

I Like to Move It, Move It!

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The brain, at birth, is undeveloped. As the brain develops, it organizes and grows sequentially starting from the lowest regions of the brain then processing up through the more complex parts of the brain. In order for the upper regions to be healthy, you must first develop healthy lower regions. The normal organization of the brain is “use-dependent”; the more patterned activity (think music, reading, conversation, etc.), the more the brain regions responsible for these tasks will organize and be functionally “healthy”. The majority of this sequential and use-dependent development takes place in early childhood. In fact, by age three, 85% of the brain has developed.

What does that have to do with music, movement and early childhood? Everything! We have this amazing window of opportunity in early childhood to help our little ones develop healthy brains. We need to capitalize on these early childhood years (infancy through ten-years-old). As we teach young children, we need to match experiences to the child’s level of neurodevelopment: physical/motor, behavioral, emotional, social and cognitive. Play and exploration grow the brain—healthy play and developmentally appropriate exploration grow healthy brains.

“The body plays an integral part in all our intellectual processes from our earliest moments in utero right through to old age” (Hannaford, 2005, p. 15). Remember, children are like little scientists exploring their environment, constantly taking in information. They experiment with their movements to learn cause and effect. They observe and process what they see, hear and taste. Really, if you think about it, all of the information a child gathers from his environment is filtered to the brain through the body’s senses. Research indicates that the stimulation of the brain is a significant factor in overall brain development. That stimulation occurs in movement and sensory experiences. Synapses, connections made between neurons in the brain, are strengthened when they are made by activity. This is great news because children love to move. Eventually, the brain will cut away weakened synapses much like pruning away the dead branches on a tree. According to Hannaford (2005), “neural connections can be altered and grown only if there is full attention, focused interest on what we do” (p. 22). Therefore, in order for learning and growth to occur with the movement we need to focus on fun, engaging, developmentally appropriate activities.

Because children love to move and have an inherent, physical need to move, creating fun movement activities is relatively easy. One of the simplest movement activities is to combine music and movement. When we combine music and movement we are strengthening and bonding synapses in the brain, helping brain development. Sometimes a few small steps “outside of the box”

open our eyes to see a plethora of movement ideas for children. Consider some of the following movement activities:

Yoga (preschoolers)	Exercise/Resistance bands	Buckets	Scarves
Parachute play	Bean bags	Shaky eggs	Pool noodles
Action songs	Finger Plays		

With deliberate planning, movement activities: promote physical well-being, strengthen muscles (fine motor, gross motor, core), develop balance and flexibility, and build a child's self-confidence. In addition to these physical benefits, movement activities also provide opportunities for developing positional concepts, spatial and body awareness, cooperative play, math, science, and even problem-solving. Movement gets the brain ready for learning by involving the WHOLE child in the learning process.

“Children don’t exist only from the neck up. They are thinking, feeling, moving human beings who learn through all their senses.” Rae Pica.

ACTION SONGS (FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OR ADD YOUR OWN MOVEMENT):

- Strong Mama*** By Eric Litwin (“Smile at Your Neighbor” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Walking Song*** By Have Fun Teaching (“Fitness Songs” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Children Fun*** By Mary Jo Huff (“Gettin’ Loose with Mother Goose” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Bear to the Left*** By Billy Jonas (“What Kind of Cat Are You?” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Tooty Ta*** By Dr. Jean (“Dr. Jean & Friends” CD, www.drjean.org)
- Green Eggs & Ham*** By the Learning Station (“Rock-n-Roll Songs that Teach” CD, www.learningstationmusic.com)
- When I Was a Little Fish*** By Susan Salidor (“Come and Make a Circle: Twenty Terrific Songs for Kids and Teachers” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Dance, Freeze, Melt*** By Mr. Eric & Mr. Michael (“Rockin Red from the Learning Groove” CD, Available on iTunes)

SCARVES (USE THESE SONGS OR JUST MOVE WITH THE SCARVES):

- Teddy Bear Playhouse*** By Hap Palmer (“So Big” CD, www.happalmer.com)
- Nutcracker Suite, Op. 71a:4*** By Herbert Von Karajan & Wiener Philharmoniker (Available on iTunes)
- Scarves on Your Lap*** By Johnette Downing (“The Second Line – Scarf Activity Songs” CD, Available on iTunes)
- Scarves Up and Down and Around*** By Johnette Downing (“The Second Line – Scarf Activity Songs” CD, Available on iTunes)

Scarf Dance By Mary Jo Huff (“Gettin’ Loose with Mother Goose” CD, Available on iTunes)

Jack in the Box By Just for Kids Premium (“Just 4 Kids” CD, Available on iTunes) – the scarf is “Jack” and you have the children move it up or down based on the song.

O’S (USE THESE SONGS OR JUST HAVE FUN WITH THE O’S):

Trashin’ the Camp By Phil Collins & Rosie O’Donnell (“Tarzan” Soundtrack, Available on iTunes)

Who Let the Dogs Out By the Hit Crew (“DJ’s Choice: More Kids Fun” CD, Available on iTunes)

Cookie Bakers of the Night By Laurie Berkner Band (“Buzz Buzz” CD, Available on iTunes)

The Tempo Marches On By Jim Gill (“Jim Gill Sings Do Re Mi On His Toe Leg Knee” CD, Available at www.amazon.com)

SHAKY EGGS (USE THESE SONGS OR JUST DO MOVEMENTS):

I Know a Chicken By Laurie Berkner Band (“Whaddaya Think of That?” CD, Available on iTunes)

Bean Bag Frog Song By Julie Wylie (“Do the Bean Bag Bop” CD, Available on iTunes)

Shake It Up High By Brian Funshine (“Let’s Sing” CD, Available on iTunes)

Shaky Egg Chant Original idea from Abigail Flesch Connors, modified by Melissa McKenzie

Frog’s Physical Exercise Song By Julie Wylie (“Do the Bean Bag Bop” CD, Available on iTunes)

NOTE: The above songs are easily used with other props like bells, bean bags, and scarves.

BUCKETS (USE THESE SONGS OR JUST DO MOVEMENTS):

Circle Game By Hap Palmer (“Getting to Know Myself” CD, www.happalmer.com)

The Circle By Hap Palmer (“Getting to Know Myself” CD, www.happalmer.com)

The Circle Song By KidzUp Production Inc. (“The Top 30 Preschool Songs” CD, available on iTunes)

Elevator By Hugh Hanley “Circle of Songs” CD, available at www.hughhanley.com)

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APPENDIX

Shaky Egg Chant

Original idea from Abigail Flesch Connors, modified by Melissa McKenzie

I heard a little shake (*small shake*), right inside my house (*small shake*).
It sounded like the shake (*small shake*) of a little shaky mouse (*small shake*).
He was shaking on the ceiling (*small shake*) He was shaking on the floor (*small shake*).
He was shaking till he fell asleep (*small shake*) and began to snore (*lay your head on your hands/eggs and pretend to sleep*).

I heard a bigger shake, (*bigger shake*) It made me drop my hat (*bigger shake*).
It sounded like the shake (*bigger shake*) of a little shaky cat (*bigger shake*).
He was shaking on the ceiling (*bigger shake*) He was shaking on the floor (*bigger shake*).
He was shaking till he fell asleep (*bigger shake*) and began to snore (*lay your head on your hands/eggs and pretend to sleep*).

I heard the biggest shake (*biggest shake*) Right outside my door (*biggest shake*).
It sounded like the shake (*biggest shake*) of a shaky dinosaur (*biggest shake*).
He was shaking on the ceiling (*biggest shake*) He was shaking on the floor (*biggest shake*).
He was shaking till he fell asleep (*biggest shake*) and began to snore (*lay your head on your hands/eggs and pretend to sleep*).

Strong Mama

BEFORE THE SONG: Describe the movements for the song. Model each of the movements:

- *Strong mama says “no, no, no” – you start at one side and point your index finger for each “no” as you cross your arm in front of you over to the other side (this crosses the mid-line which activates both sides of the brain)*
- *Worried papa goes “oh, oh, oh” – you put your hands on your cheek and make a worried face and tip your head side-to-side as you say the oh’s.*
- *Big brother says “yea, yea, yeah” – explain that big brother is a teenager and has a little bit of an attitude. You kind of lean your head back, curl your lip, say “yea” with a snarky attitude and wave your hand like you are saying “whatever” (think teenager!)*
- *Little baby goes “wah, wah, wah” – you put your hands out to the sides and sort of flap your hands as you say “wah” like a baby and make a grumpy/sad baby face*
- *Cool cat says “meow, meow, meow” – you put one hand on your hip, lean back a little and flip the other hand out – like you are so cool*
- *Old dog goes a “bow wow wow” – you let your shoulders droop like you are tired, have your arms straight down at your sides, bend your hands out and shrug your shoulders as you say the “bow wow wow”*

- Silly sister says a “ha ha ha” – you act like that sassy little sister that always gets you in trouble – make a big smile, put your open hands on either side of your head and you’re your head side-to-side as you say “ha, ha, ha”
- The radio plays a “cha, cha, cha” – you put your hands on your hips and shake your hips side-to-side with the “cha, cha, cha”
- When the jazzy music plays, you have to move to the music and just “get jiggy with it!” – have fun, get your whole body moving

(Point finger)

Strong mama says no, no, no!

(Worried face)

Worried papa goes oh, oh, oh.

(Teenage brother with attitude)

Big brother says yea, yea, yea.

(Crying baby)

The little baby says wah, wah, wah!

(Flick your cool hand)

Cool cat says a meow, meow, meow.

(Droopy, tired shoulders)

The old dog goes a bow-wow-wow.

(Annoying sister with smiling face)

Little sister says a ha, ha, ha!

(Shake your hips)

The radio plays a cha, cha, cha!

(Get jiggy with the jazz!)

Repeat everything 2 more times.

Bear to the Left

BEFORE THE SONG: Tell the children that you are going to sing this song about your friend John and his directions. John is kind of funny because he gives directions using animals. For example, he says “bear to the left” when he wants you to go left or “snake to the right” when he wants you to go right. But... John never remembers to give us all the directions at one time. Something is always lacking – that means not there – and we have to go back and then John says, “oh yeah, I forgot” (You **HAVE** to use this sort of dumbfounded expression on your face and kind of a “surfer dude” voice whenever you talk like John.) The kids will think John’s voice

is funny – which is what you want. Tell them that John has talked that way ever since he was little. Have them practice saying “oh yeah, I forgot” a couple of times before you start the song. Also remind the children that you will sang each part two times, just for practice.

You will need to reverse the left and right for this song so that the children move in the correct direction.

(Snap to the music as you sing this part – or just snap and listen if you do not know all of these words yet.)

Traveling, traveling, traveling on.

I bumped into my friend John.

I said, hey John which way should I go.

He said, follow the animals they all know.

You gotta bear to the left (make bear claws with your fingers and move your hands to your right which will be the children’s left)

Bear to the left (repeat the movement)

But something was lacking (put your hands out to your side)

So I went back and (point behind you with your thumbs)

And he said, oh yeah, I forgot (use the dumbfounded expression and surfer-dude voice)

You gotta bear to the left (bear claws to right)

And snake to the right (put your hands/arms together and slither your arms to your left)

Repeat

But something was lacking (put your hands out to your side)

So I went back and (point behind you with your thumbs)

And he said, oh yeah, I forgot (use the dumbfounded expression and surfer-dude voice)

You gotta bear to the left (bear claws to right)

And snake to the right (put your hands/arms together and slither your arms to your left)

Weasel on down (bend down to the floor)

And duck out of sight (duck your head down a little under your hand)

Repeat

But something was lacking (put your hands out to your side)

So I went back and (point behind you with your thumbs)

And he said, oh yeah, I forgot (use the dumbfounded expression and surfer-dude voice)

You gotta bear to the left (bear claws to right)

And snake to the right (put your hands/arms together and slither your arms to your left)

Weasel on down (*bend down to the floor*)
And duck out of sight (*duck your head down a little under your hand*)
Horse around (*quickly stand up and put your arms/hands in front of you and “hop” your arms like a little horse*)
Flounder about (*flip-flop your hands in front of you like a fish flopping around on land*)
Repeat

But something was lacking (*put your hands out to your side*)
So I went back and (*point behind you with your thumbs*)
And he said, oh yeah, I forgot (*use the dumbfounded expression and surfer-dude voice*)

You gotta bear to the left (*bear claws to right*)
And snake to the right (*put your hands/arms together and slither your arms to your left*)
Weasel on down (*bend down to the floor*)
And duck out of sight (*duck your head down a little under your hand*)
Horse around (*quickly stand up and put your arms/hands in front of you and “hop” your arms like a little horse*)
Flounder about (*flip-flop your hands in front of you like a fish flopping around on land*)
Worm your way in (*arms/hands together and wiggle your arms out in front of you like they are going through a hole*)
Bug out! (*Spread your arms/hands open wide*)
Repeat

Steer straight home (*pretend to drive a car with one hand*)
Yak on the phone (*pretend to talk on the phone*)
Wolf down my dinner (*pretend to eat*)
And say so long (*say “so long” several times as you wave good bye to everyone*)

Children Fun

BEFORE THE SONG: *Tell the children you need help with this next song because you have to count to ten. Stop and practice counting to ten using your fingers (count slowly as you hold up each finger until all ten fingers are showing. Then tell the children that you will be counting children instead of fingers in this song. They just have to copy whatever you say and whatever you do. Ask them if they know how to copy and let them respond. Then give them a test run by saying, “children one and children two” and have them repeat that. Then say, “let’s all do the dooby-doo!” and have them repeat that.*

As you count in this song, try to hold up that number of fingers. This is not super important so do not get hung up on getting the fingers right – the song is very fast.

Children one and children two *(children repeat)*

(open and close your hands/fingers)

Let's all do the dooby-doo. *(children repeat)*

(open and close your hands/fingers – but much faster and crazier)

Dooby-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo.

Dooby-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo-by-doo.

Children two and children three *(children repeat)*

(bend down and tap on your knees to the music)

Let's all do the slap my knee. *(children repeat)*

(keep tapping on your knees to the music)

Children three and children four *(children repeat)*

(Stand up really tall, stretch one arm up high like it's about to “knock” on the door)

Let's all knock on the great big door. *(children repeat)*

(“knock” on the door to the music while you make a “clicking” sound with your tongue)

Children four and children five *(children repeat)*

(Bend your elbows at your sides)

Let's all do the sponky jive. *(children repeat)*

(Now do the sponky jive which is like a polka on steroids)

Children five and children six *(children repeat)*

(Put your hands together with arms straight out in front of you)

Let's all do the children mix. *(children repeat)*

(Keeping your hands together, pretend to stir/mix a cake batter in a big bowl)

Children six and children seven *(children repeat)*

(Hold your two index fingers up in front of you so they look like the number “11”)

Let's all make our fingers like eleven. *(children repeat)*

(Keeping index fingers together, bend forward and back to the music)

Children seven and children eight *(children repeat)*

(Stand yourself up very straight and tall with your arms down at your sides)

Let's all walk and stand up straight *(children repeat)*

(Walk in place, arms at your side, without smiling – very serious)

Children eight and children nine *(children repeat)*

(Wiggle just a little bit)

Let's all wiggle our own spine. *(children repeat)*

(Now wiggle your spine and jump up and down – it's a crazy move)

Children nine and children ten *(children repeat)*

(Make fists, bend your arms in front of you and get ready to spin your arms)

Let's all turn and spin, spin, spin. *(children repeat)*

(Now spin your arms forward (like a boxer hitting a punching bag), stop and shout "backwards" and spin arms backwards, stop and shout "forwards" and spin forward – continue backwards/forwards until the end of the song then shout "freeze" to have everyone stop.)

Following Directions with Exercise

(This is an action song, just do the movements described in the song. Flip your left and right if you lead this song facing the children – when the song says 'left hand in the air' you would put your right hand. This is a "funky song" so have fun moving to the rhythm.)

BEFORE THE SONG: *Tell the children this is a fun, tricky song and they have to listen closely to the words to know what to do. They might have to put their hands in the air (show them) or touch their toes (show them).*

So put your right hand in the air *(right hand all the way up)*

Now put your left hand in the air *(left hand all the way up)*

Clap your hands two times *(clap twice with hands still up high)*

Clap your hands two times *(clap twice with hand still up high)*

Put your hands on your hips *(put your hands on your hips and shake those hips!)*

So Put your hands on your hips *(keep shaking your hips!)*

Now Stomp your feet three times *(stomp feet three times)*

Stomp your feet three times *(stomp feet three times)*

Reach down touch your toes *(reach all the way down to your toes and touch them)*

Now put your hands on your hips (*put your hands on our hips and shake those hips!*)
Reach up and to the sky (*reach both hands all the way up*)
Stretch it out now, stretch it, stretch it, stretch it out now (*keep reaching*)

Reach down touch your toes (*reach all the way down to your toes and touch them*)
Now put your hands on your hips (*put your hands on our hips and shake those hips!*)
Now reach up to the sky (*reach both hands all the way up*)
Stretch it out now, stretch it, stretch it, stretch it out now (*keep reaching*)

Jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump (*jump with hands in the air*)
Now shake, shake it out now, now shake, shake it out now (*shake hands out in front*)
Shake, shake
STOP! (*freeze!*)

Okay, it's gonna get trickier (*ask kids if they can handle trickier – get them excited!*)
Listen carefully and see if you can keep up.
Are you ready, are you ready, are you ready?! (*Shout "ARE YOU READY?!"*)
Let's go!

Put your hands up, now put them down (*hands all the way up, then down to the floor*)
Put your hands up, now put them down (*hands all the way up, then down to the floor*)
Put your hands up, now put them down (*hands all the way up, then down to the floor*)
Put your hands up, now turn around (*hand up and turn around in a circle with hands up*)
STOP! (*freeze!*)

Reach to your left, now to your right (*stretch left hand way out to the left, then with right*)
Reach to the left, reach to the right (*stretch left hand way out to the left, then with right*)
Reach to the left, reach to the right (*stretch left hand way out to the left, then with right*)
Reach to the left, reach to the right (*stretch left hand way out to the left, then with right*)

Put your hands down and touch your toes (*reach all the way down and touch toes*)
Now stand up real slow (*round back and slowly return to standing position*)
We're about to slow it down, shake (*shake hands in front very slowly – it's a cool shake*)
Slow it down, shake (*keep going until song ends*)

Dance, Freeze, Melt

(This is an action song, just follow the directions of the song for the action – counting to eight while you do each action. When you FREEZE, stop right where you are and whisper as you count to eight. When you MELT, slowly melt down to the floor like ice melting into a puddle as you count to eight. Then jump up and do the next movement.)

BEFORE THE SONG: *Tell the children they are going to do a fun, crazy kind of song. In this song they will dance (show them and let them try) while they count to eight. Then they will freeze (show them and let them try) while they whisper count to eight. Then they will melt – like an ice cube. Stop and ask them what they think a melting ice cube would look like? After they answer, practice melting together. Tell them they are going to dance, jump, twirl, and fly in this song. Even if they have done this song before and know it well, still introduce it like this and point out the sequence of movements. (Sequencing is a pre-reading skill. They are sequencing as they learn that each part will have a movement, a freeze and a melt in addition to there being four movements (dance, jump, twirl, and fly)).*

Dance 2-3-4-5-6-7-8 *(dance to the beat of the music)*

Freeze 2-3-4-5-6-7-8 *(don't move and whisper the count to the beat of the music)*

Melt 2-3-4-5-6-7-8 *(melt like ice to a puddle on the floor)*

Repeat for the following movements:

Jump

Twirl

Fly

You will finished “melted” on the ground.

More “Action” Songs (most of these are available on music streaming platforms, like Spotify):

1. *“The Cool Bear Hunt”* by Dr. Jean (Sings Silly Songs CD, www.drjean.org)
2. *“The Opposite Song”* by Dr. Jean (Keep on Singing and Dancing with Dr. Jean CD, www.drjean.org)
3. *“Boom Chica Boom”* by Dr. Jean (Keep on Singing and Dancing with Dr. Jean CD, www.drjean.org)
4. *“Let’s Move”* by Dr. Jean (Move It Get Fit! Vol 2 CD, www.drjean.org)
5. *“Seven Days of Boot Camp”* by Dr. Jean (Better Bodies and Better Brains CD, www.drjean.org)
6. *“Jumping and Counting”* by Jim Gill (The Irrational Anthem CD, available on Amazon)

7. *"The Dance Along Gong Song"* by Jim Gill (The Irrational Anthem CD, available on Amazon)
8. *"The Goldfish"* by Laurie Berkner (Victor Vito CD, available on iTunes)
9. *"Popcorn Calling Me"* by Laurie Berkner (Buzz, Buzz CD, available on iTunes)
10. *"Button Factory"* by The Learning Station (Rock-n-Roll Songs that Teach CD, available on Amazon or www.learningstationmusic.com)
11. *"Body Boogie"* by The Learning Station (Get Funky and Musical Fun CD, available on Amazon or www.learningstationmusic.com)
12. *"Tarzan"* by The Learning Station (Get Funky and Musical Fun CD, available on Amazon or www.learningstationmusic.com)
13. *"Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"* by the Learning Station (Here We Go Loopty Loo CD, available on Amazon or www.learningstationmusic.com)
14. *"The Freeze Dance"* artist unknown (Birthday Party Singalong CD, available on iTunes)
15. *"Hula Mula"* by The Happy Hatters (Exercise Party CD, available on iTunes)
16. *"The Balancing Act"* by Kevin Quinn (Kids in Motion CD, available on iTunes)
17. *"Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed"* by Stephanie Burton (Mathmagic CD, available at www.pandabooks.com)
18. *"Funky Chicken"* by Melinda Carroll (Girl Scouts Greatist Hits, Vol 6 Little Happy Campers, available on iTunes)
19. *"The Exercise Game #1"* by Mark D. Pencil & Friends (Learning with Hip Hop CD, available on iTunes)
20. *"Following Directions with Exercise"* by Mark D. Pencil & Friends (Learning with Hip Hop CD, available on iTunes)
21. *"Ding Dong"* by Brady Rymer (I Found It! CD, available on iTunes)
22. *"Head and Shoulders"* by Wendy Gelsanliter (Ants Wear Underpants CD, available on iTunes)
23. *"All the Fish"* by Sue Schnitzer (Wiggle and Whirl, Clap and Nap CD, available on iTunes)
24. *"Milkshake Song"* by Anne-Marie Akin (Songs for Wiggleworms CD, available on iTunes)
25. *"I Can Run as Fast as You"* by Tumble Tots (Actions Songs Vol 2 CD, available on iTunes)
26. *"Jump and Hop"* by Karyn Henley (Five Little Ladybugs CD, available on iTunes)

Other Great Resources:

iTunes

www.songsforteaching.com

www.writeoutofthebox.com

www.drjean.org

www.gregandsteve.com

www.learningstationmusic.com

www.happalmer.com

www.movingandlearning.com/

“3-2-1: *Time for Parachute Fun*” by Clare Beswick

“50 *Ways to Use Your Noodle*” by Chris Cavert & Sam Sikes

“50 *More Ways to Use Your Noodle*” by Chris Cavert & Sam Sikes

“*Noodle Madness*” by Chad Triolet (www.noodlegames.net)

“*Noodle Mania*” by Chad Triolet (www.noodlegames.net)

“Great Games for Young Children: Over 100 Games...” by Rae Pica

“*Energizing Brain Breaks*” by David Sladkey

“*Energizing Brain Breaks 2*” by Scott Miller