

IMPORTANCE OF DANCE

Lets Join the Dance

Keeping kids active for life!

In a world where the fastest movements experienced are often in the virtual world and children are taking to electronic devices with great gusto, how do we promote a love of real movement for life and teach a sense of body-kinaesthetic intelligence (as Howard Gardner named it) in children?

Creating opportunities to experience dance and fostering a love of dance is a great way. It seems humans are “wired” for dance, just as we come into the world wired to perceive music. Research with young children with multiple disabilities, in hearing, vision, and motor function, all gained enormously from regular dance experiences. Dance for all children can be freedom and fun. Children themselves report experiencing wholeness, self esteem, a sense of true self and optimism.



How does dance help our preschoolers learn?

Dance can:

- develop neural pathways through movement patterning, essential for higher cognitive learning
- help with spacial awareness (proprioception), co-ordination and balance
- develop problem solving skills
- strengthen the ability to listen and follow directions
- help with self-awareness
- teach co-operation
- release energy and build a strong healthy body

Dance has so many varied forms and styles, so what could we try with young children?

- some simple creative dance ideas are moving to opposing concepts such as fast /slow, sharp/ smooth, big/small, high /low. Give concrete examples to the children to experiment with in their own bodies
e.g. heavy as a big elephant or light as a fluttery butterfly.
- Action songs can suggest simple dance ideas. We have many on our or Happy Beats CD
e.g. Jungle Beat, Bop 'Til Ya Boogie or from Favourite Songs, Rubadubdub, Shane and Josh, Dinosaurs Don't Live Live Here Anymore.
- Sensory dancing can use scarves, ribbons, ribbon sticks, hoops, feather boas, a parachute or a large stretchy ribbon.
- Folk dance and multicultural dance offers opportunities to learn a repertoire of dance steps
e.g. dancing in circles, or with partners, clapping, sidesteps, skipping, hopping, slide steps and turning on the spot.

(Our Dances Around the World CD and Book has a great mix of multicultural music suitable for creative or sensory dance and folk dance suggestions.)