

- Deborah Kayton Michals
- Learn With Action – Physical Activity as the Basis for Learning
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- “18th Annual Birth to Three Institute”

Objectives:

Using Active Learning Exercises - materials that use movement and physical activity integrated with cognitive development - as a regular part of a young child’s day supports development in Infants, Toddlers and Twos in:

- **Motor Skills**
- **Pre-Literacy**
- **Pre-Numeracy**
- **Healthy Body/Eating Awareness**

Active Learning Exercises are easy-to-do activities –

with clear progression in levels from Infant to Toddler to Twos –

that put into action the research demonstrating that active learning sharpens auditory discrimination and multiple-intelligence learning as children listen to and process information through physical activity/movement.

Research shows the connection between movement and physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Active Learning Exercises take common activities used with infants, toddlers and twos and structure them into larger and specific uses of movement towards learning goals. Rhythm and motor skills are incorporated into pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and body/eating awareness Exercises.

Active Learning Exercise Advantages:

- Can be done in any space, from very small to large; indoors or outside**
- Need no special materials - use only what a caregiver, parent or teacher already has available**
- Short 2-10 minute repeatable activities**
- Designed to be used one on one, in any size group**
- Can be used with children with special needs**
- Culturally responsive by grounding learning in the language of movement.**

PROGRESSIONS:

Infant to Toddler to Twos

Spatial and Body Awareness:

Infant - Come Here Hand/Wave Bye-Bye Hand;
Tickle Toes and Wrinkle Nose

Toddler - Waving Game Dance;
Toes and Nose!

Twos - Let's Get Ready to Learn;
Touch Your Toes, Touch Your Nose!

Patterns:

Infant – Peekaboo Hands

Toddler - Bounce Run Stop!

Twos - Fly, Jump, Run, Stop!

Eye Tracking:

Infant – Blue Birdie Flies

Toddler – Peekaboo Around the Room

Twos – Elephant Trunks Walkaround

Pre-Literacy:

Infant - Swaying Name Song

Toddler – Twinkle, Twinkle Star Moves

Twos - Magic Land Moving Story

Pre-Numeracy:

Infant – Bouncing 1's and 2's

Toddler – Little and So Big!

Bunny Hop 1's

Twos - I Was a Little Baby and Now I'm Big;

Jumping Jack Fun (1's and 2's)

Nutritional Awareness:

What We Eat to Be Healthy:

Infant – Choochoo Train; Giggling.

Toddler – What Does This Animal Eat? And We Eat!

Twos - Head to Toe, Make an O, These are Foods that Help Me Grow!

What We Drink To Be Healthy:

Infant – Rocking and Feeding

Toddler – Let's Get Some Water!

Twos – Water Break Game!

Motor Skills:

Infant – Carrying and “Flying”

Toddler – Fly Like an Airplane

Twos – Plane/Train/Truck Game

Crossing the Midline:

Infant – Reach and Grab;

 Moving and Crossing the Midline with Sounds

Toddler - Twisting;

 Planting Flowers Game

Twos - Row Row Row Your Boat;

 Ride Your Bicycle (Hand, Hand, Foot Foot)

Calming:

Infant - Boop, Boop, Gentle Touch.

Toddler - Arms Up, Arms Down, Say Haaa!

Twos – Squeeze, Please, and Say Haaa!

Results:

Infants, toddlers and twos all benefit from Active Learning Exercises linked to, and building on, each level of development in Motor Skills, Pre-Literacy, Pre-Numeracy and Healthy Body/Eating Awareness. Active Learning Exercises build a young child's skills in both cognitive and physical development and promote social and emotional growth.

Conclusion:

Movement is the universal language, and infants, toddlers and twos need to move to learn through active involvement. Putting movement into simple, multidisciplinary structures caregivers, teachers and parents can use and repeat makes this kind of learning enjoyable and promotes successful outcomes.