

Good Move!

Providing Movement-rich  
Outdoor Play

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How outdoor provision can support young children's emotional well-being and physical health through building upon their natural desires and interests

Movement and doing:

building brain and body

*“It is time that we recognised that the brain does not learn by itself: the body learns too, and if we are to educate our children properly we must encourage developmental parity between body and brain.*

*Physical education is as important as the teaching of literacy and maths in the early years.”*

Sally Goddard Blythe TES 7.1.00

# What can movement do for the developing child?

- Underpin mental health
- Develop physical health
- Support personal and social health
- Aid learning
- Lay the foundations for attitudes and interests for life (runner beans not couch potatoes)

# Mental health through the joy of movement

Develops from satisfying the strong urge to explore movement and from building self-image, self-confidence and self-esteem ('look at me')

A love of activity and movement gives great emotional benefits

Movement actually makes you feel good: feeling life in every limb!

# Physical health through activity

Builds up from developing muscles, tendons, bones, nerve connections, co-ordination and the vast array of movement skills needed for life

Moving well brings enjoyment of being active, now and in the future

*“Time spent outdoors is perhaps the most important factor influencing how active young children are”*

Doherty & Whiting 2004

# Personal & social health through physical play with others

Being able to join in and do the things their friends do

Learning how to play with others and forming relationships through movement

Playing physically: running, super-hero and rough & tumble play

Learning through moving and doing:  
brain and body develop together

Movement activates the brain to make it  
ready for new learning

It physically builds the brain through the  
creation of nerve networks

And it facilitates expression of what has  
been learned, deepening the learning

*“Physical development is the key that  
unlocks all learning”* MacKintyre & Mcvitty 2004

*“Young children learn about themselves and their environment through movement.*

*Movement is thought in action; children have first to experience the world actively through all of their senses before they can think in the abstract and hold thoughts on the memory of those things in their heads as pictures, concepts or symbols.”*

Margaret Donaldson, *Children's Minds* 1978

Joy of movement and physical play:  
activity providing 'exercise'

Learning through doing, with your  
whole body

# What can movement do for the developing child?

- Develop, integrate and modulate sensory structures throughout the body
- Develop balance through the vestibular sense
- Develop body-sense: a feeling of your body and where it is (proprioception)
- Develop coordination and linkage across the brain and body

*A well organised balance system indicates a well organised brain.*

*Balance is trained through movement.*

*Those children who are unable to stay still are showing their balance systems are not yet sufficiently mature to remain still for long periods of time.*

*They need to move to get their brains into gear.*

Sally Goddard Blythe

Balance through the vestibular sense:

*turning, spinning, rolling,*

*swinging, rocking,*

*tilting, falling, jumping,*

*bouncing, sliding, moving fast*

Body sense through proprioception:

*pushing, pulling,*

*stretching, hanging,*

*lifting, carrying, throwing*

Co-ordination through linking the two sides of the brain:

*crawling, clambering, climbing,  
steps and slopes*

## Young children need adults who...

- ❖ Understand the role of movement and action in the lives of young children
- ❖ Value and enjoy young children's pleasure in movement, action and mastering physical skills
- ❖ Know what developmental challenges young children need

## Young children need adults who...

- ❖ Create a movement-rich environment, full of suitable stimuli and challenges
- ❖ Build movement and physical activity into every experience outdoors
- ❖ Provide encouragement and just enough support for children to extend their abilities at their own pace