



Transitions in Motion

In this section, you'll find ideas on how to keep children moving when it's time to switch between indoor and outdoor spaces or from one activity to another. Specific movement tasks during transitions can serve as fun cues to help children get ready for what's next.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO PUT MOVEMENT INTO TRANSITIONS!

- Movement breaks can help children release energy after sitting for a long period of time, so encourage them to get up, wiggle, and shake their bodies during transitions.
- Do a special movement while you play slow, soft music, or sing a song to signal that a change is about to happen.



Naptime Breathing

Just before naptime, this simple exercise can calm children. It can also help them become more aware of their breathing when they're involved in physical activities later.

MOVEMENT SKILLS: resting, breathing

MATERIALS

- music player with slow and soothing music

HOW TO PLAY

- Together with children, sit in a circle with legs crossed. Explain that it's important for bodies to have downtime. Children's bodies need to rest so that they have enough energy to move and play.
- Model each action as you ask children to place their hands over their mouths and feel their breaths. Together, **breathe** quickly or slowly, and ask children to compare how each breath feels in their hands.
- Ask children to pretend their tummies are balloons. Encourage them to take long, deep breaths and fill up their balloons with air. Then tell them to breathe out through their mouths to let the air out of the balloons.
- Use this opportunity to introduce *inhale* and *exhale* as vocabulary words. Explain that inhale means "breathe in," and exhale means "breathe out." Then say, "Let's take five deep breaths together," and with each breath cycle, repeat, "Inhale through your nose, exhale through your mouth."

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- Together, lie on the floor facing the ceiling and place hands on tummies. Take deep breaths and watch hands move up and down. Ask children to imagine that their tummies are big waves rising and falling in the ocean.



Learning Links



Literacy: Right before naptime, you can read a story that contains calm and peaceful elements. Ask children to close their eyes and take deep breaths as they imagine the story in their heads.



Science: Explain that when people breathe in air, they breathe in something called *oxygen*. The body sends this oxygen to all of its different parts to keep them healthy. Then discuss: What other things need oxygen?

Picker-Upper Vacuum Cleaner

Cleanup time is a big part of the day for both the children in your care and for yourself. Using imagination is a fun way to get children moving at a moderate pace as they put away toys and supplies.

MOVEMENT SKILLS: bending, reaching, grabbing

MATERIALS

- toys and supplies to be put away

HOW TO PLAY

- When it's time to clean up, you can say, "Vroom! Vroom! It's time to turn on your vacuum cleaners to clean up!" Ask children to pretend they are vacuum cleaners. Tell them that their arms are hoses that suck up toys and supplies, and their legs are wheels that move around to put things back in the right places.
- As you clean up together, **bend**, **reach**, and **grab** in all kinds of directions: *forward, backward, above, below, around, and through*. Learning these vocabulary words will also guide children in the cleanup process and help them build spatial awareness. Make vacuum cleaner sounds as children move around the room and encourage them to join in!

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- If space allows, ask children to "vacuum" around the room fast.
- Add more movement by pretending to be a **jumping**, **marching**, or **wiggling** vacuum cleaner.
- If it's time to clean the table, you can play "Wipe, Wipe, Table Wipers!" Put nontoxic soap or spray on the table and give children paper towels to wipe. Ask them to use their hands and arms to make large, small, fast, or slow circular motions.

Learning Links



Literacy: Help children learn a new vocabulary word. Explain that a *machine* can help make things easier for people, and a vacuum cleaner is a kind of machine!



Math: Ask children to pick up two square blocks or find three triangular objects to help develop their matching and sorting skills.





Healthy Food Grooves

Lead this activity to transition children into mealtime or snack time. It's a great way to get them excited about healthy foods through dance and movement!

MOVEMENT SKILLS: jumping, bending, reaching, throwing, grabbing

MATERIALS

→ children's bodies – and their imaginations!

HOW TO PLAY

- Announce that it's almost time for a snack or a meal. Talk with children about how they can keep their bodies healthy and strong by eating lots of nutritious foods and by moving their bodies! Ask each child to give an example of a healthy food and make up a move for it! For instance:
 - * Reach for apples: **Bend** your knees to **jump** high in the air and **reach** for apples in the tree. **Pick** as many as you can, as fast as you can!
 - * Go strawberry picking: Bend your knees and **squat** down low to pick some strawberries from the patch. Then reach up high and **throw** them into the basket.
 - * Go food shopping: **Walk** in place and pretend you're at the grocery store. **Swing** your arms as you walk. **Grab** some healthy foods and put them in your cart. What foods are you buying?

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- Cooking together is a great way to help children learn about healthy foods. Have them help prepare simple snacks and meals. They can work on developing their fine motor skills as they **mix**, **spoon**, **pour**, **shake**, **toss**, and **roll** ingredients. Even if you don't have access to a kitchen, children can pretend to cook!
- Divide children into small groups named after healthy foods, such as "jumping beans" or "wiggling noodles," and ask each group to move like that food to the table.

Learning Links



Literacy: Help children in your care develop a rich food vocabulary by introducing categories of foods (fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, and dairy) and some of the different foods in each group.



Science: Explore what fruits and vegetables need in order to grow. A child can imagine being a seed planted underground (by squatting down low), then the rain falling down (hands fluttering from up high to down low), the sun shining bright (making a big circle with arms), and finally the plant growing tall (arms stretching up high)!



Nutrition: Help children make a grocery list of healthy foods using words or pictures, and go on a pretend trip through the grocery store. They can reach up high to get a food item from the tallest shelf and then put it in their carts to push around.

Off We Go!

Pretending to be different modes of transportation is a fun and active way to help children move from place to place.

MOVEMENT SKILLS: stretching, twisting, spinning, pulling

MATERIALS

- pictures from magazines, newspapers, and/or the Internet of different modes of transportation (car, truck, train, airplane, boat, motorcycle, rocket ship, etc.)

HOW TO PLAY

- Show children pictures of different modes of transportation and label them together. Explain that these are all types of *transportation*, which means “a way of getting from one place to another.” Ask children to imitate how each type of transportation moves and sounds. For example, children might:
 - * **stretch** their arms out wide and **shift** their torsos from side to side as if flying like an airplane;
 - * **rotate** their arms in circles like the moving wheels on a train;
 - * **twist** their arms clockwise and counterclockwise in front of them as if turning the steering wheel of a car;
 - * **pull** their arms forward and back on each side, as if rowing a boat; and
 - * **circle** their legs in the air while on their backs, as if riding (upside down!) on a bicycle.
- When it's time for children to move on to another area or activity, ask them to use one of the moves you practiced.

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

- Instead of moving like vehicles, children can move like insects or form letters, numbers, or shapes.



Learning Links



Science: Compare the speed of a quick-moving train to that of a bicycle.

Ask children to predict which will get to its destination sooner. Talk about all types of vehicles – those that travel by air, land, and sea. Don't forget that the body is a mode of transportation, too!



Nutrition: Explain to children that, just as a car needs fuel to go, their bodies

need plenty of healthy foods to think and move. Let children know that as their bodies do more work, they lose energy. For example, you can show how a ball loses energy as it bounces. That's why they need to feed their bodies nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables to keep them strong.