

Movement planning

Movement planning is efficient and effective execution of our actions and is based upon our learning and experiences. We select appropriate ways of acting without thinking it about it until we have to learn something new and difficult such as a musical instrument or drive a car. Once mastered, these activities can be carried out without thinking about it.

Children gradually come to have a repertoire of movement plans starting with mastering the way their own bodies move and respond. Then, as children start to move through and directly interact with their environment and objects in their environment, these movement plans become increasingly complex. They learn to write, ride bikes, skateboard, make models and play sports, to name but a few of the amazing things we can do with movement.

Planning simple movements in space

Activities to help children develop better sense of their ability to control their movements:

Imitation games: Keep any action very simple initially; symmetrical movements will be easier than asymmetrical, as will movements using less body parts.

- Action songs such as Hokey-Cokey, In and out the dusty bluebells, London Bridge is falling down and Ring-a-Ring a-Roses
- Action games such as duck, duck, goose
- Follow my leader
- Simon says

Creative body movement games: (where the child comes up with their own ideas)

- Ask children to move like different animals; walk as though they are happy, cross, sad and angry. They can pretend to be swimming with fish, climbing with monkeys, walking on ice, grow like a plant, be pumped like a balloon or respond to the weather – it's hot, raining, windy, snowing etc. Walking on sand, in glue, with very heavy boots on etc.
- Music and movement where children interpret the music, how it makes them feel.
- Dancing. Teach simple dances or let children make up some of their own.



How to help children learn the movements

- Help the child to position themselves when starting, if it is relevant have a starting mark on the floor
- Discuss how the movement feels, use hand over hand to guide the movement the child needs to achieve, ask the child to close their eyes and feel the movement, ask them to picture themselves doing the movement
- Ensure the child knows what they need to be doing that they stop and think about organising themselves, try to stop children “launching” into activities, and give enough time for the child to plan.
- Some children find talking though what they are going to do helpful
- Use repetition and practice. Don't move the child on too quickly
- Reward effort and participation
- Carry out movements in slow motion, eg move fingers to touch shoulders slowly, move arm and leg slowly in a circular motion
- Copy movements – play Simon says, copy body actions and postures, eg animal walks



- Elephant walk: bend forward at the waist, allowing arms to hang down taking big steps while swaying from side to side
 - Rabbit hop: placing hands on floor, do deep knee bends and move feet together between hands
 - Crab walk: crawl backwards and forwards face up
 - Duck walk: walk with hands on knees while doing a deep knee bend
 - Worm walk: walk with hands and feet on the floor, take small steps first with feet then with hands
- Sequence movements, eg jump, clap, jump, clap. Describe verbally if the child has difficulties
 - Move in space, eg rolling with arms down at sides, with arms outstretched above head, holding a beanbag in hands, holding a beanbag between knees, or holding a beanbag between feet
 - Walking forwards: have the child walk along a curved path marked on the floor with a target goal. The path may be wide or narrow, but the narrower the path, the more difficult the task.