

Exploring

children's social-emotional wellness

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers



Capital District
Child Care Council

Shake Out Those Sillies

It can be tough when children need to expend energy and outside playtime is limited. It is important to offer children indoor gross motor activities for many reasons. Gross motor activity teaches young children concepts of force, direction, space awareness, balance, and object control. By providing young children a chance to “shake out their sillies,” we are also promoting self-control.

A suggested list of supplies to enhance indoor gross-motor play

Bean bags, beach balls, baskets, streamers, plastic soda bottles, yarn balls, small balance beams, hula hoops, jump ropes, sheets, blankets, colored masking tape, CD's and a CD player. With these supplies, the possibilities are endless. Children can also walk, run, skip, hop, and jump without any supplies. All that is needed is a little imagination.

Before you begin

Provide clear expectations for the activity and communicate them each time the activity is started.

- Will shoes stay on or off?
- What do we need to do to the environment to make it safe for children to move?
- Will the children help set up or clean up the activity?
- How will you signal the children when you need their attention?
- How will we take turns?
- What if a child chooses not to follow expectations?
- What can we do to keep our bodies from bumping into a friend?

Some ideas to get you started

- **Create a “parachute activity”:** Have children stand in a wide circle while everyone holds an end of a sheet or blanket. By working together, the children can make the “parachute” move up and down like waves in the ocean, ripples on a lake, etc. Children can take turns placing a yarn or foam ball on the “parachute” to make it dance around.
- **Streamer dancing:** Using remnants of chiffon material from a fabric store, cut strips 2-3 feet long and 3-5 inches wide. Give each child one streamer to start with (later you can give them two, one for each hand) and cue a CD player with music (classical works great for this activity). Every minute or so, put on music of a different tempo, varying between soft, fast, upbeat, and slow, encouraging the children to move their bodies and streamers to the music.
- **Bowling:** Collect 6 empty 2 liter soda bottles, clean them and secure the lids. Children can set these up bowling style, and use masking tape to create a “lane.” Using a soft ball, children can practice bowling. Children can decorate the bowling “pins” by taping paper around the bottles.

Give children a chance to learn self control

