



ready at five

Dancing and Moving Creatively

Dance is a type of art that involves moving the body in new and different ways. People dance for performance, ritual, exercise, or just plain fun! Dance can be used to express ideas, communicate emotion, or even tell a story. Encourage your child to dance and move creatively.

INFANT:

- Dance with your child to different kinds of music. Try: classical, jazz, pop, R&B, hip-hop, or country.
- Read books that highlight movement. As you read, gently move your child's arms or legs. As your child gets older, ask him to move like the characters in the story. Try these books: "From Head to Toe" by Eric Carle or "Barnyard Dance" by Sandra Boynton.

TODDLER:

- Tumble! Encourage your child to tumble and roll on a soft rug or play mat.
- Play "Red Light - Green Light" with your child. To play: stand across the room from your child and say "Green Light". Ask your child to move toward you in a fun way (hop, bounce, dive, leap, jump, turn, kick, or stretch). When she is about halfway toward you, say, "Red Light" and your child should stop moving. Repeat with a new movement. When she reaches you, switch roles.
- Move your body – your head, arms, hands, body, legs or feet – in different ways. Ask your child to copy each of your movements.
- Do a Pattern Dance. Use different movements to do a pattern dance with your child. For example: hop, wiggle, spin, hop, wiggle, spin. Once your child is able to do the pattern, add other movements, like jumps, flaps, or shakes.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Read a short story or board book. After reading each page, pause, and have your child dance or move creatively to explain what was read (tell the story).
- Dance like an animal! Help your child choose an animal. Then, talk about how that animal moves. For example, if your child chooses a bunny, talk about how bunnies hop and ask your child to create a bunny dance that has hopping in it.
- Do a Feelings Dance. Ask your child: "How do you think someone who is happy would dance? Can you do a happy dance with me?" Try other feelings: sad, lonely, excited, or mad.
- Encourage your child to try moving in new ways. Shout out different movement directions. For example: walk lightly forwards and backwards; stretch and lift heavy feet; wiggle legs while running sideways; clap squishy arms; or shake a circling head.
- With your child, do movements based on the roll of a dice: 1=jump five times; 2=twirl in a circle; 3=wiggle your body; 4=wave your arms; 5=kick your legs, 6=take a bow.

Book Suggestions:

How Do You Wokka-Wokka? by Elizabeth Bluemle • *Elephants Cannot Dance!* by Mo Willems • *Giraffe's Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees