



Movement and Play Indoors

Kids need to move! The vestibular system is the sensory system that processes and controls movement. The “control panel” that helps kids understand balance, posture, a sense of upright positioning, and alertness in response to movement is located in the inner ear. Guess how this system is activated? BY MOVEMENT, of course!

There are lots of fun indoor games and activities to help spice up those dreary winter days when outdoor play is not an option. These fun ideas can help refuel kids with the sensory and motor experiences they need!

- **Build a fort.** Grab some empty cardboard boxes, old sheets or blankets, and even chairs. Be creative!
- **Play with your couch cushions.** Help your little ones set up the cushions like a road with some twists and turns between two designated points (like two stools). The kids take turns jumping onto the road to see how quickly they can make it from point A to point B without falling off! Another favorite is “Hot Lava”. Have your kids scatter the pillows all around the floor. The floor becomes hot lava and they have to jump from pillow to pillow to stay safe! It’s also fun to make it into a chase game by having someone become “The Lava Monster”!
- **Have fun with streamers and music.** Have kids grasp streamers (one end in each hand) on either side of their bodies, like wings! Tell them to hold their streamers like this, flapping their arms a little, and running around the room like bumblebees while music is playing!
- **Let the kids have some fun in the bath!** Try adding kitchen utensils for fun! Turkey basters to pinch and squirt, spoons to stir and scoop, slotted spoons for a rainfall, soup ladles to pour into cups, tongs to save sea creatures from the waves, etc. What do you have in your drawers that could make bath time even more fun and develop those fine motor skills along the way?
- **Play with Play-Doh.** Make three “snowballs” out of play dough, using both hands to roll the dough. Stack them up to make a snowman! Add beads for eyes, nose, a mouth, and buttons! Stick a couple of toothpicks in for arms!

Ideas adapted from theinspiredtreehouse.com. Visit <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com> for more examples.

What's New at Preschool?

IMPORTANT DATES

Christmas Break: Friday, Dec. 22nd to Monday, Jan. 8th.

Monday, Jan. 8th - Elementary School begins. NO PRESCHOOL.

Tuesday, Jan. 9th - First day back for T/Th Preschool classes

Wednesday, Jan. 10th - First day back for M/W/F Preschool classes

Friday, Feb. 9th - No Preschool. No Elementary School

Monday, Feb. 19th to Friday, Feb. 23rd - No Preschool. No Elementary School

SNACK TIME!

APPLE QUESADILLA

All you need is some shredded cheddar, 2 flour tortillas, and some sliced Granny Smith apples. You can either do these in the microwave for a super-quick bite to go, or get them crispy in the skillet if you have a bit more time. You can even be creative and add chicken, bacon or cinnamon.



photo credit: www.babble.com



Rhythm and Wordplay to try at home

Share rhymes and songs with your child everyday! "If children know eight nursery rhymes by the age of four years old, they are usually the best readers by the time they are eight. From rhymes, children learn words, sentences, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, all of which they'll find later in the books they read" (Mem Fox, *Reading Magic*, 2001)



Looby Loo

Here we go looby loo,
Here we go looby li,
Here we go looby loo,
All on a Saturday night

Put your right foot in,
Put right foot out, Put
your right foot in again,
And shake it all about

(Continue switching body parts)

"Sharing books is an ideal time for having conversations. It is a quiet, cozy time with something to look at and talk about— an experience to share" (Ayala Manolson *It Takes Two to Talk*) Make time in your schedule to read with your child. It is okay to read a favorite book over and over again. Change how you read books by using different voices, or leaving out words and see if they will fill them in, even try changing the words to include them and your family in the story.

For more great parenting tips and activities, visit the preschool activity calendar at www.albertahealthservices.ca



A bin full of cotton balls make great soft mini snowballs! Pull one or two cotton balls out of the bin after the kids are finished exploring and have a snowball race! Who can blow their snowball across the table fastest? Great oral sensory fun!

January Parent Tip

"Spin Stories Together"

The stories you tell about your child, to your child, are powerful for their development of confidence and a healthy sense of themselves. Make a point of "story-telling" all the little things you are appreciating about them and their growth.

Acknowledge some of their struggles and paint a picture of a time when they will have mastered the things that are most challenging today.

"Today it was really hard to share your scooter with Madison. Someday soon you'll be able to take turns."

February Parent Tip

"Love Sense"

Celebrate the month of love by considering all the ways your child senses your love - through your touch, your words, your attention, your gifts, and the special things you do for them. Create that "just loved" feeling in your child in simple and specific ways like:

- A mini massage.
- Saying, "I'm so glad I get to be your Mom/Dad."
- Floor play together.
- PJs warmed in the dryer.

Tips provided from:
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