

EASY DOES IT

Activity Songs for Basic Motor Skill Development

by Hap Palmer

Easy Does It is a collection of simple activity songs which encourages children to explore basic motor skills in an enjoyable, relaxed way. While the basic activities are easy enough for very young children, more challenging suggestions are given for older children. (*see increasing the challenge* :) All children can be involved at the same time. The focus is on moving with ease and enjoyment, an important aspect of efficient movement. The recording can act as an informal diagnostic tool. The teacher observes the group performing the challenges and notes the areas that need further attention.

Skills included are: balance, locomotor and axial movements, eye-hand coordination, spatial awareness, body awareness, and relaxation.

TRACK #1

The BEANBAG

Skills: eye-hand coordination, body image, balance, posture

Materials: one beanbag for each child

Setting: children scattered around room

Lyric:

*Throw the beanbag, and catch
Turn around, turn around, stamp, stamp, stamp
Throw the beanbag, and catch
Turn around, turn around, stamp, stamp, stamp
Put it on your head and walk around the room
Put it on your head and walk around the room*

Repeat

*Put it on your shoulder
Put it on your elbow
Put it on your knee
Put it on your back now
Put it on your stomach
Put it on your fingers
Put it on your foot
Put it on your arm*

*Put it on your head and walk around the room
Put it on your head and walk around the room*

*Throw the beanbag, and catch
Turn around, turn around, stamp, stamp, stamp*

Repeat 4 times

Explanation: Children perform challenges heard in the song.

Increasing the challenge: Older children may work in partners, try to throw bean bags higher, try to throw and catch with one hand, or try to throw and catch bean bag 2 or 3 times each time they hear the challenge.

TRACK #2

BIRDS IN THE CIRCLES

Skills: hop, jump, balance, leap, gallop

Material: 1 circle for each child (any kind of hoop, rope laid on floor in circle, or circle drawn on floor)

Setting: scattered, with lots of room between circles

Lyric:

*Birds in the circle stand on one foot
Birds in the circle stand on the other foot
Bunnies in the circle hop on one foot
Bunnies in the circle hop on the other foot*

Kittens in the circles sound asleep

*Frogs in the circle jump outside
Frogs outside jump back in
Ponies in the circle leap over the edge
Ponies outside gallop around*

Kittens in the circles sound asleep

*Monkeys in the circle jump and turn
Monkeys in the circle jump and scratch
Birdies in the circle fly outside
Birdies outside fly back home*

Kittens in the circle sound asleep

Explanation: Children respond to two challenges at once.

1. pretend to be an animal
2. perform the suggested movement

TRACK #3

HIGH WIRE ARTIST

Skills: balance

Material: balance beam, rope, tape, or chain line for each child

Setting: scattered

Lyric:

*I'm a high wire artist, a tightrope walker
To do my show and do it well is my desire
People sitting below me
Faces still as they're watching me
Balancing alone on the wire
I slowly walk forward, turn around and walk back
Then I slowly walk backwards
Stopping somewhere near the middle of the wire*

*I balance on one leg
I balance on the other leg
Like a dancer I move my arms
Changing legs with the feeling
My silhouette on the big top ceiling*

Repeat last three lines

Explanation: During the introduction, children pretend to climb up a ladder to their "tightrope". Then children move along their "tightrope" responding to challenges heard in the song. At the end children have an opportunity to do whatever they wish on their "tightrope".

Increasing the challenge: Use the narrow side of balance beam, raise the balance beam, have children perform challenges with eyes closed; give specific, more difficult challenges during free movements portion at the end of

the song. i.e.: Make one foot and one hand touch beam.
Move backwards to the middle of the beam and standing on
one foot, turn all the way around.

TRACK #4

TREE FELL DOWN

Skills: spatial awareness: moving over and under a stick

Material: 1 stick (long dowel, broom handle, etc.)

Setting: one large circle

Lyric:

*As I was walking homeward bound
One cold and windy night
I heard a crack; a tree fell down
and there it lay blocking my way*

*So I went over, over
I made it home by going over the tree*

*As I was walking homeward bound
One cold and windy night
I heard a crack; a tree fell down
And there it lay blocking my way*

*So I went under, under
I made it home by going under the tree*

*As I was walking homeward bound
One cold and windy night
I heard a crack; a tree fell down
and there it lay blocking my way*

So I jumped over, over

I made it home by jumping over the tree

*Suppose you're walking homeward bound
On a cold and windy night
You hear a crack; a tree falls down
Now find a way to get home today*

*Show us your way, your way
Show us your way to get by the tree*

Explanation: One child stands just inside the circle holding stick vertically. Children walk around the circle. When the tree "cracks," the child holding the stick lets it drop across the path of the children moving around the circle. Children in the circle then move past the stick in the ways suggested by the lyric. The last time, children choose their own way to move past the "tree".

Increasing the challenge: Raise stick for children to go over, lower stick for going under. Have children limbo under the stick.

TRACK #5

CIRCLE YOUR WAY

Skills: jump, skip, slide, walk backwards

Materials: one hoop or circle for each child

Setting: children stand by hoops, scattered around room. If no hoops are available children may form one large circle to do activity.

Lyric:

*We're moving around the circle today
Can you think of a way, a way you can say
Put it in words and let it be heard
And we'll all move around the circle your way*

*We're jumping around the circle today
Jumping's a way, a way you can say
Lisa has said that we can all jump
And we're moving around the circle her way*

*We're skipping around the circle today
Skipping's a way, a way you can say
Johnny has said that we can all skip
And we're moving around the circle his way*

*We're sliding around the circle today
Sliding's a way, a way you can say
Valerie has said that we can all slide
And we're moving around the circle her way*

*Walking backwards around the circle today
Walking's a way, a way you can say
Kelly has said we can walk backwards
And we're moving around the circle her way*

Explanation: Children do movements suggested in the song. During rhythm only (woodblocks) part, children stop moving and listen for the next suggestion. Teacher may want to ring a bell as an additional signal.

Increasing the challenge: Use Circle Your Way II, Track 5. Children make up ways to move around the circle. These may be sung using the child's name and idea as in part I. Locomotion movements (hop, run), animal imitations (monkey, cat), or "pretends" (as if you were being chased by a bear, or like an old man with a cane), can all be ways to move around the circle.

TRACK #6

MOVE AROUND THE COLOR

Skills: color identification, walk, run, jump, crawl

Materials: 4-8 objects of each color - red, yellow, blue, green (cards, hoops, scarves, etc.)

Setting: colors scattered randomly on the floor around the room

Lyric:

Can you walk around the color blue?

Blue, blue, walk around blue

Can you walk around the color blue?

Blue, blue, walk around blue

Can you run around the color red?

Red, red, run around red

Can you run around the color red?

Red, red, run around red

Can you jump around the color yellow?

Yellow, yellow, jump around yellow

Can you crawl around the color green?

Green, green, crawl around green

Can you crawl around the color green?

Green, green, crawl around green

Go to the color that you like best

Move around the color that you like best

Repeat last two lines

Explanation: Here is a simple color activity which gives even very young children plenty of time to find the color they hear and respond to the movement challenge

TRACK #7

SMOKE DRIFTS TO THE SKY

Skills: relaxation, body part identification

Materials: none

Settings: Children lie on backs, scattered around the room

Lyrics:

*Lift your right leg up slowly
Slowly move it high
Lift your right leg up slowly
Like smoke drifts to the sky*

*Lift your left leg up slowly
Slowly move it high
Lift your left leg up slowly
Like smoke drifts to the sky*

*Let yourself relax while lying
on your back
You don't have to think
just let your body sink*

*Let your arms rise up slowly
Slowly move them high
Let your arms rise up slowly
Like smoke drifts to the sky*

*Knees and elbows rise slowly
Slowly move them high*

*Knees and elbows rise slowly
Like smoke drifts to the sky*

*Let yourself relax while lying on your back
You don't have to think, just let your body sink*

Explanation: Children slowly raise each body part named in the song, holding it up for a few seconds, then allow it to relax and drop to the floor at the sound of the slide whistle.

TRACK #8

FRIEND ON THE FLOOR

Skills: relaxation, body part identification

Materials: none

Setting: children in partners: one lying on the floor, the other sitting

Lyric:

*My friend on the floor can help me
Learn about parts of the body
I can help my friend relax
By moving each part gently*

*These are my friend's legs
These are my friend's arms
These are my friend's shoulders
This is my friend's head
These are my friend's knees
These are my friend's elbows*

Repeat 1st verse

Explanation: Child who is seated gently moves the body parts of his partner as they are named. The child lying down tries to relax totally and let his legs, arms, shoulders, etc. be gently moved and relaxed.

TRACK #9

NATURE'S SWEET ENDLESS SONG

Skill: axial movements: push/pull, twist/turn, rise/fall, open/close

Material: none

Setting: scattered

Lyric:

*Waves are rolling, slowly moving in and moving out
Waves are rolling, slowly moving in and moving out
In and out, shifting sands
Ever on and on
Just singing nature's sweet endless song*

*Earth is turning, through the seasons turning round
and round
Earth is turning, through the seasons turning round
and round
Day and night, dark and light
Ever on and on
Just singing nature's sweet endless song*

*The river flows, it curves and turns
Then it straightens out and bends again
Winding on to the sea*

*Water rising, rising up to form the clouds so high
Then it's falling, rain drops falling down to give us life
Rise and fall, up and down*

*Ever on and on
Just singing nature's sweet endless song
Flowers open, show their color to the morning sun
Give their pollen, then they close up when their work
is done
Open close, live and die
Ever on and on
Just singing nature's sweet endless song*

*The river flows, it curves and turns
Then it straightens out and bends again
Winding on to the sea*

Explanation: Children act out situations described in the lyric. This may be done with just hands, with whole body in seated position, or with whole body and free movement around the room. Teacher may do specific movements and have children follow, or children may interpret the song with their own movements.

TRACK #10

CIRCLE YOUR WAY (Instrumental)



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