

Indoor Movement Ideas

For Early Education and Care



This guide was created for early education and care or daycare classrooms. Most activities do not need any equipment or use common items only. Use these activities as movement breaks or when the weather prevents children from having access to the outdoors for play.

Game: Simon Says

1. First, choose someone to be "Simon."
2. "Simon" will then make a series of commands to others in the group, which they follow.
 - i. Examples: walk like a duck, gallop like a horse, touch your toes, balance on one foot,
3. "Simon" begins each command they want the group to follow with, "Simon Says." If, however, this is not stated, don't follow the command!
4. To stay in the game, children only must follow the commands that begin with "Simon Says." If someone follows a command without "Simon Says," they sit down and wait for the next round.

**Simon says act
like you're hula
hooping!**

Tip!



If you want to make the game difficult for older children, simply issue commands faster and faster, and make the actions more difficult to complete.

Game: Hot Potato

1. Use a soft ball or a rolled-up sock and toss it to a child.
This is the "hot potato."
2. Tell the children to toss this "potato" to someone else as quickly as possible.
3. Everyone repeats this quick tossing action.
4. The game can end whenever in this open format!



Tip!

Play in a circle! A smaller circle will be easier for younger children and a larger circle adds some difficulty with aim and strength.

Game: Follow the Leader

1. Select one child to be the "leader."
2. Instruct the other children to follow the leader in a line, wherever they might go.
 - i. Under the desk, around the tables, through aisles, etc.



Tip!

An optional variation is to merge this game with Simon Says. Instead of the children only following the leader, they also have to do exactly what the leader does. Jumping jacks, dancing, headstands, etc.!

Game: Duck, Duck, Goose!

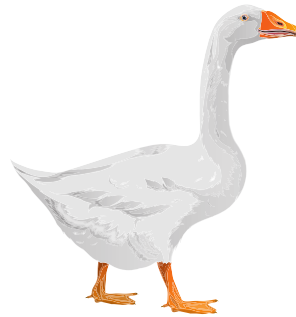
1. Choose one child to be the "Goose."
2. All the other children sit in a circle with enough space to move around behind where everyone is seated.
3. The "Goose" then walks around the circle, tapping each person lightly on the head, and saying "duck".
4. The "Goose" will choose another person to tap on the head and say "goose!" instead of "duck." Whoever was tapped in that moment now has to chase the "Goose" around the circle, trying to tag them.
5. If the tagged child does not touch the Goose before they sit in the open spot, the tagged child then becomes the new "Goose."
6. This game can go on as long as children are engaged!



Duck



Duck



Goose!

Game: Animal Races

1. Mark a starting line and a finish line on the floor or by an object in the room.
2. Choose an animal for the children to act out.
3. Have all the children start on the starting line.
4. When the race begins, the children should move like whatever the chosen animal is.
 - i. Examples: hop like a frog, run like a dog, walk like a bear, crawl like a lizard, gallop like a horse, jump like a kangaroo, etc.
5. The first child to cross the finish line is the winner!



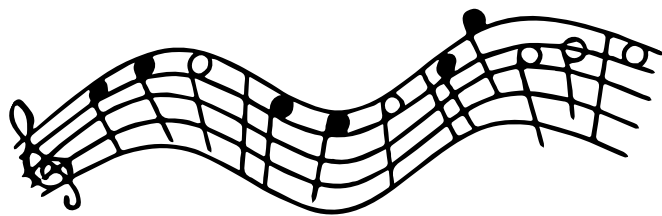
Tip!

For less competition, the children can simply all do the animal movement together. To get the children involved, they can shout out animal options for the teacher to select from.

Game: Musical Chairs

1. Set enough chairs out for one less than the total number of children playing (i.e., if there are 8 children, only set out 7 chairs).
2. Have the children start by standing in front of the chairs.
3. Start some upbeat music and have the children walk, march or dance around the chairs in a circle, until the music stops.
4. Once the music is stopped (the teacher is in control of this), children must immediately find the nearest open seat.
5. The child who doesn't find a seat will sit out until the next round.
6. Remove one more chair from the setup and start the music back up for the next round.
7. This can continue, as another chair is taken away with each round until one child is remaining OR can simply be played over again with the original setup.

Tip!



If you don't have enough chairs or do not want the setup, then you could substitute pieces of colored construction paper taped to the ground. When the music stops, the child who gets both feet on first claims the spot. Have some jobs ready for those sitting "out" of the game to keep them engaged.

Game: Balance Beam

1. Use colorful tape to make a straight line on the floor (as long or short as you would like).
2. Encourage children to walk forwards, backwards, and sideways along the line, trying their best to only step on the tape.
3. When children master the straight line, add semi-circles or zigzags for a bit more of a challenge.

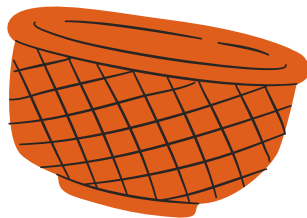
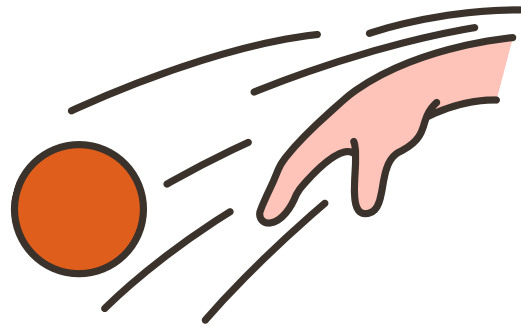


Tip!

Outdoors this game can be done with sidewalk chalk! This game can be made more physically challenging by asking children to perform certain moves, like lunges or duck walks, along the line.

Game: Color Toss

1. Tape a piece of colored paper to the outside of 3-5 baskets, bins, or large bowls.
2. Then have a basket full of colorful, soft balls in colors that match the paper on the baskets. You could use balled up socks, soft plastic balls or fabric ones.
3. Ask the children to toss the balls into the matching color bin.
4. Children can take turns and cycle through a line OR there can be multiple setups in the room.



Tip!

Match this game to the children's ability, move the bins closer if they are struggling or have younger children simply walk around and place the balls into the correct bins.

Game: Animal Yoga

Lion Pose: Kneel on a mat and sit back on your heels. Press your palms into your knees, splaying out your fingers like claws. As you breathe in through your nose, open your mouth, and try to stretch your tongue to your chin. Breathe out through your mouth and let out a roar!

- The fun of sticking out the tongue and bellowing a roar is what gives Lion Pose so much appeal for a young audience. Don't forget the sound effects!



Bear Pose: Sit on the floor, with a straight back, and stretch your feet straight out, creating a V shape with your legs. Grab your big toes, bottoms of feet, or ankles, and sit back to balance on your bottom.

- Who can resist a good balancing pose? Go beyond the standard Tree Pose and guide children to balance on their behinds with legs extended.



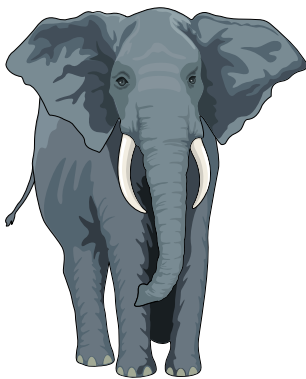
Gorilla Pose: Stand up and fold at your hips, so your fingers reach your toes (it's okay to bend your knees to make this comfortable!). If you can, lift up your toes and slide your hands under them, palms facing up, fingers parallel to toes. Now that your hands are under your feet, breathe, focusing on lifting your hips to the sky.

- Children will enjoy either stepping on the insides of their hands or gripping their toes and sticking out their elbows. Both grips offer fun variations on a basic posture that they can have fun playing with.



Lizard Pose: Bring your palms to the ground and extend your legs back, raising your bottom up and hanging your head. Place your right foot to the right of your pinky finger. Pause here, and be sure your right knee is directly above your heel and not in front of it. For a deeper stretch, rest your forearms on the ground. Keep your chin lifted and look ahead.

- Kids are naturally flexible, which makes it perfectly okay to introduce poses that require more preparation for adults. This funky-looking lunge helps children learn right from left while stretching the hip area.

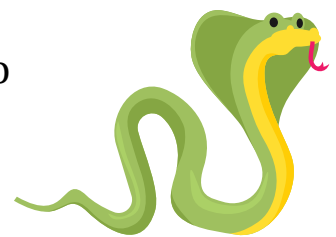


Elephant Pose: Hinge at the hips, and bend forward. Stretch arms toward the ground or let them dangle in front. Look forward at the ground. A gentle bend in the knees can be comfortable here.

- The arms are your elephant trunk! Move arms around together, gently, as one and get a "trunk stretch"

Cobra Pose: Start by laying flat on the ground, stomach facing down, tops of feet pressed into the floor. Use arms to lift upper body slightly off the floor, keep a bend in the elbows, and feel a slight stretch in your back.

- This pose moves the body up and back down to the floor, be sure to move gently, slowly, and with control (no dropping to the floor). Ask the children to make a snake noise when in cobra pose for a fun add-on!



Game: ABC Challenge

- A is for Air. Can you take 5 deep breaths of air?
- B is for Bouncing. Can you bounce like a ball?
- C is for Curling. Can you curl your body into a round shape?
- D is for Dodging. Can you dodge from side to side?
- E is for Exercises. Can you do your favorite exercise?
- F is for Football. Can you pass a ball like a quarterback?
- G is for Golf. Can you swing your golf club and hit the ball hard?
- H is for Helmet. Can you put yours on and ride your bike?
- I is for Ice Skating. Can you skate around the room?
- J is for Jump. Can you jump up high?
- K is for Kick. Can you kick each foot up high?
- L is for Lean. Can you lean to the left, then lean to the right? Do it again 5 times.
- M is for Muscles. Can you pose and show me your muscles?
- N is for Nose. Can you touch your nose? Sing and do Head, Shoulders Knees & Nose.
- O is for Over. Can you jump over 3 great big holes?
- P is for Push-ups. Can you do 18 push-ups?
- Q is for Quietly. Can you tiptoe quietly?
- R is for Run. Can you run in place very fast?
- S is for Swim. Can you swim like a fish?
- T is for Throw. Can you throw the ball really far?
- U is for Under. Can you get under your desk?
- V is for Vibrate. Can you shake and vibrate like a washing machine?
- W is for Wiggle. Can you wiggle like a worm?
- X is for X-ray. Can you trace the bones in your arms and hands that an x-ray could see?
- Y is for Yo-yo. Can you go up and down like a yo-yo?
- Z is for Zigzag. Can you zigzag around the room?



Game: Exploring Space

Students will move throughout the room without touching anyone or anything unless asked to do so. The teachers will continuously ask students to move to different places in the room. Teachers can add more challenges, appropriate to their space.

Go to a wall

Go to a door

Crawl under a desk

Go to a window

Lie down under a desk

Kneel at front of the room

Walk around a desk

Touch a table leg

Go to a bookcase

Go to a whiteboard

Touch something green

Touch something high

Stand under a light on one foot

Touch a chair with an elbow

Stand on toes at back of the room

Go to a trash can

Adaptations for students with movement or health concerns: Work with a buddy!

Game: Letter Formation

1. Each child can stand and face the teacher, who is writing letters in the air to establish visual patterns of letters and shapes.
2. The teacher might pull letters from a deck of cards showing letters/sounds to lead this activity.
3. Each child is given a piece of braided yarn or cloth to form shapes or letters in the air.
4. The teacher can draw letters/shapes with their string, and then children mimic the gross motor pattern before writing letters using fine motor skills (on a piece of paper).
5. Music can be added to add a rhythm and flow to the movement of the string through the air.

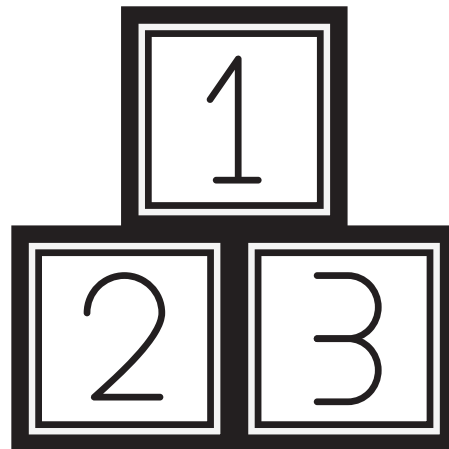


Adaptations for students with movement or health concerns:

Children with issues standing might be placed on the floor to balance their body. A teacher/aide might move a visually impaired child's arm to establish muscle memory.

Game: Number Hunt

1. Place numbers 1-30 along the wall, at a height students can easily reach.
2. Students will each be given a different number from 1-30.
3. On the signal to start, students will start with their own number, and touch each number in order until they return to their own starting number again.



Variations: Use the letters of the alphabet instead of numbers. Use skip counting (by 2's, 3's or 5's). Count backwards instead of forwards. Add some light music in the background to add to the fun atmosphere.

Source: "Let's Move Resource Guide

"https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/documents/resource_guide_interactiveFinal.pdf

Game: Over, Under, Around and Through

1. Students stand in lines on 5 (or less) and they will go over, under, around, and through imaginary or real objects, following a leader. Acting with the imaginary objects can make this game lots of fun!
 - i. For example, go over a sea of sticky peanut butter, through a giraffe's legs, under a low bridge, around a desk, etc.

Go Over:

A steep mountain, a river in a wobble bridge, a barbed wire fence, three logs on your path, a slithering snake, etc.

Go Under:

A low tree limb, water, a big dog, a limbo stick, another student, etc.

Go Around:

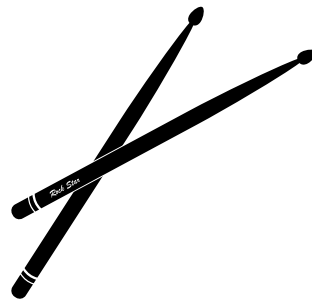
An elephant, a corner, a dirty trash can, a thorny bush, a soggy swamp, etc.

Go Through:

A creaky door, a field of tall grass, a long tunnel, a haunted house, a sea of Jell-O, etc.

Game: Rhythm Sticks and Marching

1. Each child is given a set of rhythm sticks (try chopsticks, pencils, rolled-up paper, etc.) to use while marching around the open areas of the room. This can be led by the teacher or students.
2. While playing a selection of music (songs that make vocabulary connections or lesson concepts are great), children will attempt to march in rhythmic patterns while walking and tapping their rhythm sticks.
3. During the song, the teacher can offer cue words to tap the rhythm sticks in various places.
 - i. Examples: Tap up high; Tap down low; Tap in the middle of the body; Tap with the sticks behind your back; Tap the sticks to the right; tap the sticks to the left; STOP and turn your body and keep tapping; etc



This activity develops rhythm needed for spoken language, neural pathways and combination of integrated movements to control the body in complex movement patterns.

Game: Show Me a Move

1. Start some music for the children to move along to.
2. Students start marching in place to the music.
3. The teacher will ask one student to "Show Me A Move," and all students will then copy that movement.
4. The teacher will now ask another student to show a movement, etc.
5. Continue asking different students to show their moves and have the rest of the class copy them.



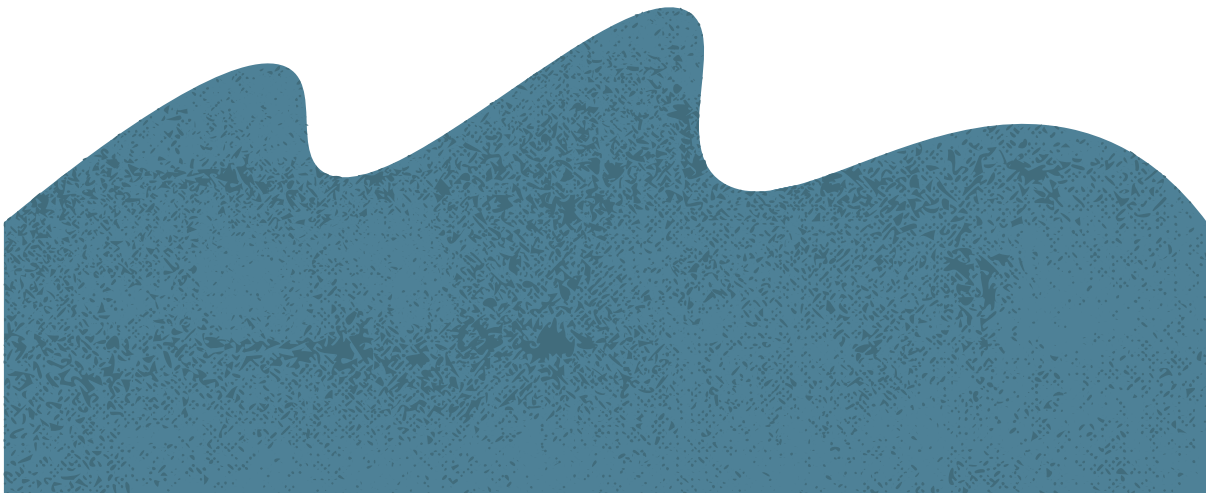
Variations: Return to marching in place before each new student shows their movement. Jump, hop or run in place rather than marching.

Source: "Let's Move Resource Guide

"https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/documents/resource_guide_interactiveFinal.pdf

Game: The Wave Maker

1. Students will attempt to create a wave by raising and lowering their arms in sequential order.
2. Start in lines of 6-10.
3. When students can do it in a short line, make the lines longer.
4. Then try to make it a continuous wave, by standing in a circle.
5. Then try to make the wave with other actions: Squatting and standing, sitting and using your legs, leaning right and left, bending and extending at the waist, etc.



Source: "Let's Move West Virginia Resource Guide"

"https://wvde.state.wv.us/healthyschools/documents/resource_guide_interactiveFinal.pdf