



**Sure Start
Children's Centres**

"Caring for each other, Sharing with each other, Learning together"

FACT SHEET

MOVEMENT

Movement experience in the early years matters because:

- Movement is the primary medium through which sensory integration takes place.
- Movement experience helps a child to develop an internal body map.
- Movement helps a child to know her place and position in space. This forms the basis or reference point from which other spatial judgements are made.
- In the first years of life, emotional regulation is felt and expressed in physical ways and is derived from touch, feeding, movement experience, social engagement and rough and tumble play.
- Confidence in using the body develops non-verbal aspects of language and the ability to understand the non-verbal language of others.
- Outdoor play is important for developing balance, coordination and imagination. It also has a number of health benefits.
- Rough and tumble play invites children to act and play in creative ways; it helps to develop self-regulation, self-control and is an essential part of healthy development in all young mammals.
- Sensations derived from exercising the balance mechanism help to train centres in the brain involved in the control of eye movements, necessary for reading, writing, copying and physical education later on.
- Movement has the capacity to soothe or arouse and is usually a joyful experience for young children. When there is joy, children learn.



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MUSIC AND LANGUAGE

- Speech and language begin with gesture and non-verbal utterances. In this sense, movement and music provide natural early language schooling.
- A mother's voice provides an acoustic link from pre-natal to post-natal life and is a child's first language teacher.
- Music and language share many elements in common. Language is musical and instrumental music is a form of language without words.
- Singing unites the verbal and non-verbal (musical) elements of language.
- Lullabies, nursery rhymes and songs prepare the infant ear and brain for the sounds of speech.
- Social interaction is vital for the development of reciprocal communication.
- 'Voicing' prepares the ground not only for speech but also for thinking in words.
- A child's own voice is one of the most powerful teaching instruments.
- Vibration provides multi-sensory stimulation affecting not only the body but also neuro-chemistry and emotions.
- Many children today are entering school with inadequate language ability.



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POETRY AND FAIRY STORIES

- Reading and telling stories is sociable.
- Fairytales and fables are narratives told and retold orally from one group to another across generations and centuries. The stories usually contain 'collective wisdom' and imaginative archetypes acquired over time and across cultures.
- Fairytales and fables usually entertain and educate.
- They provide lessons in morality, cultural values and social requirements.
- They encourage imagination, fantasy and humour.
- They help all age groups to understand the human predicament.
- They allow for the examination and reframing of human problems.
- They help all ages to live with the 'unknowable'.
- Analysis and understanding of unconscious material.



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GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

- Developmental readiness is the key to learning success.
- Balance and control of posture provide a stable platform for the coordination needed to achieve well in the classroom.
- Sensory integration takes place as a result of movement and action. Certain activities can help to develop sensory awareness, integration and improved motor control.
- Physical play, including rough and tumble play, provides a practice ground for life.
- Not all children are 'ready' for school at the time of school entry and it is important to identify signs and causes of immaturity to provide effective remediation and support.
- Boys and girls develop different skills at different rates at different times. Nurturing these differences throughout development can help all children to succeed.
- When you train the body you also train the brain.