

Movement Policy

In December 2010, the staff team at Daisy and Rainbow Childcare spent an inset day working with an organisation called Jabadao. This policy is the result of the information and experiences we shared during this training and the experience we have developed since when working with a local somatic movement therapist.

'We need to live fully in our bodies as well as in our hearts' quote Jabadao.

Jabadao shared with us the understanding that

- Our mental wellbeing is improved through physical activity
- We should acknowledge the child's physical realm, so the thinking brain can be engaged and other layers of neurological development can take place e.g. the child needs to be physically comfortable so more formal learning can take place.
- Movement activities improve physical health, emotional resilience, self worth and the worth of others
- Children gain a sense of their own body through felt experiences
- Movement is our first language. Children being comfortable in their own skin will find verbal communication. We can communicate with children using physical activities.
- Sensory integration is developed through movement.
- We celebrate children's physical achievements when they are babies and manage to sit up or when a toddler starts to crawl or walk. This celebration should continue as their physical skills develop.
- It is useful to observe children's natural rhythm when they are relaxing or playing. Many children have a natural preference whether it is kneeling, curled up in a ball or lying on their tummies.
- If we consider baby animals, there are comparisons between their movements and those of our toddlers e.g. young bears like rough and tumble as much as our youngsters do. The children get in touch with their 'creatureness' when involved in this type of play.
- As with all learning, repetition enables us to practice and consolidate our skills. Through repeated physical behaviours, some skills become refined and change and some remain the same.
- Our young children's nervous systems are developing rapidly during their early years. Movement assists this development as when the brain is engaged with sensory movements our nervous system is flooded with positive experiences. During this process, Myelin is produced which is a white fatty substance which coats the outside of the nerve fibre and insulates it. Myelin supports the neural connections which are built up in the early years. To support this, as adults, we need to enable children to be moved and move. Tactile stimulation produces brain chemicals which are crucial to growth and develop very strong neural pathways.
- Massage of both fingers and toes is particularly beneficial in developing myelin and should be encouraged.
- Our internal sense of movement is linked to receptors in our inner ear.
- There is a strong relationship between body, gravity and ground
- Our sense of balance means it takes time after spinning round for our eyes to catch up. Some children need to practice this e.g. tipping; tilting; spinning round
- Proprioception ... although common thought would have us believe that we have only five senses, we in fact have six. This sixth sense is what is known as proprioception. Proprioception is an unconscious sense that gives us information regarding the location, movement and posture of our bodies in physical space.
 - our sense of our body
 - learn about force
 - we learn what it is like to be moved
 - tells us where one part of our body is compared to another
- We can encourage parents to use a night light to enable children's developing proprioception

How we provide enabling environments to support children's movement?

The environment leads the play... so we need to consider how children experience this on their level

- Tumble time which is part of routine
- Movement activities can be offered inside or outside
- We keep tables and chairs to a minimum
- We may use 'LEAP into Life'
- We often offer activities and encourage play at floor level
- We use tumble mats when ever possible
- Dens and hidey holes created in the setting
- Children's movement is encouraged through their imagination
- We provide resources to stimulate a wide range of movement – gross and fine motor
- Our settings aim to provide sufficient floor space to enable rocking and rolling and full body movement
- Mirrors provide good opportunities for children to observe their own movement
- Adults will explore with children down on their level – low level exploration with adults modelling gives children positive reinforcement
- Be aware of children having two worlds – high and low level
- Adults are conscious of providing interaction, touch and emotional warmth
- Adults are aware of the need for children to experience force through pushing and pulling.
- We are mindful of children who take risks or have a stronger physical drive or their sensory feedback to body is not yet in place
- We consider the children at the edges of physical play who need support to become involved
- Staff assess when children are at risk physically and intervene appropriately
- We constantly review our play spaces to further develop the resources and opportunities available to children.

We support children's physicality by.....

- Using our observations
- Tuning in and supporting children's felt experiences
- We join in with and follow the lead of children at play
- Mirroring children's movement
- Supporting children to challenge their physical limits
- Finding ways to celebrate children's movements with them

Ideas to support movement

- Encourage babies and children to spin, rock, roll, crawl, climb
- Follow my Leader
- Weather story – massage on children's backs
- Action songs – musical bumps and statues
- Bumper cars – move like crabs – Beans
- Trampoline bouncing – Benji jump up and down – Big Red Tractor
- Bubble play

Babies

- Babies having tummy time to develop their upper body strength also facilitates babies going from clenched fists to palms flat
- Encourage babies to reach out
- Using Treasure basket Play
- Using the floor instead of propped chairs etc as much as possible
- Massage and actions songs

Resources to support this

- Commando nets
- Mats to support movement on the floor
- Ribbons
- Using natural outside area – e.g. slopes to roll down
- Soft blocks
- Jigsaw mats
- Stretchy scarves
- Coloured Velcro
- Elasticated fabric bands
- Big pieces of material or cardboard for dragging children along in
- Interesting spaces/dens/cubby holes/hidey holes
- Screens
- Cushions
- Low level pictures
- Tubes/tunnels to crawl through
- Tents
- Different textured objects –to explore and move over
- Objects that encourage movement e.g. balls
- Trampoline
- Spinning cones
- Bottom Rockers
- Belly Boards
- Tyres and ropes
- Caterpillar steppers
- Stilts – Tiger feet
- Book: Penny Greenland – JABADAO – ‘Hopping home backwards’
- www.jabadao.org - follow them on twitter

We recognise the cross curricular links with -

- THRIVE – attunement/soothing/containing/validating
 - Adults modelling for children with a DOING needs
 - Supporting in children in staying safe within their BEING needs
- Tumble Time
- Attachment
- Child initiated play
- Sensory and tactile exploration
- SOLA
- Supporting children who do not talk but love physicality

Policy formulated on: **June 2011**

Policy last reviewed on: Oct 2018

Signed: _____

