



Parent Tips

ready at five

Experimenting with Music & Movement

Young children love to dance! They also love music. There are lots of ways that infants, toddlers and preschoolers can experiment with music and movement. Help your child to discover the joy of music and movement. Try these suggestions:

INFANT:

- Play games that teach your baby about her body and how it moves. For example, ask your baby, "Where are your hands?" Pick up your baby's hands, give them a kiss, gently move them, and answer, "These are your hands." Continue the game by asking about other body parts: feet, tummy, legs, arms, and more.
- Give your baby "tummy time." Infants that aren't provided with this time often have development delays in their motor skills. When your baby is awake, place him face down; start with a short amount of time and extend it, as he feels more comfortable. Join your baby on the floor, encourage him, talk with him, shake his rattle, make funny faces, play peekaboo.

TODDLER:

- Play the radio, CD, or iPod. Listen to different types of music, including classical, hip-hop, jazz, country, R&B, etc. Ask your child to move her body creatively or dance to the music. There is no right or wrong way to dance.
- Do a "Freeze Dance" – play some fast-paced music and ask your child to dance until the music stops!
- "Balloon Dance" with your child. Play some music. As the music plays, move around the room, tapping the balloon into the air not allowing it to touch the ground.
- With your child, sing his favorite song. Ask your child to make up a dance to go with the song.
- Provide props to encourage movement. For instance, give your child streamers or scarves to carry around and wave as they dance, or lay bubble wrap on the floor and allow her to dance on the bubble wrap, popping the bubbles.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Sing songs with your child that encourage movement. Try: "If You're Happy And You Know It," "Hokey Pokey," "Shake Your Sillies Out," or "I'm a Little Tea Pot."
- Host a pretend talent show or dance recital. Turn your living room into a stage. Set out instruments and costumes. Help your child make microphones out of toilet paper rolls and black tape. Turn on the music and let the show begin.
- Listen to music with different beats (fast, slow, upbeat) or tone (loud, soft) with your child. Ask: "How does this music make you feel?" Have your child dance to the music. Change the music. Ask: "Would you dance to this music in the same way or differently? Can you show me how you would move?"

Book Suggestion

Dancing Feet by Lindsey Craig & Marc Brown

Watch Me Dance: Family Celebration Board Books by Andrea Davis Pinkey & Brian Pickney