



# Parental News

Stepping Into the Future

Vol. 12 No. 1, Fall 2009

## Why Are They So Wiggly?

Are your children wigglers? Do they seem to squirm, kick their legs, or jump out of their seat before you realize it? Some days they have so much energy that their little bodies cannot sit still. Believe it or not, this is all part of their natural development.

Children’s development includes knowing how to count and identify letters, but it also involves learning how to move and use their bodies safely. When they wiggle and squirm, young children are learning to control their movements while they find ways to release their energy. The more they move, dance, jump, and run, the healthier they will be and the better they will be at controlling their bodies.

In addition, when children learn to control their bodies, they use their physical skills to develop academically. Before children can write, they need to learn how to control their hands and move their fingers. Before they can stand still in a line, children need to know how to move their legs without bumping into others and how to walk carefully so they don’t kick anyone. Physical development benefits children’s bodies as well as their minds.

Having time to play, move, and run also helps children develop their self-control, coordination, and self-esteem. Through physical activities, children learn how much their bodies can do as well as ways they can use their bodies to work as a team with their friends. Movement and music activities help children learn rhythm, rhyme, hand-eye coordination, as well as social skills. While they’re having fun making music or playing physical games, children are also learning and developing.

There are many fun and healthy ways to support your children’s physical development. Involving children in activities like dancing, making music, playing at the park, riding bicycles, playing a sport, or just taking a family walk will get their energy out while giving them opportunities to wiggle and squirm. Family trips to parks, museums, zoos, and parades also give children new experiences while letting them move and play.

As Mister Rogers says, “Strange as it may seem, one way to help children grow in the ability to control their bodies is by giving them lots of opportunities to enjoy freedom of movement – of course, within appropriate limits. When children know there are times when they are allowed to move about, they are more likely to contain themselves for the brief periods of time when they aren’t allowed.” (Bodies and Movement by Roberta Schomburg and Hedda Bluestone Sharapan) The more time your children can play and move, the more they will be able to be calm and quiet when you need them to be focused.



# A Message from the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services



Dear Parents,

The changing colors of the leaves and the chill in the air mean it's time to for the season of Fall. It is also the time for new teachers, classrooms, and different routines for the children. During this season, children continue to need time to run, move, play, and learn outside.

A big part of children's growth is their physical development. It is important for children to come to school ready to learn and develop their minds but they also must have time to grow and develop their physical skills. While they are running, climbing, jumping, skipping, and chasing one another, they are also learning how their bodies work and how to control them. In addition, time to move and play helps children stay healthy, develop their muscles, and keep a healthy weight. When children have time to run and move, they can better focus on learning in school.

I encourage you to find safe and fun places for your children to play and explore the outdoors. Whether it is time at the local park to explore the playground, a game of catch, a family bike ride, or joining a sports team, children's bodies need time to move.

Music and movement activities are great ways to support your children's physical development! This issue of *Parental News* has information on fun activities and games using music and movement. It has ideas from teachers and other parents as well as things you can do with everyday items in your home. There are also resources, books, and Web sites with additional activities for you and your children.

Let's start this season off with lots of music and movement!

Mary Ellen Caron, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



**UIC**

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## Let's Move!

When *Parental News* asked parents and educators about their favorite things to do to get the wiggles out of their children and students, this is what they had to say:

"I turn on the radio and we dance. Sometimes my daughter gets tired and says 'Mommy, that's enough!'"—Nannette, mother

"We go on walks and visit different places. We take the train downtown and we go to Millennium Park, the lake, the zoo, or the library."—Maria, mother



"Playing with a beach ball inside or throwing a Frisbee outside are great activities and we love the time together."—Samuel, father

"We go bike riding and we go to the library. In the winter, we build igloos with snow and we go to the park for snow fights."—Judith, mother



"I try to engage the children in an active game like Simon Says. It helps them focus on following directions and makes use of their energy!"—Bryan, teacher

"When the leaves fall and our tree is bare, we go outside for a sensory activity. We start walking and jumping and crunching those beautiful, loud leaves. It is so cool!"—Kim, teacher



"We sing songs, dance, or use puppets with the children."—Margarita, teacher



"We play finger games and hand games allowing turn-taking leadership."—Hortensia, grandparent

# MOVING AND GROOVING

## DRAW TO THE MUSIC!



The next time your children are listening to their favorite music, give them some paper and crayons. Ask them to draw what the song sounds like, the rhythm, or how it makes them feel. Then, when they're done, ask them to tell you all about their musical picture.

## Do-It-Yourself Play Dough

One way to help your children use their fingers and develop their hand control is by playing with play dough. Here's an easy recipe that you can make with your children. Just mix the following ingredients in a bowl:

1 ½ cup flour

¾ cup salt

¾ cup water

If the mix is too dry, just add more water. When you and your children are done playing with the play dough, be sure to put it in a sealed container or sandwich bag to keep it fresh.

**Source:** *Mudworks: Creative Clay, Dough, and Modeling Experiences* by MaryAnn F. Kohl



## Name Game

Do you remember the name game? It's fun to sing and gets children laughing and making up new words. Ask them to dance while the whole family takes turns singing each person's name. Here's an example of how it works, just put in your child's name for a giggly, silly song.

Juanita-nita Bo-beeta

Banana-fana Fo-feeta

Me-my-mo Meeta

Juanita!

Or

William-william Bo-billiam

Banana-fana Fo-filliam

Me-my-mo Milliam

William!



## HOMEMADE KAZOO

There are tons of things around the house that can become instruments. Pots and wooden spoons make for great drums. But did you know you can make your own kazoo? Use an empty cardboard paper towel roll, cover one end with wax paper, and use a rubber band to keep it wrapped tight. Then poke a few holes in the wax paper. When you're done making it, your children can decorate it with crayons, stickers, or ribbons. After they finish decorating, show them how to put their mouth on the open end and hum, sing, or talk to make fun kazoo noises.

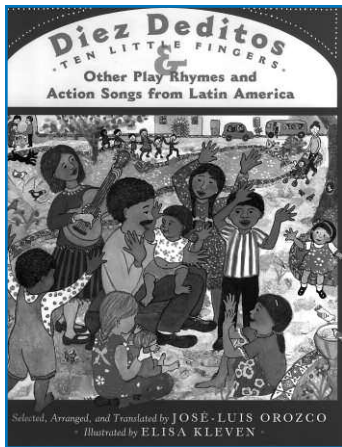
**Source:** <http://familycrafts.about.com>

## Balloon Volleyball

Blow up a balloon then find a flat, open space to play some volleyball with your children. See how many times you can hit it back and forth while keeping it from touching the ground. If your children are really good at this game, you can make it more challenging by standing further apart. You can also make it harder by playing music and bouncing the balloon back and forth to the rhythm of a song.

# MOVING AND GROOVING

## From the Book corner



### **Diez Deditos: Ten Little Fingers and Other Play Rhymes and Action Songs from Latin America**

by José-Luis Orozco

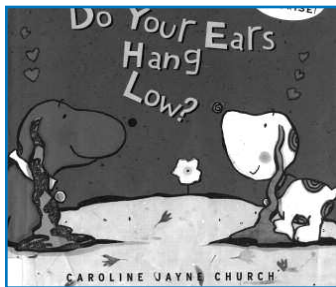
This book has songs and rhymes that will make you sing, chant, clap, wiggle, and dance. They were originally written in Spanish

but they include English translations as well as the music and hand movements that go along to each song.

### **If You're Happy and You Know It... illustrated by Annie Kubler**



Through a fun song and pictures of playful babies, this story encourages infants and toddlers to sing along while they read. If you're happy and you know it, check out this book!



### **Do Your Ears Hang Low? by Caroline Jayne Church**

Two friendly puppies dance and play to this classic children's song. Sing along as they explore whether their floppy ears prefer to

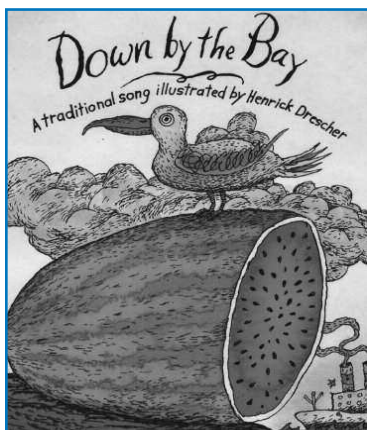
hang low or reach up high to touch the sky. With a foldout surprise at the end, your children will ask you to read and sing this one over and over.



### **There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly by Simms Taback**

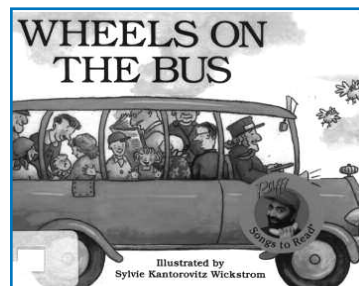
This award winning book uses detailed pictures and cut-out pages to get you singing along. The silliness

of the story and the repetitive rhymes will keep your toes tapping.



### **Down by the Bay illustrated by Henrick Drescher**

With a catchy rhyming song and silly pictures, this book is great for children to sing along while they develop their reading skills. What will they see when they go down by the bay?



### **Wheels on the Bus by Raffi**

This sing-along story is a great way to sing, read, and move your body all at the same time. It's a classic children's song with colorful pictures.

Children can read or sing the story as they act out all the things the bus does while it drives "all through the town."

To find these, or other books you can sing along to, visit the Chicago Center for Early Education, call (312) 733-3134, or go to [www.uic.edu/educ/ccee](http://www.uic.edu/educ/ccee).

# Stages of Physical Development



Every child develops at their own speed. There is no 'right' way for children to grow and learn. However, at each age there are some common developmental stages that most children go through. Here are some phases that you may see in your own children's physical development.

## **Infants**

- They are learning basic movements like: holding up their head, using their feet and legs to push, sitting up, kicking, reaching and holding toys, crawling, standing, and walking.

## **Toddlers and Two Year Olds**

- Can use their bodies to move around by jumping, walking, hopping, and dancing.
- They are curious about the world and very active in exploring by picking up objects, stacking them up, and knocking them down.

## **Three Year Olds**

- Can hold and move small objects like beads and crayons.
- They are gaining greater control of their bodies and can ride a tricycle, throw and catch a ball, and walk on a line.

## **Four Year Olds**

- They are learning to use and control their bodies and may seem clumsy as they bump into others or spill things.
- Fine motor skills are developing like learning to hold a pencil.
- They need lots of physical activity and time to run, play, dance, and move. They can only sit still for short amounts of time.

## **Five Year Olds**

- Have better control of their bodies and large movements.
- They are able to hold a pencil using three fingers in a pinching motion but may hold the pencil in different ways.
- They still need plenty of physical play time but can pace themselves and rest before they are exhausted.

## **Six Year Olds**

- Enjoy being active and playing physical games but they can be sloppy and noisy.
- They are developing their writing skills but may have difficulty staying on a line.

## **Sources**

*Building your Baby's Brain: A Parent's Guide to the First Five Years* by Diane Trister Dodge and Cate Heroman

*Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14* by Chip Wood

## Resources for Parents

### ***Follow Me Too: A Handbook of Movement Activities for Three to Five Year Olds* by Marianne Torbert and Lynne B. Schneider**

This book will help you and your children move and grow through all the indoor and outdoor activities described by the authors. They include games to play in small spaces too.

### ***Kids Make Music! Clapping and Tapping from Bach to Rock* by Avery Hart and Paul Mantell**

Tap your way through this book as you make music fun, exciting, and hands-on... and you don't need any instruments! It has activities that develop children's rhythm and musical skills as well as dance, creative play, and nature.

### ***Dilly's Music and Movement* by The InvestiGator Club**

This CD includes classic songs that your children may already know as well as some new originals. There are pirate songs, dance songs, and great songs to sing and move to. Check this out the next time you need to work out the wiggles.

### ***Ready...Set...Move!* by Steve and Greg**

You'll find several famous songs on this CD as well as country versions of classic children's songs. Your children will be dancing and moving when you put this one on!

## Parents as Advocates

Keeping your children healthy through physical activities is an important part of encouraging their development. At school, children usually have time on the playground, at a park, or for recess. However, it is just as important for children to have active play time at home.

When you make time for outdoor play, sports, and active games, you are helping your children learn how to use their bodies and stay healthy. Making active play and outdoor time part of your daily routine also teaches your children ways to stay fit and encourages them to be active throughout their lives.

Here are two Web sites that have some great resources on supporting physical development:

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

Kids Health offers information to parents and children on ways to stay healthy. They have articles on ways parents can support their children's music and movement skills through family activities.

[www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com)

The Chicago Park District Web site has information on how to sign-up for family events, classes, and sports teams. Check out what events are going on for families all over the city!

## CHOOSY is Coming!



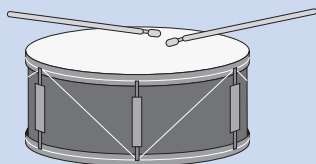
The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) will be kicking off a new movement and nutrition program called CHOOSY which stands for Choose Healthy Options Often & Start Young. The theme of the program "Be Choosy Be Healthy" encourages healthy eating habits and active movement activities for young children. Look for information from your Head Start classrooms on this program in 2010!

## MAKE YOUR OWN MUSIC!

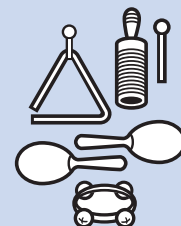
**Need some new ways to enjoy music with your children? Want to encourage your children's musical skills?**

Bring this coupon to the Chicago Center for Early Education and pick up a toy musical instrument.

Have fun singing your favorite song, making up a new tune, and dancing around the house together!



Chicago Center for Early Education  
1900 West Van Buren, Room 2611  
Chicago, Illinois 60612  
(312) 733-3134



**Supplies are limited. One coupon per adult.**

## Resources, Education and Training for Parents

**FAST Learning Centers** offer family literacy programs and services, which include GED, English as a second language, computer literacy and family literacy programs for Head Start or Child Care parents.

### **Family Start Learning Centers (FAST)**

FAST at Garfield Human Services Center  
10 South Kedzie Avenue  
(312) 746-5416

FAST at King Human Services Center  
4314 South Cottage Grove Avenue  
(312) 747-2354

FAST ESL Central  
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 611  
(312) 996-9361

FAST ESL North  
1650 West Foster Avenue, Room 1652  
(773) 561-5667

FAST Family Literacy Outreach Office (FLO)  
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 619  
(312) 413-3252

### **Project SOAR (Sharing Opportunities and Activities for Reading)**

Supports the development of literacy among preschool children in Head Start programs, as well as supports employed parents and teens as they develop their own literacy, leadership, and employability skills.  
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 618  
(312) 413-2654

### **AmeriCorps Programs**

FAST is always interested in talking with parents who want to serve their communities while earning a living allowance and a \$4,725 education award. Call Ruby Camacho at (312) 355-4227

### **Chicago Center for Early Education: resources for parents and professionals**

provides resources and training materials based on current research and best practices to promote high-quality education of young children.  
1900 West Van Buren, Room 2611  
uic.edu/educ/ccee  
(312) 733-3134

### **Finding Child Care**

earlychildhoodchicago.org

### **Action for Children**

actforchildren.org  
(312) 823-1100

### **Links:**

Chicago Department of Family and Support Services  
cityofchicago.org/fss

Chicago Park District  
www.chicagoparkdistrict.com

Kids Health  
www.kidshealth.org

## Family Events in Chicago

### **Chicago Book Festival**

Throughout October  
Harold Washington Library  
400 S. State Street  
www.chipublib.org

### **Chicagoween 2009**

Throughout October  
Daley Plaza  
50 W. Washington Street

### **Creatures of the Night at Garfield Park Conservatory**

October 31, Noon–3:00 p.m.  
300 N. Central Park Avenue

### **Kraft Free Family Museum Night**

November 19, 5:00–8:00 p.m.  
Chicago Children's Museum  
at Navy Pier

### **Magnificent Mile Lights Festival**

November 21, 10:00 a.m.–7:30 p.m.  
Oak Street and Michigan Avenue south  
to Wacker Drive

### **63rd Street Holiday Parade**

November 21, 1:00 p.m.  
63rd Street from Tripp to Oakley

### **McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade**

November 26, 8:30–11:00 a.m.  
State Street and Congress Parkway

### **Chicagoland Toys for Tots Motorcycle Parade**

December 6, 9:30 a.m.  
83rd and Western to Western  
and Foster

### **Winter Solstice Festival**

December 19, 6:00–9:00 p.m.  
North Park Village Nature Center  
5801 N. Pulaski Road

### **Mayor Daley's Holiday Sports Fest**

December 27 and 28  
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.  
McCormick Place, Halls A & B  
2301 S. Martin Luther King Drive

