POLL #1

What would be the biggest hindrance to bringing more movement and kinesthetic learning into your Early Childhood setting?

1. Lack of experience with movement
2. Lack of space in your facility
3. Difficult to justify spending time on it
4. Children wouldn’t want it
5. I already use movement and would like to learn more about it

There is no “correct” answer to this question, of course!

This is a framework for today’s discussion. I will give you many reasons why movement is beneficial to young children.
WHAT IS DANCE?

• Dance is an art form whose medium is the body in motion and stillness.
• Dance crosses many boundaries; it is a creative art, a performing art, and a visual art.
• It is an athletic endeavor as well as an artistic pursuit.

WHAT IS CREATIVE DANCE/CREATIVE MOVEMENT?

Any type of dance that uses movement and its elements as a means of communication and expression. Creative dance is age-appropriate and enriching for young children.

Like music, art, or drama, dance has basic elements, or building blocks:

The Four Basic Elements of Movement

• The Body
• Space
• Time
• Energy
The Body

- Body parts and the range of motion in each one
- Body awareness (sense of balance, shape and orientation in space)
- All the large and fine motor skills the body can execute

Space

- Level
- Direction
- Floor pattern
- Size
- Personal space vs. shared space

Time

- Speed (tempo)
- Stopping and starting
- Rhythm (how time is divided)
Energy

This element encompasses the use of energy, or force, to create specific movement qualities.

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POLL #2

In a 2010 Global CEO study, what was the ONE crucial quality CEO's cited as the most important factor for future success?

1. Proficiency with technology
2. High IQ
3. High EQ
4. Creativity
5. None of the above

Answer to Poll #2:

CREATIVITY!
Benefits of Dance in the Early Childhood Environment

1. Physical Development
2. Accessibility
3. Social and Emotional Development
4. Creativity
5. Kinesthetic Learning

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Guided movement activities develop:

- Balance
- Coordination
- Strength
- Body control

Age-appropriate large motor skills

POLL #3

Study in NE Journal of Medicine of leisure activities and dementia, showed the only exercise associated with lower risk of dementia is:

1. Walking
2. Dancing
3. Group exercise class
4. Swimming
5. None of the above
Answer to Poll #3

“Dancing was the only physical activity associated with a lower risk of dementia.”

Two more recent studies highlighted in *Time Magazine*, “Dance Like Your Doctor is Watching: It’s Great for Your Mind and Body” had similar outcomes.

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**ACCESSIBILITY**

Movement Activities can be done in any space, large or small

Very little equipment is needed. A small tambourine or drum, and/or recorded music, are helpful but not required

Most movement activities can be modified to allow all children to participate

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**Social-Emotional Skill Development**

Self-discipline, setting goals, and working toward goals

Body awareness, spatial awareness

Self expression, awareness of emotions

Individual and group problem-solving skills

Cooperation and taking turns

Impulse control and delaying gratification

Listen to and follow instructions

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Listening to and following instructions; taking turns

CREATIVITY
As this generation of children prepares to enter the global workforce, it is crucial to:

Teach them to look at problems in new ways
Nurture critical thinking skills
Help them to learn collaboration and cooperation in finding new solutions
Dance and the other creative arts can be used to develop these important skills

The man who has no imagination has no wings.
— Muhammad Ali
Dance is basic to learning. Children learn most readily from experience. John Dewey understood this when he asserted, “Action is the test of comprehension” (Dewey, 1915).

To learn by “doing” and to act on knowledge is the basis of kinesthetic learning.

Source: National Dance Education Organization

Kinesthetic learning is becoming more widely understood through the work of Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Howard Gardner (1944-), and other cognitive theorists. Dance, in particular, integrates kinesthetic learning with understanding.

Preschool children do not conceptualize abstract processes (Piaget). They primarily learn through physical and sensory experiences.

Source: National Dance Education Organization

Using Movement to Teach Math Concepts
Teaching ECE Math Using Movement

3 Activities*

1. **Streamers**

- **Materials needed:** Streamers (cloth or crepe paper, enough for 1 per child)
- **Time:** 15-30 minutes
- **Addresses:** Equal distribution of objects

Dancing with streamers

2. **Squiggle, Jiggle, Freeze, Repeat!**

- **Materials needed:** Blackboard and chalk, or dry erase board and markers
- **Time:** 10-15 minutes
- **Addresses:** Representing quantity using symbols

Dance Freely for 7 Counts

3. **Name that Shape, then Dance!**

*Lessons from “WeTHRIVE Active Education Early Childhood” pamphlet
3. Name That Shape, Then Dance

- Materials: Large shapes, 1 of each: circle, triangle, rectangle, square — large enough to be seen by all children during the activity
- Time: 10-15 minutes
- Addresses: Identification of common two-dimensional shapes

DANCE

Using Movement to Teach Early Literacy Concepts

Teaching ECE Language Arts
Using Movement

3 Activities*

1. Make That Letter Shape!*

2. “Run” Rhymes with “Fun”**

3. Read and Dance***

*Lesson from “From A to Z with Energy!”
**Lesson from “One, Two, What Can I Do? Dance and Music for the Whole Day”
***From “Expressing Creativity in Preschool”
1. Make That Letter Shape!

- Materials needed: The book “From A to Z with Energy!”
- Time: 15-30 minutes
- Addresses: Letter Recognition and Sounds

2. “Run” Rhymes with “Fun!”

- Materials needed: List of action words paired with rhyming words
- Time: 15 - 30 minutes
- Addresses: Phonemic awareness, rhyme, vocabulary
3. Read and Dance

- An overview of how to present a Read and Dance activity is described in the handout of my article in the book “Expressing Creativity in Preschool,” NAEYC, 2015
- The second Read and Dance handout is a dance story I created for “Water is Water,” by Miranda Paul

Float and slowly change shape like a cloud
(From the “Water is Water” Dance Story)

POLL

(Repeat of POLL #1)

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5. I already use movement and would like to learn more about it.
POLL # 4

Once again, there is no correct answer.

But has your answer changed since you took the same poll at the beginning of this webinar?

What changed, and why?

My TOP 10 Reasons for Offering Dance to Young Children
1. Activities are multi-layered (physical, creative, kinesthetic learning, and more)
2. Children can discover a new way of expressing themselves
3. Dance has anti-aging benefits
4. Dance is part of the education of the whole child
5. Social-emotional and classroom management benefits
6. Inclusion/Accessibility
7. Physical Benefits
8. Nurtures creativity in children
9. Dance is good for your brain!

And . . .

10. Dancing is fun!

Cincinnati Ballet CincyDance! Outreach Program:
Flash Mob Dance in Washington Park,
Cincinnati, Ohio
1500 Third Graders, May 2015
Website: www.movingislearning.com

Facebook: Moving Is Learning

Instagram: @conniebdow

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