

# Activities for Brain Based learning through Movement

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## THE BRAIN DANCE

Adapted from work by Anne Green Gilbert for the University of Hartford Magnet School

\* **Deep breathing:** Inhale through the nose, exhale through the mouth. Repeat 3 times..

\* **Tactile pressure:** Create a body pattern that you will repeat each time you do this section. For instance, starting with the left arm and ending with the head.

Be sure you touch all parts of your body, including as much of your back, neck and head as possible.

1. Squeezing. Using your hands to squeeze your body in the sequence you have designed.

2. Light tapping.

3. Slapping.

4. Brushing.

Purpose: To stimulate blood flow, to increase sensory awareness.

\***X and O:** This is a full body stretch in the shape of an X. Stretch all the way out with fingers outstretched, away from your belly button. And then the O stretch is done by squeezing yourself into a small ball. Be sure to stay balanced on your feet. Repeat X and O 2 times.

Purpose: To stretch all parts of the body, to increase awareness of -where your body is in space. This is a proximal- distal stretch: away from the center of the body and then toward the center of the body..

\***Raindrop:** This is a head to toe stretch of the spinal column. Pretend that a drop of rain has landed on your head and you are rolling it down your spinal column all the way to your toes. Then send it back up your spinal column to your head, picking up your head last and stretching it up to the ceiling.

Purpose: To stretch the body lengthwise.. This is a cephalo- caudal stretch : from head to toe.

\* **Follow your hands:** This begins in a position with both arms bent out to the side of your body. One arm stays stationary and the other travels across the front of the body to the opposite side to meet the stationary hand. Return the moving hand to its original position. Repeat then change hands. Be sure that you are visually tracking the moving arm and the upper body remains square to the hips. It defeats the purpose if the shoulders move.

Purpose: To increase visual tracking skills, to increase midline crossing skills, to increase body awareness.

\* **Follow your arm:** Stretch one arm out to the side and, keeping it straight, move it across the front of your body to the other side. Again, watching it and keeping your shoulders square. Repeat then change arms.

Purpose: To increase visual tracking skills, to increase midline crossing, to increase proprioception.

**\*Puppet stretch:** On the same side of the body, reach up with your arm and leg, balancing on the opposite leg. Both arm and leg should move at the same time as though attached together with a string like a marionette. Repeat 4 times then change sides.

Purpose: To increase unilateral coordination, balance.

**\* Climbing stretch:** Reaching up with opposite arm and leg while balancing on the standing leg. Repeat 4 times.

Purpose: To increase bilateral coordination, balance.

**\*Cross over :** Begin with one arm stretched up and cross it in front of your body while lifting the opposite knee. Touch elbow and knee together. Repeat 4 times.

Purpose: To increase midline crossing, bilateral coordination and balance.

**\*Spining:** This is a very important part of the dance. Put your hands up in front of your body to protect you from hitting anything. Spin in one direction for 15 seconds or until you get dizzy Stop and take in a few deep breaths as in the beginning of the dance. Spin in the opposite direction for 15 seconds or until you get dizzy. It is important to listen to your body and stop when you are dizzy. This is where your body learns to keep itself upright. Be sure that spinning take place in both directions.

Purpose: To create vestibular stimulation and increase muscle tone, to teach the body to right' itself, to learn to listen to body signals.

*\*\*There is so much learning that takes place in this dance that it should be done at different times during the day. We have found that with some classical music in the background it becomes a very calming event. To quote Ann Green Gilbert, "when people tell me they can't afford to take the time to do this, I tell they can't afford to NOT do this."*

*Enjoy and use often!!*

## **ENERGIZERS**

Name of Activity: **Over, Under, Around and Through**

Grade Level: K-2

Formation: Students line up around the perimeter of the room (can also be done standing at desks)

Equipment: None

Rules/Directions:

1. Teacher decides on a pattern where students go over, under, around and through imaginary or real objects.
2. Lead the line of students around the room, following this pattern for at least 30 seconds each.
  - Example 1 – Over a sea of sticky peanut butter, under a cherry tree, around an ice cream cone and through a sea of Jell-O.
  - Example 2 – (geography) Over a turtle, under a big dog, around the elephant and through a giraffe's legs.

Examples: **Over Under Around Through**

Steep mountain, subway, round rock, deep dark cave, Atlantic Ocean, underground your desk, a creaky door, wiggly bridge, sand chair, long tunnel, steep hill, thorny bush, water, dirty trash can, haunted house, limbo stick, the school, a swamp, a spooky hole, camp fire, swimming pool, the bed of a sleeping giant

Name of Activity: **Pass it On—UNO style**

Grade Level: 1-3

Formation: Form a circle around perimeter of the room

Equipment: UNO cards

Rules/Directions:

1. Teacher hands out one card to each student.
2. Students identify color on card and perform activity that corresponds to that color for 10-15 seconds:

- Blue: jump to the sky
- Red: squats
- Yellow: twist
- Green: swim

Variations:

1. Teach colors in Spanish.
2. For younger children, squat and slide card on floor to the right rather than handing the card to the next person.

Name of Activity: **Inches, Feet and Yards, Oh My!**

Grade Level: 1-4

Formation: Students line up around the perimeter of the room or stand at desks.

Equipment: None

Rules/Directions:

1. Have students start with feet side by side and move one set of toes ahead of the other set of toes to represent inches or “small”.
2. Have students place one foot in front of the other to represent feet or “medium”.
3. Have students take one giant step forward or backward to represent yards or “large”.
4. Call out different measurements:
  - Example—Move forward 2 feet, back 5 inches, sideways 1 yard.
5. Have all students move in the same direction.
6. Have students jumping, twisting and stretching between measurements for at least 30 seconds.

Variations:

1. Add directions (right, left, forward, back).
2. Use the metric system.

Name of Activity: **Rescue 9 - 1 - 1**

Grade Level: K-3

Formation: Standing at desks

Equipment: None

Rules/Directions:

1. Review with the students how to make a 911 call.

2. Have students use their bodies to make shapes of 9 - 1 - 1 while chanting 911!
3. Review fire safety: what are the things we all need to know in order to survive a fire?
  - Practice crawling under the smoke at least 30 seconds
  - Practice “stop, drop and roll” (using space available) several times
4. Review storm safety procedures:
  - Practice moving away from windows
  - Practice covering their heads

Name of Activity: **Memory Lane**

Grade Level: 3-5

Formation: Standing at desks with partners

Equipment: None

Rules/Directions:

1. Teacher calls out one task at a time and partners complete that task.
2. Tasks should be called out in the order provided.
  - High five right
  - High five left
  - Low five right
  - Low five left
  - High ten
  - Low ten
  - Backwards ten high
  - Backwards ten low
  - Tunnel ten (feet apart, back to back, reach between legs and hit low ten)
  - Sole of shoes right
  - Sole of shoes left
  - Elbow right
  - Elbow left
  - Both elbows
3. Partners repeat the tasks beginning with the first task each time.
4. Have students repeat sequence

Name of Activity: **Silent Signs**

Grade Level: 4-5

Formation: Standing at desks

Equipment: Map

Rules/Directions:

1. Teacher chooses 1 student to go to the map.
2. Teacher chooses location (state or country) and tells everyone in the class except the student at the map (can write location on board or piece of paper).
3. Class uses movement without talking to guide the student to the correct location.
  - East: knee lifts
  - West: jumping jocks
  - North: raise the roof
  - South: squats
4. Repeat with new location and new student.

Variation:

1. Post the direction that corresponds to each movement on the board.

Name of Activity: **Travel the Tarheel State**

Grade Level: 3-5

Formation: Standing at desks

Equipment: None

Rules/Directions:

1. Teacher leads the class on a virtual tour of North Carolina. Students move according to the actions listed below for at least 30 seconds.

- Hike the Appalachian Trail
- Climb to the top of Mount Mitchell
- Whitewater raft on the Nantahala River
- Fish at the Outerbanks
- Shoot a basket in the Dean Dome
- Go swimming in the Atlantic Ocean
- Fly a kite at Kitty Hawk
- March like a soldier from Fort Bragg
- Drive a racecar around the Rockingham Raceway
- Do a touchdown dance like the Carolina Panthers
- Climb to the top of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse
- Act like a monkey or elephant at the NC Zoo

- Variations:
1. Order the tour from east to west or west to east to finish tour at your location.
  2. Use a state map to point out landmarks.

Name of Activity: **Number Spots Addition**

1. Stand Up and find a partner
2. Here are the spot values: right shoulder = 1, right ear = 2, nose = 3, left ear = 4 and left shoulder is 5.
3. Without talking, one person will touch two of their own number spots and the other person will have to say the numbers out loud and then add them together.
4. Once one person has done a few problems, the other person can give some problems.

Name of Activity: **Color Pattern**

Select 7 colors on 7 different objects: touch in order, repeat

Name of Activity: **Simon-Says**

Content built in (relate to lesson focus, etc)

Name of Activity: **Body measure**

Select an object:

- Measure with knuckles
- Measure with feet, etc.
- Compare/analyze

Name of Activity: **Thumb and Pinkie**

This one is great for getting students to "think" about their movement.

Take your left hand and have your fingers in and your thumb up.

Then take your right hand and put your thumb in and all your fingers in except your pinkie.

So in other words, your thumb up and pinkie out.

Now switch the roles of your hands

Name of Activity: **Toe Tapping**

1. Stand Up.

2. Face your partner.

3. Both you and your partner put out your right leg and tap your right feet together 1 time and say "1" out loud.

4. Tap your left feet together 3 times and say "3" out loud.

5. Tap your right feet together 2 times and say "2" out loud.

6. Continue the 1,3,2 toe tapping pattern alternating feet.

7. See how fast you can go.

Name of Activity: **Hand Shake**

1. Stand up and find a partner. Decide who is A and who is B.

2. Shake right hands. Shake left hands.

3. Now do a right hand fist bump, and then a left hand fist bump. (A fist bump is making a fist, and lightly touching finger sections that are closest to the wrist)

4. Now do a right hand hammer tap. Person A will put their right fist out. Person B will lightly tap A with the bottom of their fist. Now Person A will lightly touch the bottom of their fist to person B's fist. Now do a left hand hammer tap.

5. Now while crossing your arms do a high ten.

6. Now do a double fist bump. (Opposite hands will be touching)

7. Lastly do a regular high ten.

8. Repeat this handshake over and over as fast as you can.

Be creative and make up your own handshake.

Name of Activity: **Elbow to Knee Taps**

1. Stand up.

2. Hold your ears with your hands.

3. Tap your right elbow to your left knee. Tap your left elbow to your right knee.

4. You will be tapping each knee alternately using this pattern: 1, 1, 2. For instance; 1 tap (right elbow to left knee), 1 tap (left elbow to right knee), 2 taps (right elbow to left knee), and then back to 1 tap (left elbow to right knee), 1 tap (right elbow to left knee), 2 taps (left elbow to right knee). Do this as fast as you can.

Be creative with your patterns. Use a pattern like 3,1,2 taps

## **CORE STRENGTH BRAIN BREAKS**

### Forward and backward circles

1. Point your arms toward the ceiling.
2. Keep your elbow straight and move your right arm forward creating a large circle. Continue making forward circles with this arm. Now do the same with your other arm except go BACKWARD. Continue with both arms moving at the same time. Make sure you have this pattern working before you continue.
3. While both arms continue to move, lift your right foot off the ground and make a ninety degree angle with your knee. Hold this for a few seconds.
4. Now extend your right knee out to make your leg parallel to the ground. Hold for a few seconds.
5. Stop.
6. Repeat the same process again with your left leg

### Airplane

1. Point your arms toward the ceiling.
2. Lift your right leg and put it behind you. Try to keep your knee straight.
3. Lean forward with your body. Try to make your body, arms and leg parallel with the ground. Hold for 10 seconds.
4. Now try the same sequence with your left leg behind you.

### Don't Fall

1. Point your arms toward the ceiling.
2. Lift your right leg and put it to the side of you. Try to keep it straight.
3. Point your body in the opposite direction. Try to make your body, arms and leg parallel with the ground. Hold for 15 seconds.
4. Now try the same sequence with your left leg to the side.

## **MOVEMENT MOMENT ACTIVITIES**

### Muk - Jee Ba

Korean version of rock, paper scissors.

Face each other and both jump 3x while saying rock, paper, scissors....shoot

On last jump land in 1 of 3 shapes

Hal-squat – rock

Straddle – paper

Stride – scissors

1 pt for winner - play best of 5

### West African Jumping Game

Stand opposite partner

Decide who will be called same and who is opposite

Both jumps 3x

On last jump land in stride position

If both have same foot in front – same wins  
If opposite foot – opposite wins  
Play best of 5

Steal the Bacon (sitting)  
Sit facing partner criss cross applesauce  
Put a bean bag on the floor between you  
Place hands on knees, head or behind the back  
Teacher calls out right, left or both hands  
First to steal the bacon wins a point

### **LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY**

- ▣ Read the book "The Little Engine That Could "
- ▣ Compare the "little engine" with a Winter Games athlete.
- ▣ Discuss how the Olympic Games athletes have a dream, and how it takes hard work and determination to achieve a dream.

Encourage the children to draw and then verbalize and act out their dreams, and what they might do to follow their dreams