

Script for “Motion Moments—Toddlers”

(Behind “Motion Moments” title graphic, 1980s-era Caribbean music plays: samba-type rhythm)

Narrator: “Motion Moments—Toddlers” shows you a few simple ways to weave physical activity into your current early care and education program.

People everywhere are talking about the obesity problem in America, and the health problems associated with obesity not only impact adults but our children.

As a caregiver, you are in a special position and uniquely qualified to help children develop healthy eating and age-appropriate physical activity and limited screen time viewing habits to help them avoid childhood obesity. Physical activity and movement are essential to help children gain new skills and enhance their development as well as their social and emotional well-being.

Let’s take a look at encouraging movement with toddlers. Toddlers are all about being independent. They are practicing new skills every day. When you understand the importance of physical activity and encourage toddlers to be physically active, you are helping them develop a preference for physical activity and patterns of motor coordination and movement that can last a lifetime.

Here’s an activity that you might find useful transitioning toddlers into snack or lunchtime. Sometimes, there can be lots of waiting around, and that is something that hungry toddlers do not do very well. Maybe this can help: as children come in from outdoor play and before they wash their hands, they are helping clean the table.

Caregiver/Teacher: (Singing) This is the way we wipe the table before we eat...lunch...

Narrator: Once they have moved around the table wiping it dry, they come over to the hand-washing area and do even more motion movements. Watch and see:

(Children chattering)

Caregiver/Teacher, then children (Singing) This is how we wait to wash our hands...”

Narrator: And don't worry about the table; the teacher will be cleaning and sanitizing it before the children sit down to eat.

Narrator, continued: These toddlers do this every day, but don't worry about this getting boring. Toddlers like routine. Knowing what to expect can help your toddlers feel more secure and more in control. While repeating this cleaning routine every day for you may seem monotonous, they will enjoy knowing that this part of their day is predictable.

Another thing you know about toddlers is that they love to move and explore. Watch this teacher as she guides her toddlers while they move through a favorite toy. It's just an empty box. Having an empty box in your classroom or family child-care home encourages movement and exploration. When you sit down near the box with your toddlers, they will come, and you can further guide them as they move and play.

(Children chattering)

Caregiver/Teacher: Step up...step up...jump! (Singing) Pop goes the weasel!
Ohh...good jumping!

Narrator: Transition time is usually hard for children and caregivers. Here is a way to help the toddlers in your classroom as they move from unstructured or self-directed playtime to a structured activity.

Use routine prompts to signal transition times. In this example, soft, relaxing music is the cue that lets these children know a change is about to happen. As the teacher and children make their way over to the new area, they start to bend, stretch, or wiggle with their walk. The teacher provides praise to each child and a movement he or she is doing. As a variation, the teacher could encourage the toddlers to imitate a selected movement.

(Bouncy music playing, teacher clapping and singing ["whoop, whoop, whoop, whoop... wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle...flap your arms"...continuing] as narrator begins voiceover, as follows)

Narrator: You are such an important influence in children's lives. Do your part to promote more physical activity with children by modeling and sharing these ideas with others. Build upon these ideas; create your own activities to help children be healthier and more physically active, and put kids in motion every day!

Q & A

Narrator: What have been parent comments about a more movement-oriented curriculum?

Caregiver/Teacher 1: Parents come to us and are, like, “What are you guys doing in the classroom? Because we see bits and pieces of it in the home. So, um, they’re always kind of asking us for ideas and tips of what we’re doing so they can really implement it in the home. They love the fact that we really engage in self-help skills like wiping the table, taking our plates to a bin...um, so a lot of times parents have asked us, like, “Ooh, maybe we could get a bin and so really promote them cleaning up their plates, and you know, marching it over there, and cleaning the table,” and those things.

Narrator: What kind of time does it take to implement these strategies?

Caregiver/Teacher 2: Well, actually, you will be surprised. This really takes no time at all. It just take a little bit of time as far as putting a CD into the CD player and telling the children, “Let’s move...let’s dance...let’s have fun.” Lots of times you may even have a beat in your head...but it just takes nothing for you to get some music together, turn it on, and get the kids moving because they love it.

Narrator: What are the benefits you’ve experienced with having a more active approach with the children’s activities?

Caregiver/Teacher 3: Benefits have been where you have less...less behavior problems, less kids with, um, behavior issues, um, far as hitting, fighting, too much aggression...they get all the aggression out into gross motor play...so if you do a lot of gross motor activities or home activities...gets the energy released into a positive way where they’re not hitting, they’re getting in trouble...and also, it helps the kids that are...that don’t have the...that aren’t up to the level with other movement capability...has—gives them the chance to work on those skills, to improve their skills.

Narrator: Where do you get your ideas?

Caregiver/Teacher 2: Actually, you know what? When you work with children, they give you the ideas. Also, the things that we’ve done, how we just like to move...you think of what you want them to do with their bodies, how they want their bodies to be limber, how they want their bodies to just move...big movements, large movements, small movements...that’s where all your ideas come, and with music, you want to teach them: do whatever comes natural, do what you want to do...because that is movement, that is moving, and that gets your body...in action.

(As credits start to roll, 1980s-era Caribbean music resumes: samba-type rhythm, twanging guitar, brass section)