Growing In-Sync Children

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Between birth and about six, children learn about their world by feeling it and moving their body through it. The more opportunities children have to move, the more they will feel comfortable in their bodies — and “In Sync” with the world.

Are your students In Sync? Consider them as you look at the quiz below. The more checks, the more likely your classroom is filled with “In-Sync” children.

A Quick Quiz

Do your children...
☐ Move easily and effectively?
☐ Enjoy movement?
☐ Join in group games?
☐ Try new activities?

Do your children find it easy to ...
☐ Function in a classroom environment?
☐ Work well in groups?
☐ Make friends?
☐ Get dressed?

Are your children...
☐ Emotionally secure?
☐ Easy to get along with?
☐ Comfortable in the world?
When children are In Sync, their movements are efficient and fluid. They feel comfortable in their bodies, and, being comfortable in their bodies, they feel good. We all function better when we feel good. Everything works.

Children who are out of sync do not share the ease and comfort of an In-Sync child. They may be clumsy, trip over themselves, avoid playground equipment, exhibit behavior problems, and have especially low self-esteem. They often develop into adults who are equally uncomfortable in their own bodies.

How can you, as a caring preschool teacher, help your children become In Sync? Here are fun suggestions, based on our book, *Growing an In-Sync Child: Simple, Fun Activities to Help Every Child Develop, Learn and Grow* (Perigee, 2010).

1) Consider how much time children spend at sedentary or technology-based activities. Be sure your children spend *equal or more* time actively moving. Two-dimensional activities on computer screens do little to develop and enhance preschoolers’ sensory, perceptual and visual-motor skills. *Understand that only by experiencing the three-dimensional world by moving within it can a child build a solid foundation for all subsequent skills.*

2) Introduce novel ways of moving throughout the day. For instance, instead of walking, have the children:
   - Jump, slide or gallop to get their coats from their cubbies.
   - Scoot on their bottoms or wriggle on their tummies to join Circle Time.
   - Creep on hands and knees during Clean-up Time.

These large locomotor activities strengthen muscle tone and prepare young bodies for small, discrete movement, such as cutting and drawing with crayons.
3) Outside, encourage children to:
   - Go barefoot to feel differences between sand, grass and black-top.
   - Step in puddles and make mudpies and snowballs.
   - Jump in leaf piles and snow mounds.

These “messy” activities organize young brains to be ready for future reading and hand-writing tasks.

4) Entice children to become aware of the space around them. The young eye is designed to look at things far and wide, more than near and narrow. Have the children:
   - Clap bubbles between their hands.
   - With their fingers, noses, and feet, track a flashlight’s beam as it moves across the ceiling.
   - Catch slowly falling feathers on the backs of their hands, elbows, or knees.

Watching these slow-moving targets trains the eyes to move smoothly, which is a precursor to reading.

5) Instead of using bake sale funds for a computer for the classroom, buy one for yourself and let your students play in the box that it came in. Maneuvering in and out of a large box — or around a hoop, under a table, or through a tunnel — allows children to be in charge of their bodies and gives them the confidence to handle life’s challenges successfully.
You Are Already Growing In-Sync Children

Every time you ...

- Bounce a child on your knee
- Let a child walk in your shoes
- Let a child roll down a hill
- Roll a ball to a child
- Toss a ball to a child
- Let a child get in and out of his car seat or swing
- Let a child push a wheelbarrow or pull a wagon
- Let a child jump off the bottom stair
- Let a child mix the play dough
- Let a child pull on her own boots
- Let a child jump in a puddle
- Give a child different sponges at Clean-up Time
- Offer differently textured snacks
- Hug a child tightly

... you help your students become more In Sync!
Where Am I?

Illustration by Durell Godfrey

By maneuvering in small spaces and figuring out how to position their bodies to play this game, children develop and enhance their body awareness, spatial awareness, and motor planning. These skills are prerequisites for future success when learning to write, organize one’s desk and papers, and play sports.

What You Need

Several large cartons big enough for children to hide in

What You Do

1. Say, “Friends, hide inside these boxes. Make sure all of you is hidden.”
2. Say, “Can you put just your two hands outside the box?”
3. Ask the children to put only the following body parts outside their boxes:
   - Head
   - Elbows
   - Knees
   - Feet and head (nothing else!)

Ways to Make it More Challenging

- Use more complex parts or combinations of body parts, such as
  - One foot and one hand
  - Both elbows and one foot
  - Tummy
  - Tongue
- Reverse the directions and have the children put their body parts into the box while they are outside the box.
Heads Up, Toes Down

Illustration by Durell Godfrey

Got a classroom full of fidgety kids? This quick stretching activity will liven up the drowsy and calm the restless. As children listen and move, they develop and enhance bilateral coordination, auditory processing, and directionality, which are essential skills for getting dressed, conversing, and moving across the playground.

What You Will Need: Xylophone and mallet, or keyboard

What to Do:
1. Show the xylophone (or keyboard) and say, “A musical scale is like a ladder. You can climb up, step by step. Watch and listen as I play up the musical scale.” Hit the lowest, largest tone on the xylophone (or Middle C on the keyboard) and slowly play and sing, “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.” If you can’t carry a tune in a bucket, just say the numbers in a gradually rising voice. “One” is in your lowest voice; “8” is in your highest.
2. Say, “Now, children you sing the numbers with me.” Play up the scale again.
3. Play down the scale, singing in reverse from “8” to “1.”
4. Say, “Children, put your hands on the floor (or knees) and move your hands little by little, as we sing up and down the scale.”

Ways to Make It More Challenging:
- Crouch and place hands on the floor or on knees. As you sing the numbers, rise to a stand, gradually stretching your hands overhead.
- Reverse direction of body, coming down instead of rising up.
- Lie on backs on the floor and repeat variations, raising legs instead of arms.

Growing an In-Sync Child: Simple, Fun Activities to Help Every Child Develop, Learn, and Grow; first edition...Â See more of Growing an In-Sync Child on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of Growing an In-Sync Child on Facebook. Log In. Forget account? or. Growing an In-Sync Child and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more. Books.Â She has developed an innovative program to screen young children for Sensory Processing Disorder, and writes and speaks regularly about the subject. She has an M.A. in Education and Human Development. Start reading Growing an In-Sync Child on your Kindle in under a minute. Don't have a Kindle? Get your Kindle here, or download a FREE Kindle Reading App. Based on the authors' more than seventy combined years of professional success working with children of all abilities, Growing an In-Sync Child provides parents, teachers, and other professionals with the tools to give every child a head start and a leg A fresh and timely approach to understanding the profound impact of motor development on children of all ages and stages. Based on the authors' more than seventy combined years of professional success working with children of all abilities, Growing an In-Sync Child provides parents, teachers, and other professionals with the tools to