting parts of the body
- Encourage performance of full turn of body
- Turning body a quarter, half or full turn to right, then to the left
- Turning body to music
- Turning to pantomime movements. e.g.: tops, doors, washing machine, etc.
- Let children experiment with all parts of the body to see how many different parts of the body as well as the number of combinations they can twist.
- Twist to pantomime movements, e.g.: trees and wind.

### **SWINGING AND SWAYING**

*Swinging* is a pendular movement with the axis of support above the moving parts.

*Swaying* is the same type of movement with the support below the moving parts.

#### **Teaching Suggestions**

##### **(Playful activities)**

- Increase flexibility to ensure swing or sway through the full range of movement.
- Encourage graceful and continuous movement.
- Swing arms forward and backward and side to side (repeat with legs)
- Sway arms overhead in frontward, backward and sideward directions
- Swing or sway various parts of body in pantomime. E.g.: Sway like a tree, windshield wiper, etc. Change tempo with each pantomime movement.

### **BENDING AND STRETCHING**

Bending is a flexing any or all parts of the body, whereas stretching is extending the same.

Both movements may be done in a relaxed or vigorous fashion and with even or uneven rhythm.

#### **Teaching suggestions:**

##### **(Use playful activities, games and role play)**

- Encourage pupils to bend or stretch to full range of movement.
- Bend and stretch different parts of body; e.g., arms, legs, trunk
- Imitate things that bend or stretch; e.g., tree, snake, dog, etc.
- Assume different sitting or lying positions and explore different bending and stretching movements.
- Bend one part of body (arms) while stretching the other (legs).
- Balance skills can also be practiced whilst curling, holding, lifting, pulling, pushing, stretching and in many more opportunities of movement.

# 1C. Manipulative Skills

Ability of the body to control objects

## Foot eye coordination

Kicking, dribbling with feet, collecting, trapping.  
Grouped, individual, partners, stationary, mobile

## Hand eye coordination

Throwing, catching, collecting with hands  
Striking with hands and volleying, spiking, punching, shaking  
Dribbling with hands, bouncing the ball.  
Striking with rackets and paddles, suspending, net games  
- Under-hand, over-hand, back-hand, fore-hand  
- Grouped, individual, partners (stationary, mobile: walking, running)

## 2. ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT

### 2A. BODY AWARENESS (How humans can move)

Being aware of body shape, parts of the body, and the support and transfer of own's body's weight.

#### How the Body Senses Itself

When you close your eyes, how do you know where your feet are? Your arms? Your hands? **Proprioception** is the internal sense that tells you where your body parts are without your having to look at them. This internal body awareness relies on receptors in your joints, muscles, ligaments, and connective tissue. They pick up information as muscles bend and stretch as well as when your body is still. The joints, muscles, and connective tissue in your buttocks, hips, and legs are compressed (pushed together) as you sit and read this. They are "distracted" (pulled apart) when you hang from a chin-up bar.

Information about body position travels through the spinal cord and into parts of the brain that are not conscious. Because of this, you are seldom aware of where your body parts are unless you actively think about them. As you read this book, your attention is focused on the concepts and information presented. You may be filtering out the sound of your children playing in the other room. Perhaps you're eating a snack. Whatever you are doing, you are probably not thinking about your body position. Yet you are not falling off your chair or the couch because sensory receptors are taking care of that for you.

For children to learn how their bodies can move they need to practice activities that involve:

#### Planes of movement

**Sagittal plane:** includes movement up/ down and forward/backward directions (bowling)

**Frontal plane:** includes side-to-side movements (tennis)

**Transverse plane:** includes rotational movements (hammer throwing-athletics-)

Sports and motor skills activities usually combine all three planes.

#### Shapes

The body can either move or remain still in various shapes.

- **Long** - body is stretched out and in an elongated position; e.g., like a pencil and thin
- **Wide** - body is stretched out and in all directions utilizing a bigger space; e.g., like a star, or elephant.
- **Round** - body is curled up with all extensions tucked in; e.g., like a ball, or seed
- **Twisted** - body is in a contorted shape with extensions wrapped or twisted around other body parts; e.g., like a pretzel, or double-jointed person, etc

### **Common Signs of Body Awareness Problems**

All children refine their body awareness as they mature. Compared to other children his age, does your child...

- Seem to move awkwardly or stiffly?
- Seem to be physically weaker than other children?
- Use too little or excessive force on things (for example, has trouble attaching clothing snaps, pop beads, and Lego, writes way too light or too dark with a pencil, breaks toys often)?
- Push, hit, bite, or bang into other children although he isn't an aggressive child?
- Avoid or crave – jumping, crashing, pushing, pulling, bouncing, and hanging?
- Chew on clothing or objects more than other children do?
- Always look at what he/she is doing (for example, he/she watches his/her feet when walking or running)?

## **2B. SPACE AWARENESS** (Where humans can move)

An important component in the early stages of skill development is spatial awareness. Space awareness is being aware of personal space and general space, directions, pathways, levels and planes. When you don't know where you are and where you're going, you can't move effectively. Additionally, a physically educated person exhibits responsible personal and social behaviour that respects self and others in physical activity settings. Consequently it is of major importance for children to practice space, body and movement awareness.

### **Self space or personal space**

Children need to learn that movement in personal space includes as far as they can reach around themselves, as high as they can reach above themselves, and as low as they can reach around themselves. Children also need to learn that personal space is "their space." It goes everywhere they go, whether they sit, stand, or sleep.

All movement should start in personal space. This is the easiest and safest area to begin to learn skills. Personal space is important when teaching children how to work on their own, without the interference or distraction of other people or objects. If a child can first toss, catch, bend, stretch, and move successfully in their personal space with objects (balls, bean bags, hoops, scarves, ropes) and without objects (miming, pretending, imagining), then they can progress to more difficult movements in general space.

### **General space**

It is the remainder of the space in a room (or outdoor location) that can be reached through a variety of movements. The boundaries of general space will change depending on the environment where the class is being taught. In the gymnasium, the four walls, floor, and ceiling define the physical boundaries of general space. If a class is held outside on the tennis court, the physical boundaries would comprise the four sides of the tennis fence, the pavement, and the sky.

Once children can function appropriately and safely in personal space, they can transfer the same concepts to movement in general space. Movement in general space is more difficult because the child must simultaneously move, control his or her body and perhaps an object (ball, beanbag, rope), and avoid collisions. If the movement begins slowly, and pace and proficiency is demonstrated, then the speed and difficulty of the movement can be increased. A child that can walk or crawl in personal space can begin to add other movement components involving direction (backward), level (low), and speed (fast) to enhance movement.

For children to learn where their bodies can move within their personal and general space they need to practice what follows:

### **Levels**

The body can move at various levels during any activity.

- Low - body is low to the ground; e.g., slithering or rolling.

- Medium - body is between low and high positions; e.g., crawling and creeping
- High - body is extended upward or even elevated; e.g., leaping, stretching, cartwheels.

### **Directions**

All movement can be done in different directions. Children need to be encouraged to vary these.

- Forward - moving ahead in the direction a person is facing
- Backward - moving in the direction behind a person (Care must be taken to watch where they're going.)
- Sideways - moving either right or left without turning in that direction.

### **Pathways**

The path that a person takes as they move from one place to another is the pathway. These could be either straight, curved, zigzag or a combination of the three.

## **2C. Movement Awareness (How the Body Handles Movement)**

### **(Vestibular System)**

The Vestibular System controls the sense of **movement and balance**. This system is considered to have the most important influence on the ability to function in everyday life. Directly or indirectly, the vestibular system influences nearly everything we do. It is the unifying system in our brain that modifies and coordinates information received from other systems. The vestibular system functions like a traffic cop, telling each sensation where and when it should go or stop.

For children to learn how their bodies can provide efficient movement (quality of movement) they need to practice what follows:

### **Time**

How fast or slow do you need to be according to the desired movement or sequence of movement? When the body is aware of when to stop or start a movement.

### **Force**

How much strength do you need to perform a specific movement? Strong/gentle/ Heavy/light

**Flow:** How smooth do you perform a sequence of movement (pulling a rope/ you need sharp, short movements or dancing ballet/gracious, flowing movement)

### **Common Signs of Movement Problems**

There's a wide variation in how much children like movement. Yes, some are happiest curled up for hours with a good book, while others go stir crazy if they sit around too long. To determine if there's a problem, ask yourself whether your child...

- Is constantly on the move (can't sit still, fidgets);
- Dislikes or craves activities that require his feet to leave the ground or challenge his balance.
- Seems to have a stiff head, neck, and shoulders – or always holds his head straight;
- Hesitates or is afraid of climbing or descending stairs and playground equipment;
- Seems overly fearful – or fearless – of movement, heights, or falling;
- Gets dizzy very easily – or never gets dizzy;
- Becomes easily carsick or falls asleep immediately in a car (or bus, boat, train, airplane).

### ***Teaching Suggestions for Body/Space/Movement Awareness:***

- Make straight/curved/zigzag pathways in the air using a hand/arm/foot/leg.
- Follow taped pathway on floor with different basic travels (hopping, jumping...)
- Follow flash cards of pathways.
- Travel through general space using specified (straight, curved, zigzag) pathway.
- Travel forward/backward/sideways using straight/curved/zigzag pathways (bouncing on big balls, running, with eyes closed, in scooters...)

- Copy a partner's pathway.
- Create pathways around obstacles.
- Create patterns using two pathways.
- Change pathways with or without changing speed of travel.
- Create patterns showing a change of speed/direction using straight/sideways, zigzag/curved pathways.
- Dribble the ball with hands/feet/hockey stick in a straight/curved/zigzag pathway
- Make different shapes with your body. Create group shapes.
- Mimic somebody's movement
- Follow different pathways looking throughout a mirror
- Experiment changing body position with slow, fast movements and smooth, sharp movement.
- Experience going fast and stopping suddenly.

**Important:** Every time you work one of the three basic skills of movement (Locomotor Skills, Balance Skills, Manipulative Skills) you are probably training one or more elements of movements (Space awareness, Body awareness, Movement awareness). These six sections are intimately connected and when you work in one of them you will impact on the others.

**Healthy children will become Healthy adults!**





# 1. Skills of Movement

## 1a. Locomotor Skills

(Basic Travels)

Walk, run, hop, skip, gallop, slide, dodge, leap, jump, slither, crawl...

*Using your feet to move from one place to another.*

## 1b. Balance Skills

(weight transfer)

*Dynamic and stationary*

Standing, twisting, turning, rolling, swinging, bending, stretching, pulling...

*Ability to control and maintain body's position as it moves through space.*

## 1c. Manipulative Skills

### **Hand/eye coordination**

Throwing, catching, striking, punching, shaking, dribbling, bouncing...

### **Foot/eye coordination**

Kicking, dribbling, pivoting, collecting, trapping

*Body's ability to control objects*

## 2. Elements of Movement

<p><b>2a. Body Awareness</b></p> <p><b>Planes of Movement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up/down</li> <li>▪ Forward/backward</li> <li>▪ Side to side</li> <li>▪ Rotational movements</li> </ul> <p><b>Shapes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long</li> <li>▪ Wide</li> <li>▪ Round</li> <li>▪ Twisted</li> </ul> <p><i>Being aware of body shape/parts and transfer of weight</i></p>	<p><b>2b. Space Awareness</b></p> <p><b>Personal Space</b> Space around me (my space)</p> <p><b>General Space</b> Space beyond me</p> <p><b>Levels</b> Low/Medium/High</p> <p><b>Directions</b> Forward/backwards/sideways</p> <p><b>Pathways</b> Straight/curved/zigzag</p> <p><i>Knowing where you are and where you are going.</i></p>	<p><b>2c. Movement Awareness</b></p> <p><b>Time</b> Fast/slow Start/stop</p> <p><b>Force</b> Strong/gentle Heavy/light</p> <p><b>Flow</b> Smooth/sharp (sequences)</p> <p><i>Being aware of how your body is performing movement.</i></p>
--	---	---

## PLANNING SHEET

### EXAMPLE

DATE: 04 June 2007

#### LESSON PLAN LAYOUT PROVIDED BY JUMPING BEINGS

GROUP: Peter, John, Alana, Joanna



#### SKILLS OF MOVEMENT

Locomotor Skills: hopping, leaping and jumping.

Manipulative skills: throwing and catching

#### ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT

Body/space/movement awareness

#### OBJECTIVES (Purpose of activity/ learning outcomes)

- To encourage creative movement.
- To practice various locomotor skills like hopping, running, jumping.
- To explore space awareness concepts like self space, general space, over and under.
- To work on body awareness concepts like forward and backward.
- To work on movement awareness concepts like stopping and starting movement to music.

#### ACTIVITY (Description of Idea)

##### Oodles of Noodles (Name of Activity)

Noodle activities and challenges: (The sky is the limit, use your noodle to come up with tons more!) Noodles are scattered on the floor as children enter the classroom or setting. Children move through classroom using various locomotor skills. Each time they approach a noodle they may:

- 1) jump over it
- 2) do a fancy jump over it (add a turn, tuck, etc.)
- 3) hop over it
- 4) leap over it
- 5) place the weight of the hands over it or any other weight transfer taught

Students move through the classroom using locomotor skills to the music. When the music stops they may:

- 1) freeze with a leg on each end of noodle
- 2) freeze making a bridge over it (feet on one side and hands on the other)
- 3) freeze posing as a funny statue using the noodle (i.e. a guitar player, baseball player or giant smiley face)

Students find their self space with a noodle and follow the teacher's lead. The teacher creates stories to go along with the activities and asks children to use their imagination. i.e. "We are going to travel around the school/town/world with our noodle..."

- 1) Moving through the jungle like an elephant." (Students make a trunk with the noodle.)
- 2) Moving like a dinosaur with a big tail."
- 3) Moving like a snake." (Students hold one end of the noodle and slide the other end along the floor.)
- 4) Moving like a unicorn." (Place the noodle on top of your forehead.)

Find a safe space and shoot your rocket into the air. Students hold one end of the noodle and toss it into the air attempting to catch the "falling star." March in a parade and fancy spin your noodle around the

body and neck and perform figure eights through the legs. Fly an airplane. Spin the noodle in front like a propeller. Fly a helicopter. Spin the noodle over the head. Pretend to be a motor boat. Spin the noodle behind the back. Circus stars -- Balance the noodle on your flat hand, finger and head (making the letter T). Move through the science lab with your magnet -- Wrap the noodle around the waist with the ends of the noodle to the front. Move to attract other noodles, touching ends. Ride your horse through the pasture -- Place the noodle through the legs and gallop. Ye ha! Put on your protective fire gear -- Use your hose to fight the fire! Use the noodles as tinkling poles. No pain! Be Creative!

Many of these ideas come from watching children play. Ask them if they have a cool trick or way to use the noodle. Let them share with the group and everyone try it!

Remember children's age & abilities will guide your variations!

## MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

- Open Space (free of hazardous corners or objects).
- One wacky noodle for each student or lots to make it colourful and fun!
- Music
- Your wonderful imagination

## VARIATIONS OR ADAPTATIONS (disability or other special need)

**Child with Autism**, Explain the whole routine at the beginning so John knows what to expect for during the session. Divide talking in small sentences. Keep voice tone low but show excitement. Show visual cues about the activities to be played during this session. Teacher to give lots of positive encouragement. Give help as needed.

Noodles are light, which helps with manipulation. If some children are finding some activities difficult by themselves try to pair up children (buddies) and work together. Be always positive and reassuring especially with the children that struggle or the ones that find it hard to join in. Offer your help or let them try by themselves, play by ear!

## COMMENTS

(things to be remembered about children's performance during this lesson)

- Peter showed great interest in the obstacle courses, he loses balance easily when landing with two feet; Teacher to plan work on more obstacle courses that involve balance and landing in the next couple of weeks.
- John participated more actively during this session. He enjoyed throwing and catching the noodle and he managed frustration really well, when he couldn't catch the noodle. (Thanks to 1:1 support).
- Alana is improving her manipulative skills; she could catch the noodle several times.
- Joanna worked really hard on stopping and starting movement. Teacher will plan more activities of this kind for her.

**LESSON PLAN LAYOUT  
PROVIDED BY JUMPING BEINGS**



DATE:

---

GROUP

---

SKILLS OF MOVEMENT

---

ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT

---

**OBJECTIVE(S) (Purpose of activity/learning outcomes)**

State your objective(s) with words like...

To explore/ To learn/ To practice/ To experience/ To encourage/ To work on/ To provide etc...

**ACTIVITY (Description of Idea)**

**(Name of Activity)** Explain activity step by step in the way you would explain in it to children/ Include rules.

**MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT**

Include also number of children required for the game/ location/ music if needed

**VARIATIONS OR ADAPTATIONS (disability or other special needs)**

Remember children's age & abilities will guide your variations!

**COMMENTS**

**(things to be remembered about children's performance during this lesson)**

This section will help you to remember what to plan for in the future. Check on children's strengths and needs

Early infancy		
1 - 2 months		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that the baby</i>
✓ Search for something to suck	✓ Cuddle and rock	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learn by... being held, touched and by moving around with you</b></p>
✓ Turns heads if something is blocking his breathing	✓ Give the baby a finger to hold	
✓ Arms and legs move but can't control them.	✓ Let baby feel things over skin (gentle massage)	
✓ Brings closed fists up to mouth	✓ Let the baby lie in different materials.	
✓ Can see adults face and follow with eyes.	✓ Let the baby enjoy and float in a warm water (supervised)	
✓ Lift heads from tummy position		
✓ Reacts at sounds	✓ Sing to baby (nursery rhymes)	
✓ Cries as a meaning of communication		

3 - 4 months		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that the baby</i>
✓ Moves both legs and arms when lying down on back.	✓ Let the baby move	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learn by... reaching, holding, touching, and tasting</b></p>
✓ May lift head and chest when placed on tummy and propped on forearms.	✓ Let the baby lie in the floor	
✓ Kicks more strongly	✓ Try lying in different positions: tummy, sides and on his back.	
✓ Good head control	✓ Look at the baby and talk to her/him.	
✓ Cries, whimpers and smile as a means of communication.	✓ Encourage the baby to use hearing to find things.	
	✓ Talk to baby about what are you going to do.	
	✓ Sing movement songs with baby.	



4 - 6 months		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that the baby</i>
✓ Reaches out with arms		<b>Learn by... moving arms, legs and body</b>
✓ Holds rattle and put it in mouth.	✓ Tie some small toys with short lengths of elastic hanging from baby's chair.	
✓ Roll over from side to back and from back to side.	✓ Give baby a lot of time in his /her tummy	
✓ Sits with support and holds head steady.	✓ Held touch , and move the baby	
✓ Able to raise head and hold it up while lying on tummy.	✓ Provide interesting things to look at (mirrors etc)	
✓ Brings feet to mouth when lying on back.	✓ Carry the baby in different s ways	
✓ Sits with some support.		
✓ Reaches out from a sitting position and grabs many objects.	✓ Put the baby in the floor with safe toys around him/her	
✓ Rolls over from both directions.	✓ Play pick a boo, encouraging him to roll	
✓ May move forward on tummy and push legs.	✓ Plays pushing and pulling games.	
✓ Transfer objects from one hand to the other.	✓ Give the baby different things to hold, with different textures	
✓ Looks towards the sounds.	✓ Sing to baby and dance whilst holding.	
✓ Follows your face with eyes.	✓ Encourage the baby to use eyes to find things.	

7 - 8 months		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forge the baby</i>
✓ Brings hands together to clap or bang things together	✓ Read pictures books	<b>Learn by... hearing, moving, looking, and listening</b> 
✓ Grabs for a toy with one hand.	✓ Ask baby simple questions and give short instructions.	
✓ Supports all weight on legs.	✓ Let him hop sitting on your legs (you sit on the floor)	
✓ Likes to bounce when held	✓ Give him support for him to bounce, provide different surfaces.	
✓ Sits with little support.	✓ Provide an interesting atmosphere	
✓ When sitting turns from side to side to reach for objects.	✓ Provide interesting objects to reach for. Sounds and colours. Talk and sing.	
✓ Moves around the floor in own way: creeps, crawls, and bottom shuffle.	✓ Provide an interesting and safe atmosphere for him to explore.	

<b>Late infancy</b>		
<b>8 - 11 months</b>		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget the baby</i>
✓ Open and close hands (let go of an object).	✓ Play to give and take objects from baby	<b>Learn by... touching, looking, and exploring the world</b>
✓ Brings objects close to face and mouth.	✓ Let the baby feed by himself.	
✓ Will throw objects.	✓ Paper balls/soft, small objects	
✓ Pick up small objects with finger and thumbs.	✓ Let him collect things in little boxes.	
✓ Sits alone.	✓ Rolling, crawling/chase him	
✓ Moves around, crawl.	✓ Plays more vigorous games.	
✓ May hold an object for a few minutes.	✓ Provide him with a saucepans and a wooden spoons to make music	
✓ Sits confidently.		
✓ May stands alone.	✓ Set furniture accordingly, allow cruising.	
✓ May walk holding on to the furniture.	✓ Let the baby explore (be aware of safety). Provide big boxes and tunnels.	
✓ May turn pages of a book.	✓ Read to baby, keep appropriated age books to his reach.	
✓ Like doing thing over and over.	✓ Allow time for exploration	

<b>12 Months</b>		
<i>What to expect from baby?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget the baby</i>
✓ May start walking but first steps are shaky with bumps and falls likely.	✓ Offer support and a safe environment. Offer different surfaces	<b>Learn by ... doing things by herself</b>
✓ Points with index finger	✓ Show pictures and read books, sing songs with hand movements	
✓ Hold two or three objects in one hand.	✓ Offer small objects to pick up, stack or throw	
✓ Turns containers and dump contents.	✓ Give the baby plastic containers with lid and things inside	
✓ May crouch to pick up a toy and carry it across the room.		
✓ May climb onto furniture.	✓ Offer safe places to climb/ make obstacle courses around the house.	

*\*\* Notes 0/12 months taken from "Move baby move"*

2 years		
<i>What to expect from child?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that children</i>
✓ Walks alone	✓ Provide different surfaces (non slippery) and gradient	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learn by... playing, repetition, looking at you,</b></p>
✓ Pulls toys behind her while walking	✓ Provide toys, home made objects that can be pulled and pushed.	
✓ Carries large toy or several toys while walking	✓ Provide buckets and containers	
✓ Begins to run	✓ Put comfortable shoes and bare feet (different surfaces)	
✓ Stands on tiptoe	✓ Dance and sing to music	
✓ Kicks a ball	✓ Soft balls, different sizes	
✓ Climbs onto and down from furniture unassisted	✓ Provide obstacle course with cushions, chairs, blankets, boxes, tunnels	
✓ Walks up and down stairs holding on to support	✓ Give assistance and do under supervision	

3 years		
<i>What to expect from child?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that children</i>
✓ Climbs well	✓ Provide safe climbing obstacles, parks.	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learn by... playing with others, repetition, games, role playing,</b></p>
✓ Walks up and down stairs, alternating feet	✓ Supervised	
✓ Kicks ball	✓ Use ball games	
✓ Runs easily	✓ Chasing games	
✓ Pedals tricycle	✓ Tricycles, little bikes	
✓ Bends over easily without falling	✓ Provide games that encourage body knowledge, stretching, twisting, jumping etc.	
✓ Enjoys playing with others	✓ Provide places where baby can meet new people, other children; parks, playgroups	

4 years		
<i>What to expect from child?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that children</i>
✓ Hops and stands on one foot up to five seconds	✓ Encourage games that involve hopping, jumping, balancing.	<p><b>Learn by...</b></p> <p><b>having fun,</b></p> <p><b>understanding</b></p> <p><b>simple rules,</b></p> <p><b>having friends,</b></p>
✓ Goes upstairs and downstairs without support	✓ Encourage climbing up and down safe obstacles	
✓ Kicks ball forward	✓ Provide balls of different sizes, encourage reception and kicking of ball	
✓ Throws ball overhand	✓ Provide games with small balls, balloons, light big balls	
✓ Catches bounced ball most of the time	✓ Provide games with bouncy balls.	
✓ Moves forward and backward with agility	✓ Provide backwards, forward, sideways, zigzag, curved movement (music and games)	
✓ Learning to play along others as a team	✓ Encourage non competitive team activities	

5 years		
<i>What to expect from child?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that children</i>
✓ Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer	✓ Offer the opportunity of more vigorous exercise	<p><b>Learn by...</b></p> <p><b>helping to create rules</b></p> <p><b>problem solving skills,</b></p> <p><b>Team work experiences,</b></p> <p><b>Having fun</b></p>
✓ Hops, somersaults	✓ Chalk or sticky tape pathways to run, jump, hop and many more ways to move around	
✓ Swings, climbs	✓ Offer more challenging obstacle courses, climbing on things, playgrounds	
✓ May be able to skip	✓ Teach more complex skills like skipping, galloping, leaping in fun ways!	
✓ Like more energetic games involving running, chasing, dodging. Enjoys role-playing,	✓ Encourage non competitive, non excluding games.	

6 years		
<i>What to expect from child?</i>	<i>What you can do?</i>	<i>Don't forget that children</i>
✓ runs lightly on toes	✓ Encourage high energy activities (running involved)	<p><b>Learn by...</b></p> <p><b>working on their interests</b></p> <p><b>Being positively encouraged</b></p> <p><b>Feeling good about themselves</b></p>
✓ walks on balance beam	✓ Work on stretching, balancing, twisting, pushing and pulling	
✓ can cover 2 meters hopping approx.	✓ Provide big spaces for games and running activities (fitness)	
✓ skips on alternate feet	✓ Provide activities with alternate feet	
✓ jumps rope	✓ Encourage jumping rope (group and individual)	
✓ skates	✓ Skates, bike, scooter	

School years
✓ School-age children, who are not going through the rapid, unsettling growth spurts of early childhood or adolescence, are quite skilled at controlling their bodies and are generally good at a wide variety of physical activities, although the ability varies according to the level of maturation and the physique of a child.
✓ Motor skills are mostly equal in boys and girls at this stage, except that boys have more forearm strength and girls have greater flexibility.
✓ Five-year-olds can skip, jump rope, catch a bounced ball, walk on their tiptoes, balance on one foot for over eight seconds, and engage in beginning acrobatics. Many can even ride a small two-wheel bicycle.
✓ Eight- and nine-year-olds typically can ride a bicycle, swim, roller skate, ice skate, jump rope, scale fences, use a saw, hammer, and garden tools, and play a variety of sports
✓ However, many of the sports prized by adults, often scaled down for play by children, requiring higher levels of distance judgment and hand-eye coordination, as well as quicker reaction times, which are reasonable for middle childhood. Games that are well suited to the motor skills of elementary school-age children include kick ball, dodge ball, and team relay races.
✓ In adolescence, children develop increasing coordination and motor ability. They also gain greater physical strength and prolonged endurance. Adolescents are able to develop better distance judgment and hand-eye coordination than their younger counterparts. With practice, they can master the skills necessary for adult sports.

# Teacher Made Equipment for Motor Skills Programs

## Index

- Introduction
- Sources of Materials
- Types of equipment
- Construction directions
- Diagram of various teacher-made equipment

---

### Introduction

Several factors exist that encourage physical education teachers to pursue ideas for non-commercial physical education equipment.

1. Budgetary allotment in the schools for a motor skills program is sometimes inadequate to meet the rising costs of commercial items.
2. The amount or quantity of equipment, when the desire is to have a sufficient amount of equipment to maximize the opportunity for each child to use when learning, the cost again can be prohibitive.
3. Special design equipment for specific needs or for innovative teaching methods, are not being manufactured or are expensive if found.
4. Insufficient variety of size, shape, weight, composition, etc., of equipment to provide appropriate sequential progression during instructional lessons are usually not available.

The teacher or carer begins to "seek" resources and ideas for custom designed equipment based on "needs." The desire to meet student developmental, or instructional/organizational needs, can encourage creativity in meeting those needs. "Need and necessity are the parents of adaptability and creativity."

### Sources and Design

The following ideas for resources and equipment are some solutions to "the needs" that teachers and carers have had for their programs.

- Sources for Obtaining Materials for Custom Designed Equipment

#### A. The School, CCC or FDC

1. The children: a good response from the children is always consistent. Lists of items needed could be sent home accompanying a description of learning experiences and explanation of their uses. The parents could have such items lying around the house or garage and be grateful to get rid of them. Some items which have been obtained in this method include: boxes, bags, string, old croquet sets, carpet pieces, plastic lids, plastic jugs, nylon stockings, coat hangers, newspaper, paint, beans, garden hose, ropes, old ball gloves, small wheels, etc.
2. Custodians: Let them know what you need and they will usually save and keep an eye out for useful materials: plastic bottles (different sizes), cardboard boxes, string, rope, bottle caps, paint, wood scraps, cardboard barrels, etc.
3. Lunchroom personnel: bags, boxes, milk cartons, ice cream carton cylinders, produce crates, cardboard tubes, tin cans, etc.

4. Visiting maintenance crews: (carpenters, plumbers, electricians) wood scraps, wire, paint, string, rope, plastic pipe, etc.

## **B. Area Businesses and Industries**

1. Grocery stores: past seasonal displays, string, bottle crates, discarded (damaged or bug infested) beans or seeds, cardboard boxes, paper bags, etc.
  2. Wood product manufacturing companies: wood scraps (plywood, studs, laths, etc.), sawdust, wood shaving, etc.
  3. Upholstery, foam factories, paper companies: foam rubber, cloth, paper strips, pillow polyester stuffing, cardboard, etc.
  4. Tire companies, gas stations: old tires, inner tubes, large clean oil drums, small gallon cans, etc.
  5. Wallpaper, cloth, paint, carpet, tile, and ice cream stores: discontinued samples, cardboard tubes, cardboard canister, etc.
  6. Marinas, docks, boat rentals, Navy yards, Coast Guard Stations: discarded old boat hulls, tow ropes, smaller hemp ropes, cargo nets, etc.
  7. Appliance and furniture stores: large cardboard boxes, bottom wood from appliance crates.
  8. Army surplus stores: (usually a minimal charge), parachutes, nylon straps, cargo nets, foot lockers, ropes, canvas, boot soles, etc.
  9. Factories (i.e. broom, ball, shoe, boot, packing, etc.): broom handles, shoe or boot soles, balls, round cardboard canisters, wide rubber conveyer belts, and seconds of inferior products, etc.
  10. Telephone and electric companies: telephone poles, cable spools, strapping, colourful wire, etc.
  11. Air Force Bases: parachutes, nylon cord, nylon strapping, etc.
  12. Warehouses: shipping crates, cardboard, wood pallets, etc.
  13. Church bazaars, garage and yard sales, flea markets: old sports and recreation equipment for a minimal fee, as well as, ladders, paint, ropes, etc.
  14. Construction contractors (plumbers, electricians, painters): leftover materials and supplies.
  15. Construction sites: plastic tubing, plastic sewer pipe, rope, wood scraps, nails, etc.
  16. Bowling Alleys: bowling pins, old trophies, balls.
  17. Racket and sports clubs: used tennis rackets, hand balls, golf balls, etc.
- Types and Sources of Custom Equipment and Some Uses
    1. Bowling pins - bowling alley; for targets and/or boundary marker.
    2. Burlap bags - feed, hardware, or farm supply stores; to carry equipment.
    3. Cans - various sizes - cafeterias, restaurants or homes; for targets or can stilts.
    4. Cardboard boxes - liquor or grocery stores; to stuff with paper for boxes to climb on and jump off.
    5. Carpet squares - carpet outlets or salesrooms; for a home base, bases in a game, active learning experiences.
    6. Coat hangers - dry cleaners and/or clothing stores; for making stocking rackets. Cones - construction, power or telephone companies; for markers and/or a batting tee.
    7. Foam rubber - car or boat seat manufacturer or any upholsterer; same as carpet squares and for making a soft landing place.

8. Inner tubes - truck, car, and bicycle - service stations, tire repair companies, and bicycle shops; for physical fitness (strength) development, bicycle size; to put under a mat or rug for a softer mat, kick, or crawl through, car or truck size.
  9. Plywood or lumber - large construction projects, lumber yards or cabinet makers; for making balance tilts, bounce boards, balance beams, targets, shelves for equipment storage and so on.
  10. Jugs, one-half gallon - factories, restaurants, schools or homes, for an object to throw and catch or kick and as a target or boundary marker.
  11. Spools - power or telephone companies; to climb on and jump off.
  12. Tires - truck, tractor, bus, car - service stations, tire repair and re-treating companies; to walk on, to step in, crawl through, climb on or jump over.
  13. Utility poles - power or telephone companies; for a large balance beam or making creative playground equipment.
  14. Culverts - utility companies or city, county public services commission; to climb over and/or crawl through.
  15. Balloons - from public relation or promotion department of companies; to blow up, hitting with stocking paddles, or move like the different ways a balloon moves.
  16. Parachutes and cargo nets - purchased through United States Military Disbursement Supply Depots; parachutes, for parachute activities; cargo nets, for climbing and hanging from.
  17. Vinyl material - material or fabric outlets and furniture factories; for mats, to mark shapes, numbers, letters and/ or footprints on.
  18. Wands and wooden sticks - broom manufacturers, lumber yards, (dowels), or from old brooms; used for rhythmical activities or obstacles to go over or under.
  19. Used tennis balls - tennis centre or university, recreation department or high school; for throwing, catching, or striking.
- Directions for Constructing Equipment - to determine the total amount of material required, multiply the amount listed in the example by the number of items desired.
    - Hoop - Material required: 9 feet of 1/2 or 5/8 inch plastic plumbing or sprinkler pipe, 2 1/2 inches of 1/2 or 5/8 inch wood doweling, staples, and tape, duct tape.

**INSTRUCTIONS** - Cut ends of the plastic pipe to join evenly. Insert wood doweling into the ends, staple and cover the staples with tape to strengthen the connection and cover rough edges.

Variations - Hoops should be made in different sizes. Have some large enough to crawl through and some small enough to use for ring toss or stepping stone activities.

- Paper Wand - Starting at the longest side of four or five sheets of newspaper, roll it up as tight as possible. Put rings of masking tape around the ends and middle of the paper wand to hold it together.
- Stocking racket - Use one stocking leg and a clothes hanger. The hanger hook should be bent to make a handle and the big loop pulled out so it looks like a paddle blade. Pull the stocking over the large loop and tie it at the handle end. Stretch the paddle end wider to make the striking surface tighter.



- Paper ball- Wad up a sheet of newspaper, use more paper for a larger size and loop it with masking tape a few times.
- Tin can stilts - Material required - two large cans (two-pound coffee cans work well) and sash cord or clothesline rope.

INSTRUCTIONS - Punch two holes on opposite sides of the bottom, closed end, of the can. Insert a length of rope, about 3-5 feet (*which is long enough for the child to grasp while standing in an erect position*) on the cans, through the can and tie it securely. When inside, have the children use the stilts on a carpet runner and when possible, place the plastic tops on the cans for safety purposes.

Remember: Check for safety, especially for children under 3 years of age!

## Diagrams of Various Teacher-Made Equipment

To view please access web site

<http://pe.usf.edu/projects/civitan/projects/equip/equip6.html>

1. [Balance and Agility 1](#)
2. [Balance and Agility 2](#)
3. [Balls and Markers](#)
4. [Boundary Markers and Targets](#)
5. [Hoops and Catchers](#)
6. [Rackets and Paddles](#)
7. [Targets](#)
8. [Miscellaneous](#)

### Indoor Obstacle Courses for Parents and Teachers



Published in *Sensations*, Volume 3, Issue 2 (September 2005), a Newsletter for the Benefactors and Friends of the Foundation for Knowledge in Development (The KID Foundation)

Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly, and kids gotta climb, jump, and balance. While dangling from banisters, scooting under turnstiles, teetering on curbs, and jumping into puddles may dismay grown-ups, children persist with good reason.

How do kids learn to think and relate to the world around them? By scanning their surroundings; touching wooden, metal, rubber, or concrete surfaces; grasping and

releasing handholds; changing body positions; maintaining equilibrium; and experimenting with different movement patterns. Furthermore, they are having fun, and "fun," Dr. Ayres wrote, "is the child's word for sensory integration."

An obstacle course is sensational, both to provide fun and to promote praxis. Praxis, a sensory-based process, involves: Ideation (having an idea of something you want to do); Motor planning (figuring how to do it); and Execution (carrying out the plan). Just as the person who chops his own wood is warmed twice, the person who builds and moves through his own obstacle course strengthens praxis many times over.

You and your child can build an obstacle course outdoors, where everything is better, or indoors in bad weather. You don't need special equipment – just a fresh way of looking at ordinary objects, with an eye on how they can promote sensory processing.

#### WHAT TO DO

**1) Brainstorm, or ideate, with your kids to make three lists with these headings: *Ways to Move, Prepositions, and Objects*. Encourage children to tell or show you what they have in mind. For example:**

##### *Ways to Move:*

Step, walk, creep (on all fours), crawl (on belly), scoot (on bottom), roll, somersault, jump (two feet), hop (one foot), leap, run

##### *Prepositions:*

Up, upon, down, into, onto, between, beneath, beside, under, over, through, across, around

##### *Objects:*

*Consumables:* Construction paper shapes, shoeboxes, paper plates, bubble wrap, masking tape, Bottle Babies (2-liter soda bottles, half-filled with colored water)

*Kitchen:* Stools, chairs, mixing bowls

*Garage:* Sawhorses, boards, inner tubes, tires, thick rope, flower pots, tarpaulins

*Household:* Wastebaskets, couch cushions, mattress, bridge table, exercise bench, telephone books, wash tubs, rugs, carpet squares, and sheet to drape over chairs for a tent

*Kids' equipment:* Plastic hoops, big blocks, gym mats, Crash Pad (duvet cover, stuffed with pillows and foam blocks)

**2) Together, plan the course by mixing and matching list ingredients, e.g.:**

Step / Into / Shoe boxes Scoot / Around / Wastebaskets  
Creep / Under / TableCrawl / Through / Tunnel  
Walk / Between / Lines of tape Somersault / Across / Mattress  
Roll / Over / Bearskin rug Jump / On / Bubble wrap

Vary movements, prepositions and objects to reinforce children's ability to handle and discriminate different materials (tactile sense), stretch muscles and develop body awareness (tactile/proprioceptive senses), balance and move through space (vestibular sense), perceive spatial relationships and negotiate around obstacles (visual-motor skills), and improve motor planning, coordination and postural responses (sensory-based motor skills).

**3) Execute the plan by laying out the course. In tight spaces, such as a hallway, a linear course is okay for one or two kids. In the yard or cleared room a circular course is best for a crowd. Let youngsters help! Kids with SPD often sense what their systems need; honour their ideas and be flexible about altering the plan. Also, remember that the heavy work of lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling materials into place is like over-the-counter OT.**

#### TIPS

- Have everyone travel in the same direction to avoid traffic jams.
- Prior to a happy birthday party, practice building and going through a course with your child so she feels in-the-know, adept, and ready to help her friends if they get stuck.
- For holidays, spice up the course with seasonal accents, e.g.:

#### Valentine's Day:

- Use red Bottle Babies (soda bottles half-filled with tinted water) to circumnavigate
- Make a curvy or soft, heart-shaped path with red masking tape
- Stick down red paper hearts to jump on and red arrows to manage the flow

#### St. Patrick's Day:

- Tape tiny paper feet along the course so kids can follow the leprechaun's path
- At the start, hand each child a large gold piece to toss into a pot at the end
- Have the kids go barefoot, or backwards, or with music.
- Incorporate your child's favorite theme. Does he love trains? Pretend that obstacles are the locomotive, freight car, caboose. Are planets her thing? Obstacles can be Mercury, Venus, Earth. State capitals? Hartford, Annapolis, Denver. This thematic technique may jump-start the child who is not a self-starter.
- Be vigilant about safety. Allow sufficient space between obstacles for the child to readjust his posture before moving to the next. Always be there.

To give children the chance to master new physical challenges, learn problem-solving skills and develop praxis, make an obstacle course every day! Build it, and they will come.

For more on obstacle courses and heavy work activities, see *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, revised (Perigee, 2006) and *The Goodenoughs Get in Sync* (Sensory Resources, 2004) at [www.SensoryResources.com](http://www.SensoryResources.com)

#### Race through an obstacle course

Try your skill at these obstacle course stations, involve children in planning and deciding what stations and movements they want included. Children will be keener to participate if they have

planned the activity.

### **WHIRLING DERVISH**

Players throw a water balloon high in the air, spin around and then catch it.

### **WALK THE PLANK**

Set up a board on two cinder blocks and tie some balloons to it. Players walk across, stepping over the balloons and stopping in the middle to spell their names aloud backward.

### **BOX HOP**

Lay out a row of cardboard boxes (or laundry baskets). Players jump from one to the next.

### **FRISBEE TOSS**

Place a clean trash can 10 feet from a throw line. Players try to toss a Frisbee into the can.

### **SUMMER SHOWER**

Players balance a golf ball on a tee (or on a spoon, for little kids) as they walk through a lawn sprinkler.

### **LAWN CHAIR SLALOM**

Line up several lawn chairs 2 to 3 feet apart. Players skip around each chair while carrying a half-filled paper cup of water.

### **RAKE A BALL**

Players use a rake to drag a basketball through the lawn chair slalom course (described above) and back. It is not important how fast they do it but providing the time for each child to perform and enjoy the activities. Give support as required

## **Indoor Obstacle Course**

Banish rainy day boredom by turning the living room or playroom into a challenging obstacle course.

WHAT YOU NEED Obstacles--furniture, pillows, etc String, Paper and tape, Household objects.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Plot your course with the help of children. Obstacles that might be included in the course: crawling under or over chairs; crawling under a table without disturbing any balloons dangling on strings from the bottom; sliding under or crawling over a string stretched between two table or chair legs; crawling or slithering through a tunnel made from couch pillows; or stepping on a series of pieces of paper taped to the floor.
2. To make the course even more challenging, add further elements. Have kids go through the course while holding an empty toilet paper tube in each hand. Try wearing a large hat while manoeuvring through the obstacles; VARIATIONS:  
Other obstacle possibilities include silly rules like jumping up and down three times after completing certain "stations" or singing a song at a certain point in the course. The variations are almost endless.

## **Fun-in-the-Sun Ideas**

### **Easy ways to keep the kids active and entertained**



With just a few minutes of planning, you can keep the kids active - and entertained - in fun, out-of-the-ordinary ways all day long! Try these ideas to get the whole group moving:

**Go for a hike.** Find a trail through the woods and keep your eyes peeled for natural finds. "Take the time to look at birds' nests, ant hills and even moss on trees," "Kids really get a kick out of nature." Other interesting things to spot: holes in trees, animal droppings or deer, possums and other animal's tracks.

**Get buggy.** Look for interesting insects in your own backyard or at the local park. "You can pick up a bug box from a hardware store," "They're cheap, the holes let bugs breathe, and they have a magnifying glass on one end." Get the kids to set out the boxes to contain different bugs and then get a close-up view of their eight-legged friends.

**Have a scavenger hunt.** Make a list of 20 activities in your neighborhood; The list could include activities like drinking from a water fountain, climbing a tree or throwing a basketball into the net on your driveway. Arm the kids with a Polaroid or digital camera (with young children, you can give support), and then spend a few hours finding the objects or performing the tasks on the list and taking a picture of them. Once the kids have completed all 20, help them make a keepsake poster of their pictures.

**Toss rocks.** Since you probably don't have horseshoes on hand, collect rocks from the backyard or a local park. Each child and adult can personalize their rock with their name or a different marking. Then set a target about 10 to 12 feet away and take turns throwing rocks at the target to see who comes closest.

**Take a bird tour.** Write down a list of birds that are common to your area and then go in search of your feathered friends at the park (bring binoculars!). To attract birds, cover pinecones with vegetable shortening and then roll them in birdseed; Hang your homemade birdfeeder by a string on a tree branch. Then back away, watch and wait while birds come to feed.

**Run relay races.** You'll need four to six players, so you may want to invite the neighbors over. Split the group into two teams for a tag relay, but instead of just running back and forth, make the challenges a little more interesting with multiple steps. For example, each person could start with step one: build a model rocket. Then they run to the designated spot to do step two: sing the group's favorite song. Next they run to a table for step three: eat a biscuit. Once the player completes all his(her) tasks, he passes the baton to the next person who then follows the same steps.

**Silly jumps.** Mark a starting point on the lawn and then take turns jumping in funny poses to see who can get the farthest. Try jumping doing the splits mid-air, spinning around on lift-off or flapping your arms to stay airborne.

**Create an obstacle course.** Use your lawn chairs, cardboard boxes or cones to set up an obstacle course in your own backyard. Then get the kids to run through it. Use a stopwatch to see which family member makes it through in the best time.

**Throw the dice.** You'll need two small (5x5 inch) square boxes from a moving or packaging store for this activity, these are your dice. On one die, write a different activity on each side, such as 'do a cartwheel' or 'walk 10 steps backwards'. On the other die, write mental challenges, geared to the kids' ages, such as 'say the alphabet' or 'spell your name backwards'. Each person rolls the dice and does the two challenges at the same time, like walking backwards while spelling your name backwards. "Because there are a multitude of combinations, it's endless fun," says Warner.

**Play wacky golf.** You don't need expensive clubs or golf balls to have a game with the kids. In fact, it's even more fun when you equip them with unusual "clubs" like a baseball bat or hockey stick and different sized balls. Or, try a baseball or small beach ball, says Warner. Then set up buckets and tin cans around the yard and enjoy the fun of each family member trying to get a hole in one.

**Play Frisbee.** Create a game of Frisbee basketball by hanging a basket from a tree limb close to the ground. Arm the kids with mini Frisbees and see who can make the most baskets.

**Go for a ride.** If the kids are older and have mastered bike riding, you'll all get a thrill pedaling on a trail through the woods. Look for a fairly smooth dirt trail and don't forget that every group member should be wearing a helmet.

## USEFUL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bly, Lois. *Motor Skills Acquisition Checklist*. San Antonio, TX: Therapy Skill Builders, 2003.
- Decker, Michelle. *Rainy Day Games (Projects, programs and play for rainy days)*. Indiana: American Camping Association, 2001.
- Hamilton, Amy. *Indigo Dreaming (Meditations for children)*. Queensland: Joshua Books, 2006.
- Hodges, Di. *365 TV-free Activities for Kids*. Australia: Hinkler Book Pty. Ltd., 2002.
- Kurtz, Lisa A. *How to Help a Clumsy Child: Strategies for Young Children with Developmental Motor Concerns*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2003.
- Lavoie, Richard. *It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend (Helping the child with learning disabilities find social success)*. New York: TOUCHSTONE, 2005.
- Le Febre Dale N. *Best New Games 77 games and 7 trust activities for all ages and abilities*. South Australia: Human Kinetics, 2002.
- Liddle, Tara and Yorke, Laura. *Why Motor Skills Matter: Improving Your Child's Physical Development to Enhance Learning and Self-Esteem*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- Linder, Heidi. *Great Games for Small Children (Enjoyable physical activities and games for children between ages of 3 and 7/ Book 1)*. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 2002.
- Linder, Heidi. *Animals, Animals, animals (Enjoyable physical activities and games for children between ages of 3 and 7/ Book 2)*. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 2002.
- Linder, Heidi. *Off We Go Outside (Enjoyable physical activities and games for children between ages of 3 and 7/Book 3)*. Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport, 2002.
- Pearson, Mark. *Emotional Healing & Self-Esteem. (Inner-life skills of relaxation, visualization and meditation for children and adolescents)*. Melbourne: ACER Press, 1998.
- Powell, Garry. *Classic yard games (an instructional manual for parents, teachers and children)*. Robert Andersen and Associates, 2002.
- Rhatigan, Joe. *Run, jump, hide, splash (The 200 best outdoor games ever)*. Lark Books, 2004.
- Rooyackers, Paul. *101 drama games for children (fun and learning with acting and make-believe)*. The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Panta Rhei, 1998.
- Sher, Barbara. *Attention GAMES (101 fun, easy games that help kids learn to focus)*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006.
- Smith, Jodene Lynn. *Activities for Gross Motor Skills Development*. Westminster, CA: Teacher Created Materials, 2003.

Sports and recreation QLD. *Let's get Moving* (get active QUEENSLAND). Brisbane: QLD Government, 2004.

Stock Kranowitz Carol. *The Out of Synch Child has Fun*. Activities for kids with sensory processing disorder. Penguin group, New York, 2003.

Thomas, Patrice. *The Magic of Relaxation (Tai Chi and visualization for young children)*. New South Wales: Pademelon Press, 2002.

Varney W., Rondalyn. *Bridging the Gap (Raising a child with non verbal learning disorder)*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2002.

Warner, Penny. *Baby Play & Learn*. Minnetonka: Meadowbrook Press, 1999

Wise, Debra. *Great big book of children's games (over 450 indoor and outdoor games for kids)*. McGraw-Hill, 2003.

### USEFUL E-SITES

Games and activities for children and adolescents

<http://familyfun.go.com/games/indoor-outdoor-games/>

<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

<http://fun.familyeducation.com/play/outdoor-activities/33394.html>

<http://www.funandgames.org/frontpage.html>

<http://www.kidsrunning.com/krschoolgames.html>

Gross Motor Skills, planning, general knowledge

<http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/ViewLesson.asp?ID=366>

<http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/DLiT/2000/FINAL/grossmotors.htm>

<http://www.edc.gov.ab.ca/physicaleducationonline/teacherresources/>

<http://www.edc.gov.ab.ca/physicaleducationonline/lessonplans/ViewPlanSelect.asp>

<http://physicaltherapy.org/packer/balance/>

<http://www.sportrec.qld.gov.au>

<http://learningdisabilities.about.com/od/gi/p/grossmotorskill.htm>