

What We Learned Today

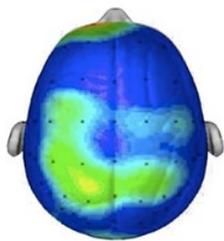
Movement with a Purpose

The human brain is simply amazing. Our brains use information from a variety of movements to get a sense of body position and balance. Some movements seem major, like spinning, jumping, or swinging, and others seem less drastic, like pushing or pulling; but it's all valuable!

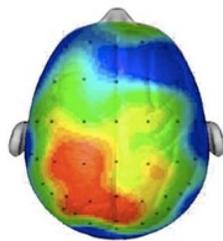


During today's ChildcareAlive! activity, your child participated in several active games that encouraged them to move their bodies in a variety of ways: pushing, pulling, stretching, and balancing. All of these different movements activate children's brains in different ways! Research shows that our brains are activated after any kind of physical activity (even walking). In the picture below, the colorful brain on the right shows areas of the brain that are activated after physical activity.

Physical Activity Activates Our Brains



BRAIN AFTER SITTING QUIETLY FOR 20 MINUTES



BRAIN AFTER WALKING FOR 20 MINUTES

Research/Scan compliments of Dr. Chuck Hillman, University of Illinois

Fundamental Movement

Have you ever wondered how it is possible that a newborn who has not yet learned how to hold up his/her head can one day grow into an adult who can run, jump, climb, and swim?



It is all learned through a progression of motor development that starts when we are just infants. Children practice a variety of "fundamental movement skills," which all build upon each other and lead to more complex movement (just think: a child must walk before they run).

In today's activity, your child practiced three fundamental movement skills: walking, marching, and jumping. Other fundamental movement skills that your child may be learning between the ages of 2-6 years include hopping, throwing, catching, kicking, twisting, bending, and stretching.

What We Played Today

1 Walk and March. Children started by pretending to be in a parade, and then walked in a variety of ways: on their tip toes, with giant steps, and with baby steps. They started to walk with their knees up high, which led to marching.

2 Jump/Rabbits and Roos. Next, the children got to practice jumping by trying to see how high they could jump (or whether their feet came high off the ground, or barely off the ground).

3 Row, Row, Row Your Boat. Children sat on their bottoms and moved their arms in rowing motions, pretending to row across a lake to get to our garden, which needed to be harvested.

4 Push and Pull It. Children heard a story about harvesting a garden, in which they were asked to pretend to push several things (an empty box, a full box) and to pull several things (pulling out a small carrot, a big carrot, or picking strawberries).

5 Hibernate. To help children cool down from these activities, they pretended to be bears, walking and climbing into their “caves” to go to sleep for the winter.



More Ways to Move

Balancing Act

Use a long piece of tape or a rope on the ground to mimic a tight rope.

Encourage your child to walk across the tight rope, but then challenge them to do so while balancing a bean bag, small pillow, or other small/light object on their head.



Circus Act

Ask your child to perform like they are in a circus! See what fun things they can do with their body. You may ask them to make different letters with their body, try to stand or balance on different body parts, or maneuver through an obstacle course made with pillows, bed sheets, or empty boxes.

