

- Deborah Kayton Michals
- Learn With Action –  
Physical Activity as the Basis for Learning
- July 29, 2014
- “18th Annual Birth to Three Institute”

# Touch Your Toes; Touch Your Nose

Help the children increase flexibility and motor control.

## How to Do It

1. Ask the children to sit on the floor in a circle.
2. Encourage the children to stretch their legs out in front of them. Ask them to lean over and touch their toes with both hands.
3. Ask the children to sit up and touch their noses with both hands.
4. Move your hands from your nose out in a wide circle away from your body, all the way around until you hide your hands behind your back. Encourage the children to copy you.
5. Ask them, "Where are your fingers hiding? Nobody knows! Let's count to three and you can surprise me! Count with me: One, two, three!" You and the children quickly bring your hands to the front and say, "Surprise!"
6. Repeat this sequence several times, as long as the children are interested.

## Expand It!

Increase and decrease the speed of the parts of the exercise to increase the surprise and humor.



BODY PATTERNS AND  
SPATIAL AWARENESS

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# The First Rhyme Song: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”

Movements reinforce the rhythm and lyrics of a familiar song.

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## How to Do It

1. Choose a simple song to sing with the children, such as “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Sit in circle time and sing the song first, just having children use simple hand motions to illustrate the lyrics.
2. Once they are familiar with the song, ask the children to stand up and sing the song, and have them add these motions:
  - Twinkle, twinkle little star, (wiggle fingers while dancing around)*
  - How I wonder what you are. (open arms wide and look around)*
  - Up above the world so high (dance while raising arms, wiggle fingers)*
  - Like a diamond in the sky. (make a diamond shape with hands high in air)*
  - Twinkle, twinkle little star, (wiggle fingers while dancing around)*
  - How I wonder what you are. (open arms wide and look around)*
3. Now add another fun movement. Say, “The stars are spinning!” Spin around and around in one direction.
4. Say, “Stars, stop! Now go the other way!” Stop and spin around and around in the other direction. (Changing direction keeps kids calm and stops them from getting dizzy.)

## Expand It!

Children can be different kinds of stars: fast, slow, spinning slowly, spinning fast, twinkling a little, twinkling a lot, twinkling high, twinkling low, feeling heavy, or feeling light. Children can sit in a circle, and each child can take a turn being the star while standing in the middle while the others sing the song using only hand motions or tapping the rhythm on their knees.

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# Twisting

Stretch the muscles of the spine and hips, and encourage cross-body patterning.

## How to Do It

1. Ask the children to stand in the center of the room. They may put their hands on their hips, or they may choose to hold their arms out at their sides.
2. Show them how to twist from the waist. Let them explore that movement with you.
3. Add a knee bend as you twist. Encourage them to bend their knees and twist as low as they can.
4. Encourage them to twist back up to standing.
5. Continue in this manner, adding some music for them to twist to.



BODY PATTERNS AND  
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# Water Break

Teach the children about the importance of drinking water throughout the day, especially before, during, and after exercise.

## How to Do It

1. Ask the children to stand with enough room around them so they can move comfortably without running into each other.
2. Tell them that drinking enough water is very important, especially when they are running around and active. Tell them that, during this activity, they will pretend to have water breaks by running to a certain spot in the room. Indicate a place, and have them practice going there and returning to their spots when you say, "Water break!"
3. Ask the children to do a series of brief cardio exercises:  
*Run in a circle*  
*Water break!*  
*Jump up and down*  
*Water break!*  
*Hop on one foot*  
*Water break!*  
*Kicks*  
*Water break!*
4. Take the children for a well-deserved, real water break.

YUMMY FOODS THAT  
HELP ME GROW

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# Let's Get Ready to Learn

Use this chant as a way to capture the children's attention and get them focused at the start of the day.

## How to Do It

Invite the children to gather with you as you say this chant:

*I am ready to learn now,*

*And I see you are, too.*

*Let's put on our listening ears. (touch ears)*

*Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding.*

*Let's put on our watching eyes. (touch eyelids)*

*Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding.*

*Let's put on a funny nose, boop! (touch nose)*

*And our mouth. (tap open mouth, making "wawawa" sound)*

*Let's put on our big feet! (bend knees and tap feet loudly on floor)*

*Let's put on our tiny feet! (tap feet quietly on floor)*

*Let's put on our flying arms. (hold out arms and flap gently)*

*And our flying fingers. (flutter fingers with arms outstretched)*

*I am ready to learn now,*

*And I see you are, too!*



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# JUMPING JACK FUN!

An exercise game that helps kids learn to move their bodies, get cardio to prevent obesity, and to learn to count to 2.

**Toddlers** jump and wave their arms in “open and close” moves. You model opening and closing the arms.

**Twos** can add counting 1 and 2 while they jump!

It will look like the kids are just jumping and waving, but they will be getting the start of the concepts as they get their heart rates going.

**JUMP WITH YOUR LEGS!** Stop.

**NOW JUST MOVE YOUR ARMS!** ARMS OPEN, ARMS CLOSE Stop.

**ADD COUNTING with ARMS!** SAY 1! ARMS OPEN, SAY 2! ARMS CLOSE Stop.

**NOW ARMS AND LEGS AT THE SAME TIME!**

ARMS OPEN AND JUMPING LEGS

ARMS CLOSE AND JUMPING LEGS

OPEN AND CLOSE, OPEN AND CLOSE. Stop.

**NOW SAY 1 AND 2, 1 AND 2 WHILE YOU DO IT!**

SAY 1! ARMS OPEN AND JUMPING LEGS

SAY 2! ARMS CLOSE AND JUMPING LEGS

**DO IT LOTS OF TIMES. TRY FOR 10 AND DO IT AGAIN!**

This activity can be done with ANY BOOK! It teaches kids what happens in a story, the beginning of reading readiness.

## READ A BOOK, SHOW A BOOK



1. **The Beginning** - All stories start with something happening! Do what the caterpillar does!

2. **The Middle** - 

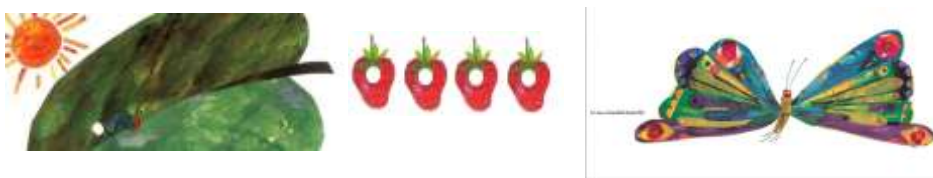
All stories have actions in the middle that tell the Five W's – **Who, What, Where, When and Why** things happen.  
Do what the caterpillar does!



3. **The End** -

Look at the last pictures. All stories have an end. Do what the caterpillar does!

4. Do the **3 Actions** again! It's fun! **Beginning, Middle, End.**  
You can do them slow and then fast.





Esta actividad se puede realizar ¡CON CUALQUIER LIBRO!  
Enseña a los niños qué ocurre en una historia, el comienzo de aprender a leer.

## LEA UN LIBRO, MUESTRE UN LIBRO



### 1. El principio -

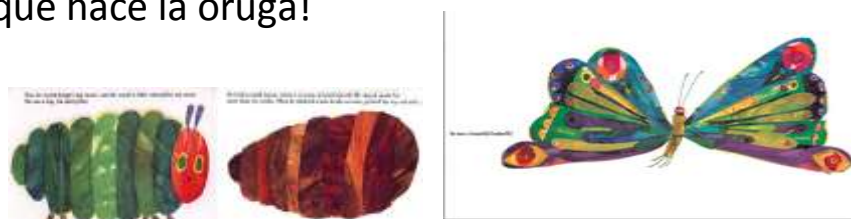
¡Todas las historias empiezan con algo que ocurre! ¡Haz lo que la oruga hace!



### 2. El medio -

Todas las historias tienen acciones en el medio que contestan las **Cinco Ws** (en ingles) – **Quién, Qué, Dónde, Cuándo y Por qué** ocurren las cosas.

¡Haz lo que hace la oruga!



### 3. El final -

Mirad los últimos dibujos. Hablad de por qué **es el final** de la historia. Todas las historias tienen un final. ¡Haz lo que hace la oruga!

¡Repetid **los 3 pasos!** ¡Es divertido! **Principio, medio, fin.** Podéis hacerlo despacio y después más r



## Resources:

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