

INTRODUCTION

Let's Get Moving!

Put a table and chairs in a room and bring in some adults. What do they do? They come in and sit down.

Now take the adults out of the room and bring in a group of kids. Same table and chairs. What do they do? One little girl rushes to the window and spins around aimlessly with a great big smile on her face. Under the table, a boy builds a fort. Three little ones decide now's a good time for a race. One girl needs to go to the bathroom. Two toddlers bump into each other and spill to the floor. A little boy can't figure out how to take his coat off. A baby crawls by only stopping to examine the lint on the floor . . . with his mouth. And, one little girl insists on showing you how she growls like a lion. If you have young children in your life, you know these kids. In fact, at one point in your life, you *were* these kids.

Kids move—often in unexpected ways, and often for no apparent reason. But if you know how to “read” the moves, you'll find there's a reason for *every* move they make, and much of it has little to do with the movement itself. You see, movement is the essential and often overlooked starting point for children's learning. Our intent with *A Moving Child Is a Learning Child* is to help you understand how all those wiggles and giggles facilitate learning and what you can do to guide this process.

About This Book

As you already know, in working with young children, theory without practice only gets you so far. But so does practice without theory. Our goal with *A Moving Child Is a Learning Child* is *both*. We call this the “Here's Why, Here's How” approach. So here's how our journey will unfold.



In the first part of the book, **Part 1: Movement Matters**, we explain the importance of movement and introduce you to a new tool we call the Kinetic Scale.

Part 2: A Moving Child endeavors to give you a simple-yet-comprehensive understanding of movement and its relationship to learning.

Part 3: Language: The Bridge to Formal Learning explores the role that all types of language play in helping young children “translate” their physical exploration of the world into higher-level thinking, reasoning, and abstract learning.

In **Part 4: A Learning Child**, we’ll lay out methods and practices for kinetic learning in the classroom, on the playground, at home, or anywhere little ones are moving and learning.

While on the move, children instinctively use different play patterns to explore their world. **Part 5: Put It in Play** walks you through classic play patterns and their role in stimulating a child’s movement and learning.

Finally, **Part 6: Smart Steps** wraps up with 36 thoughtfully selected activities that keep the fun and learning moving.

Many of the diagrams and activities in *A Moving Child Is a Learning Child* are provided as printable PDFs at the Free Spirit Publishing website (see page ix for information about how to access the PDFs).

For ease of reading, we alternate the use of male and female pronouns chapter by chapter when writing about children. Unless a specific note is made, all the information applies to girls and boys alike.

Throughout the book, you will find three recurring elements: “Gill’s Notebook,” “Family Moves,” and “Motorvators.”

Gill’s Notebook

Based on journals Gill has kept in over 30 years of working with early childhood teachers and caregivers, these first-person entries relate personal stories and practical suggestions about guiding movement in early childhood.

Family Moves

Families can get in on the action with these ideas for sharing information and activities that encourage movement at home. Handouts to share with families are included in the digital file at the Free Spirit website. (See page ix.)

Motorvators

Because we don’t want you to wait until the final chapters to get your little ones up and moving, we’ve included “motorvators” throughout the

book—quick, easy, anytime, anywhere ideas for adding high-energy, purposeful activities to your day.

In fact, here's one you can try right now . . .

Motoruator

Snail the Whale

Here's Why

Fidgeting doesn't always mean a child isn't concentrating. In fact, quite often it means he's *trying* to concentrate. First, make sure a squirmy child doesn't need to go to the bathroom, and then try a little balancing activity.

Here's How

Tell the child the tale of poor old "Snail the Whale":

There once was snail named Whale
Who couldn't find the end of his tail.
Three spins to the left . . .
Three spins to the right . . .
Never failed to help Whale find his tail.

Where's Your Tail?

Now make a game of it! Get up and look for your own "tail." Then ask the child if he can find his. Spin slowly three times to the left, then slowly three times to the right. (*Slow* is the key here—about one revolution per eight seconds.)

Once he's found his tail, what's the best way to keep from losing it again? Sit down!

"Finding his tail" may help the child settle down and sit still . . . at least until that tail goes missing again!



So, if you've found *your* tail and you're ready to start, so are we.










Let's get moving!

The Movement Can-Do Guide

On the Move

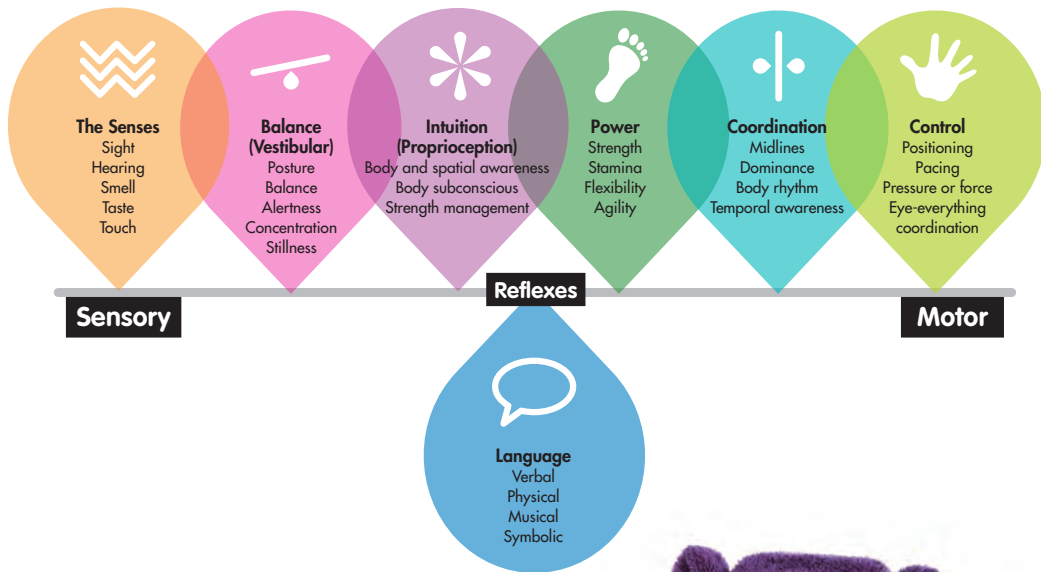
Watch Me Grow

In the Know

Play by Play	Moving into new skills and abilities	Growing through practice by playing, exploring, and experimenting	Automating skills while building confidence to try more
<p>Snugglers Birth to rolling over Approximate age: 0–6 months</p> 	<p>Primitive reflexes in place Head control (first attempts) Enjoys touch, massage, and skin-to-skin care</p>	<p>Hand and foot recognition starts Hip tips (attempting to roll) Discovery through senses emerging (especially mouth)</p>	<p>Fascinated by faces (studies facial expressions) Rolling independently Pushing up (from tummy) Postural reflexes emerging (primitive reflexes abating)</p> 
<p>Squigglers Rocking, crawling, and sitting Approximate age: 6–14 months</p> 	<p>Grasping Mouthing (mimicking mouth movements) Commando crawling (beginning to explore the floor)</p>	<p>Up on all fours Rocking Releasing grasp (voluntarily) Changing hands</p>	<p>Crawling Pincer grip Pushing into sitting position</p> 
<p>Scampers Pulling up to walking Approximate age: 9–24 months</p> 	<p>Learning navigation (small spaces) Pulling up to standing (aided) Cruising Bobbing up and down (aided)</p>	<p>Standing independently Climbing on furniture or stairs</p>	<p>Eye-hand coordination emerging (self-feeding) Toddling and walking</p> 
<p>Stompers Running and jumping Approximate age: 20 months–3½ years</p> 	<p>Running Bobbing up and down (independently)</p>	<p>Jumping (on two feet) Upper body strength (beginning to hold own weight)</p>	<p>Jumping (forward or backward) Manipulative skills (using objects to affect other things) Temporal awareness emerging (attempts to catch, bat, or kick moving ball)</p> 
<p>Scooters Hopping and climbing Approximate age: 3–4 years</p> 	<p>Early signs of handedness Balancing on one foot (dominant hand and foot awakening)</p>	<p>Marching Hopping on one foot Coordinated climbing</p>	<p>Galloping Midlines sharpening Dominant hand and foot developing</p> 
<p>Skeddaddlers Skipping, leaping, cooperative games, and dance Approximate age: 4 years and older</p> 	<p>Leaping (from standing) Cross-walking (crossing one foot over the other)</p>	<p>Leaping (from running) Skipping (no rope)</p>	<p>Automated, coordinated movement such as dance, skipping rope, and playground games</p> 

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The Kinetic Scale



The six physicalities create the body-brain relationship that wires the brain for everything else. Three sensory tools and three motor tools strike the right balance for optimal development.

Primitive and postural reflexes underpin and enable all early movement.

Language transforms experience into understanding by translating the concrete into the conceptual.



Smart Steps at Play #17: Hands, Meet Feet

Since babies aren't born with body awareness, it's important that baby gets to know his hands and feet, and that they get to know each other.

GET READY!

Playing with babies' hands and feet can be done anytime—at playtime, diaper changing, or cuddle time.

Moving

Let's Go for a Ride

Lay baby on his back on the floor. Gently move his legs in a bicycle riding motion. "Ride" up the hill slowly, and then down the hill more quickly. This helps his muscles and brain feel what it's like to experience independent movement and change in speed. Do a similar movement with his little hands.

Growing

Hands, Meet Feet

Take the baby's right hand and right foot and gently bring them together. Then stretch the leg out gently. And stretch the arm out gently. Repeat for the left hand and foot. As baby begins to recognize his hands and feet through touch and movement, he is not only learning body awareness but also becoming aware of what it feels like for different parts of his body to move at different times. This will be crucial later on as he begins his journey to independent mobility.

Knowing Crossovers

Take baby's right arm and gently bring it across his body to touch his left arm. Then bring the left arm over to meet the right arm. Repeat with the legs, doing this several times gently and playfully in a sort of infant dance. In fact, music with a gentle beat is a great accompaniment. For example, "If You're Happy and You Know It" works well. Feeling oppositional movements such as these helps prepare the body and the brain for crawling and walking, which both require complex lateral movement.

SARAH-AUCE LEE



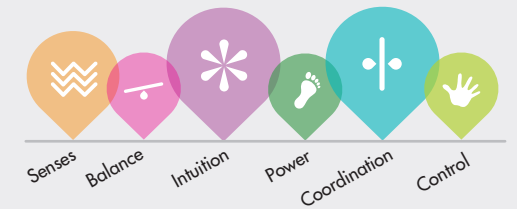
STAGES



Snugglers

Squigglers

KINETIC SCALE



BENEFITS

Body awareness
Muscle strength
Bonding
Security

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Over
Body parts

SAFEGUARDS

Do this activity very gently and slowly and a little at a time. Let the child's reactions guide you.

EQUIPMENT

None



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