

Physical Development Toolbox

Planning Learning Opportunities

Ask teachers to read the article, *Tots in Action ON and BEYOND the Playground* (Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web, May 2006). This article features a nice list of activities designed to enhance children’s locomotor and manipulative skills; many of the activities featured can be conducted both indoors and out. After reading through the list of fundamental movement activities included, have teachers identify at least two new activities that they would like to implement in their own program. Create a concrete action plan for implementation of the activities.

Ask teachers how they currently include physical development activities in their program. Are activities planned as part of the daily, weekly, or monthly routine? With teachers, review the planning calendar and identify current elements of the routine that could include an added physical development piece (Tip: Transitions can be greatly enhanced by the addition of planned movement experiences!).

Talk with teachers about the importance of promoting children’s sustained engagement in physical activity through the use of personally meaningful learning opportunities. Prompt teachers to read the vignette on page 144 of the PCF (Vol. 2). This vignette highlights one teacher’s use of an intentionally planned fire station obstacle course designed with children’s interests in mind. After completing the reading, ask teachers to think about the interests of their own students and then have them make a plan to implement at least one movement activity based upon an identified topic of interest. (PCF, Vol. 2, p. 183, 187, 197)

Discuss the idea with teachers that planned learning opportunities do not necessarily need to be teacher directed and that the set-up of the physical environment can also prompt children to independently engage in meaningful learning activities. For example, visual examples of different balance positions posted on the walls of an interest area can inspire imagination and imitation. Such examples could include photographs of the children themselves, other children, animals, gymnasts, yogis, culturally representative athletes, and athletes with physical disabilities—such as wheelchair racers or Special Olympians. Suggest that teachers take a walk around their classroom and determine if there is a safe space where these types of visual aids could be added. (PCF, Vol. 2, p. 143; Inclusion Works!, p. 10, PEL Resource Guide, p. 31).

Provide teachers with a copy of the article, *Tots in Action ON and BEYOND the Playground* (Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web, May 2006). Ask them to read the Activities to Enhance Children’s Object Control Experiences section (p. 5). Support teachers as they plan to implement one or two activities from the reading. Meet back with teachers after implementation and discuss what went well with the activity, how they were able to differentiate instruction in order to meet the diverse learning needs of their students, and what they may choose to do differently next time.

Provide teachers with a copy of the article, *Tots in Action ON and BEYOND the Playground* (Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web, May 2006). Ask them to read the Activities to Enhance Locomotor Movement Experiences section (p. 3). Support teachers as they plan to implement one or two activities from the reading. Meet back with teachers after implementation and discuss what went well with the activity, how they were able to differentiate instruction in order to meet the diverse learning needs of their students, and what they may choose to do differently next time.

Remind teachers that “Children learn from opportunities to discover materials that they may be seeing for the first time and need time to explore and get to know the properties of these materials” (Integrated Nature of Learning, p. 20). Time exploring large materials outside provides unique opportunities for exploring with large locomotor and fundamental skill. With teachers take a walk around the play yard; what spaces do they have for encouraging exploration of large materials such as sticks, large blocks, large balls, rocks, etc. Invite teachers to brain storm about how they can set up more time and space for this exploration.

Individualizing

Discuss the importance of using the children’s home language when introducing new concepts or vocabulary, giving directions, or describing children’s play. With the teachers, create a list of key vocabulary to be used with all children and translated for English learners. The list may include vocabulary related to directional-concepts (e.g., forward, backward, sideways), spatial-concepts (e.g., close, far, under, over, in front of, behind, next to), and knowledge of body-parts. (PCF, Vol. 2, pp. 135, 179, 185, 189; PEL Resource Guide, pp. 31, 79)

For teachers who are working with English-language learners, children with special needs, or simply children who prefer a visual idea, suggest that they use visual aids to promote children’s movement. Such aids might include photos of children, children’s characters, animals, athletes, dancers, and other things that the children could imitate.

(ECERS, p. 20; Inclusion Works!, pp. 10, 17, 36; PCF, Vol. 2, pp. 135, 143, 146, 152; PEL Resource Guide, p. 31, 85)

Prompt teachers to review the developmental sequences for locomotor skills and fundamental manipulative skills on pages 212-215 of the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume II. Discuss the importance of planning time to observe children in order to determine their developmental progression for particular skills. With teachers, review the daily, weekly, or monthly routine and plan an observation cycle for assessing specifically chosen movement skills. Follow up with teachers in planning future activities designed to scaffold children as they move through the identified developmental sequence(s). (PCF, Vol. 2, p. 150; Prekindergarten Learning & Development Guidelines, p. 124)

Prompt teachers to review the developmental sequences for locomotor skills and fundamental manipulative skills on pages 212-215 of the PCF (Vol. 2). Ask teachers to identify the last planned movement activity in which children participated. Discuss ways in which teachers could scaffold the specific activity to meet each developmental phase as identified in the sample developmental sequences. (PCF, Vol. 2, p. 150)

Guide teachers to page 154 of the PCF (Vol. 2). Have them read the Create Culturally Diverse Scenarios for Practicing Locomotor Skills section. After reading the section, have teachers brainstorm ideas for activities that are culturally relevant to the children in their own program (Teachers may use or adapt an idea from the reading.). Ask teachers to consider ways in which they could adapt the materials and/or activity if planning for a student or students with differing abilities. Create a concrete action plan for implementing the activity. (ECERS, p. 20; Inclusion Works!, p. 41; PCF, Vol. 2, pp. 167, 185; PEL Resource Guide, p. 69)

Invite teachers to read the section about Physical Development on page 91 of the Best Practices planning curriculum Family partnership and culture. After reading as teachers how they learn about how families value and support physical development? Is it formally through the first family meeting or informally through conversations? With the teachers consider how they can increase opportunities to learn both formally and informally. Perhaps a few questions can be added to the initial family meeting? Or perhaps opportunities to share can be added to the monthly planning? Create an action plan with teachers and let them know you will revisit this on your next technical assistance meeting.

Relationships with Families

Ask teachers how they communicate with families about the importance of their children's physical development. Together with the teachers, brainstorm a list of ways to include continuous communications with families about how and what their children are learning during active physical play activities at school. Support the teachers as they create a concrete action plan to include one of the ideas. (PCF, Vol. 2, p. 174)

Provide teachers with the handout, *15 Simple Ways to Get Moving* (Head Start Body Start, available on the CPIN Web site). After reviewing the activity ideas, ask teachers to think about how they could use the list of ideas to encourage the families in their program to engage in outdoor physical development activities at home. Plan to implement at least one idea.

Provide teachers with a copy of the article, *Tots in Action ON and BEYOND the Playground* (Beyond the Journal, Young Children on the Web, May 2006). Ask them to read the following sections: Integrating Physical Activity at Home (p. 2), Activities to Enhance Locomotor Movement Experiences; Home Integration (p. 4), and Activities to Enhance Children's Object Control Experiences; Home Integration (p. 6). After they have read the three sections, have the teachers discuss the suggested at-home activities as well as the strategies for communicating about them with families. Ask teachers to develop one strategy to implement that will help parents support their children's physical development skills at home. (PCF, Vol. 2, p.174)

"Many cultures have their own preferred physical activities (e.g., kite flying, knitting, and sewing) and children's games (e.g., drop the handkerchief)" (FPC, p. 91). Ask teachers what their family cultures preferred skill was or is? Let each teacher share. Then ask which physical development skills are being experienced while doing this activity. You may want to use the All Domains Handout from the Integrated Nature of Learning module to support teacher in this question. Finally, ask teachers how they incorporate this (their preferred family culture physical activity) into their classroom? If they already do ask them to consider how they may expand the opportunities in the classroom? For example: their family may enjoy basketball; how can they incorporate basketball in a developmentally appropriate way? Or their family may enjoy fishing; how can they incorporate fishing in a developmentally appropriate way?

"Many cultures have their own preferred physical activities (e.g., kite flying, knitting, and sewing) and children's games (e.g., drop the handkerchief)" (FPC, p. 91). Ask teachers how they learn about and incorporate the preferred physical activities of their families?

Spend time brainstorming with the teachers and together create two lists: one list of how they do this currently and one list of how they would like to do it in the future. Invite each teacher to choose one new way they are going to take the lead on implementing. Empower the teachers to do this and be ready to share their progress at the next meeting.