Movement Matters

Fundamental Movement Presentations for Young children

Melani Alexander Fuchs **Saturday, March 16, 4:00 – 5:30/Session 6**

Montessori knew that to learn, children need to move. Her work and ours must support the reality that *movement is the pathway to cognition!*

Fundamental Movements are basic human gross motor movements that lay the foundation for a lifetime of active learning. Practice and repetition is essential for the development of fundamental movement and for the integration of the body and the mind. Participants in the Movement Matters workshop presentation will experience firsthand movement lessons and large group activities from both a student's and a teacher's perspective. The prepared environment can successfully include independent movement choices that give children the opportunity to purposefully practice gross motor movements!

The goal of the Movement Matters presentation is to give teachers an introduction to Fundamental Movements and to provide teachers with *the tools to*:

- Effectively present Fundamental Movement lessons in the classroom and to confidently normalize movement practice into the environment.
- Creatively develop concrete movement materials to place on a Movement Shelf.
- Consistently implement movement practice into a child's daily work cycle to enhance and support learning.
- Successfully lead large group movement activities.

Melani Alexander Fuchs teaches at the EAC Montessori School of Ithaca. She enjoys giving workshops and trainings. The combination of Melani's passion and experience provides a fun, interactive and educational presentation!

Paper Plate Pushing: Large Group Activity

Children love pushing on paper plates to slide them all over the floor! They can either push with two hands, pressing the plate to the floor while standing on their feet, or push while on their knees. Children can push around cones, to and from boundary markers, or race each other across the floor!

Aims: Develop upper body muscular strength and endurance

Materials:
Decorative, brightly colored and sturdy paper or plastic plates, one per child
Cones or other boundary markers
Tip: Glue felt on the back of a tray for quieter sliding on tile floors.

Preparation: None

Presentation:
Bring the children together to introduce the activity. Introduce the terms “push” and “slide” and have a conversation about why it is good for our bodies to work hard pushing. Demonstrate how to push a plate to make it slide across the floor. Place two hands on the plate to push. Demonstrate how it is possible to push with the knees on the floor or push while staying on two feet. Children may push in any direction, fast and slow. Give each child a paper plate and send him or her off to push. Start the children pushing and when they show fatigue, signal for the children to rest. Have them sit on their plates while resting, then say, “Go push” again.

Variations:
Easier: Increase the resting time. Make the boundaries of the plate pushing area small.

Harder: Decrease the resting time. Set up cones so the children can push from one cone to another, stop or go around it and come back to the starting place. Move the cones close together to make the task easier. Increase the distance between cones to make the activity harder. Set up a line of cones and have the children weave in and out of them. Time children’s trips through the cones and see if they can improve their own times on the next try!

Extensions:
Challenge the children to push two plates, one plate under each hand.
Give this activity another purpose. Place objects on the children’s plates and have them ‘push,’ all around the play space, keeping the object on the plate. Use balls, small toys, or colored Popsicle sticks. Combine this activity with any Carry Game. Have children push from one end of the play space to the other and back, finding and matching numbers, sock pairs or Go Fish cards!

Paper Plate Pushing: Independent Work from the Movement Shelf

Practical Life/Movement

Age: 2 ½ +

Aims: Develop upper body muscular strength and endurance

Materials:

Sturdy paper plate or a plastic tray
One basket
Tip: Glue felt on the back of the plates or trays

Preparation: None

Presentation:

Bring the child and the work to the rug. Introduce the term 'push' and have a conversation about why it is good for our bodies to work hard pushing. Demonstrate how to push a plate or tray around the room. Use both hands to push. It is possible to push with your knees on the floor or push while staying on two feet. Quietly push the plate across the room, around tables, or up and down the hallway. Just keep pushing until you feel you have pushed enough!

Points of emphasis: Pushing with purpose, 'noticing' when you need large proprioceptive work and when you've had enough, steering around other children's work.

Points of consciousness: Pushing is hard work!

Variations:

Easier: Push only one plate, using two hands.

Harder: Play *Push and Pull Baskets*

Extensions:

Add an object to keep on the plate as the plate is pushed around the room. Challenge the child to push with one plate under each hand or under a foot!
Add Plate Pushing to any matching work, sorting work or Carry Game! Push moveable alphabet letters across the room and build the words far away from the letter box. Fetch golden beads on the plate and push them across the room rather than carrying a tray.