

**Pathway 3 Activities:**

*Before doing any Dance activities please ensure that yourself and your child are well hydrated, have not just eaten a meal, and that you do the “warm up” (below) to start every session.*

*It is important to note that during any Dance activities done at home, if you or your child at any point start to feel tired, dizzy, or unwell in any way that you stop the activity immediately and seek appropriate medical advice. Only push you bodies as far as you feel comfortable/safe, and be careful when handling/supporting your child physically throughout any of the activities.*

*Where possible, when taking part in dance activities yourself and your child should wear comfortable clothing (similar to what you would wear for sports activities), with no baggy clothes or jewellery that could cause yourself or your child to trip, get caught on or injured in any way. Dance can be done barefoot or in comfortable shoe wear such as trainers (sandals, flip-flops, heels or socks that could slip on the floor are not recommended).*

*All dance activities should be done in a clear, open space, free from anything that your child could trip over, or fall/bang into. You do not need a big room for your session, just enough space for yourself and your child to move on the spot or around in a small circle.*

Happy Dancing! 

**Warm up**

*Skills being developed: Physical preparation, awareness and control.*

Before starting any Dance activities it is important that you and your child to a warm up. This will warm up and wake up your body, ensuring that your muscles perform better and you are less likely to cause injury. This can be done to music or without.

Talk (and demonstrate) your child through the following:

1. To begin, stand still in a space and take a few controlled deep breaths.
2. Start by shaking your hands, then your arms, feet and legs.
3. Gently move different parts of the body one at a time:

* Head (side to side, up and down)
* Shoulders (shrug up and down, roll in circles)
* Arms (circular movements)
* Waist (rotate and twist)
* Hips (thrust, tilt and circle)
* Knees (bend and stretch)
* Feet (rotate at the ankles, up onto toes and down)
* Roll down the spine all the way down and up again slowly

1. 5 minutes of brisk movements including:

* Walking on the spot
* Star jumps
* Light jogging
* Lunges

1. 5 minutes of stretching including:

* Reaching arms upwards, outwards, in circles
* Bending knees up, forwards into a lunge and sideways
* Touching your toes

Don’t forget…

Help your child in whatever way they need, remind them it is ok to make mistakes, and reward their efforts with praise and positivity!



**Dance how it sounds**

*Skills being developed: Creativity, Adaptability, musicality and emotional development.*

This game is all about responding physically to what you hear. The aim is for your child to adapt the way they dance/move depending on the type of music you play.

To prepare, select 3/4 different pieces of music. Try and choose songs that range in style and speed.

For example:

1. A piece of classical music
2. A medium paced pop/hip-hop song
3. A slow love song
4. A fast-paced rock song

Once you have chosen your music, tell your child that you are going to play a song, and that after listening to it for a few moments, you will start to dance to it, moving in a way that they think matches the character and style of the music.

* Turn on the 1st song, eg. the love song, and tell your child to stand and listen to it (holding their hands if necessary to keep them still and focussed).
* After about 30 seconds, tell your child they must start to move to the music in a way that matches how it sounds. Eg. for the love your movements might be light, flowing and twirly. Dance with them so that they can see ways to dance that suit the music. This will also make them feel less self-conscious and encourage them to create their own movements.
* There are no “right or wrong” way to do this, however, the purpose of the exercise is to listen and respond, so if your child’s movements do not seem to reflect the music playing , encourage them to listen and try again. Tell them “listen to how the music is soft and floaty – try and move your arms softly and sweep them up and down and round and round to the music”.
* Next, move on to the next song and repeat the process. Remember to take time to listen before you start to dance, and use words to point out to them how the music sounds and how they might choose to move.
* Continue until you have danced to each of the different songs or until your child has had enough.
* Below is a table of descriptive language and movements that you might want to use to help your child to interpret the different styles:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of music:** | **How it sounds:** | **Types of movements:** |
| Classical (medium paced) | Light, happy, soft, lively, playful, stately, magical, | circular, flowy, swaying, bouncy |
| Pop/Hip-hop (medium paced) | Rhythmic, powerful, confident, fun, bright, energetic, upbeat | Sharp, angular, strong, bouncy, isolations |
| Slow love song | Smooth, gentle yet strong, floaty, breathy, calm, romantic | Long reaching, circular, slow and delicate, swooping, twisting |
| Fast-paced rock song | Harsh, exciting, strong, rapid, stern, noisy, rhythmical | Frantic, repetitive, vigorous, wild, heavy, stompy, punchy, bold |

Variations – things to try:

* Extend the activity by trying more varieties of music from different genres such as trance, disco, jazz, blues, country, punk, reggae, R&B, electronic, funk, gospel or operatic.

Don’t forget…

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**Copy me!**

*Skills being developed: Attention, interpersonal, physical fitness and control.*

This is a very simple exercise of “I do it, then you do it”.

1. Choose a song or piece of music that your child will enjoy dancing to.
2. Tell your child that you are going to dance to the music. You are going to be the leader and do a dance move, and then they must try and copy you.
3. Start the music and do a movement over and over. This can be as simple as marching on the spot, bouncing to the music whilst clapping your hands, or twirling in a circle. The movement does not need to be complicated, as long as it is repetitive and can be easily copied.
4. Tell your child it is their turn, and they must copy the move you just did.
5. Once they have attempted the move, say “my turn again” and do a different movement.
6. Say “your turn – copy me”, and encourage your child to copy the move.
7. Continue with this until the song has finished.
8. You may find that to begin with your child needs you to keep doing the movement whilst they are copying so that they don’t have to remember what you just did. Give verbal support when they are copying if required, eg. “your turn – copy me. I swayed side to side, can you try that”.

Variations – things to try:

* Once your child has got used to the exercise, try swapping roles and ask them to go first and make up a movement that you will then copy.
* Instead of doing one movement over and over, extend the activity by doing more than one movement at once. Try doing a sequence of 3/4 movements in a row, eg. clap your hands, turn around and then wave your hands in the air, and then ask our child to copy the whole sequence.

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**Shaping**

*Skills being developed: Improvisation, attention and spatial awareness.*

This activity is about guiding your child through a series of movements and held positions (or freezes) through the use of a poem

1. Find a calm/’chillout’ piece of music to play quietly in the background. It is important to use a song that is instrumental (has no words).
2. Ask your child to stand still and calm in a clear area, and tell them that you will be reading out a poem that tells them what they have to do.
3. You may find that the first couple of times that you do this exercise, it helps if you do the movements alongside your child in order to demonstrate what is being asked.
4. Read out the poem below, giving each instruction clearly and giving your child plenty of time to respond and move in between each line:

Stand very still  
Stretch slowly into a shape  
Curl into another  
Now POP into a shape  
Swing into another  
Scoop into a shape  
Melt slowly into another  
Spin into a shape  
Jump into another  
Slide to standing still  
And relax.

Variations – things to try:

* If your child finds some of the action words difficult to interpret, spend some time trying out different ways that you can make your body… stretch, curl, pop, swing, scoop, melt, spin, jump and slide.

Don’t forget…

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**Dance routine**

*Skills being developed: Creativity, performance, physical confidence, attention and interpersonal.*

This exercise is about joining a series of movements together to create a sequence.

* Choose a song that will motivate your child to take part.
* Think of 8 dance moves that can be easily copied and repeated.

Eg:

1. step together side to side 4 times
2. bending your knees over and over, feet apart, in a bouce-like motion 8 times
3. circling your arms above your head 4 times
4. reaching your right arm up and then out to the side, repeating on left, then repeat each arm again
5. hands on hips – lean your hips from side to side 8 times
6. walk forwards 4 times pointing both hands to the floor
7. walk backwards 4 times brushing your hands over your shoulders
8. cross your arms over the front of your chest 8 times changing which arm is in front each time

* Explain to your child that you will be making up a dance routine.
* Show them move no. 1 - step together side to side, and say “first we will do this 4 times”
* Show them move no. 2 – bending and straightening your knees over and over with your feet apart in a bouce-like motion, and say “next, we will bounce 8 times”.
* Next, say “let’s try them together”. Demonstrate for them step together side to side 4 times, and then bouncing your knees 8 times. Encourage them to join in and practice the 2 moves together a few times.
* Show them move no. 3 – circling your arms above your head, and say “next we do this 4 times”.
* Tell your child “let’s have a go adding that on”, and practice moves 1-3.
* Show them move no. 4 –, reaching your right arm up and then out to the side, then repeating on your left, and say “last, we do this 4 times”
* Finally, tell your child you will practice all 4 moves together, and do so.
* Start the music and say “let’s do it to the music”, and dance the first 1-4 moves.
* Begin to teach moves 5-8 in the same way as above.
* To finish, practice all 8 moves together. You can repeat the routine as many times as you like to the music.

The level of support your child will need for this activity will vary. Ways to support them include:

* Using clear verbal instructions as you are dancing
* Your child may find it easier to stand side by side with you, or may prefer it if you stand directly across from them.
* Give recognisable names for the moves that you can call out as you dance eg. for move 4 you could say “point the ceiling then to the wall”

Variations – things to try:

* When creating the routine, try asking your child “what move should we do next?”, and see if they can come up with a move to go into the routine. This will build confidence and get them more involved as a choreographer.
* Once your child has learnt the routine, extend it further by creating another 8 moves to add onto it.
* If your child is happy to do so, perform your routine to other members of the family in your household – remember to encourage lots of applause and cheering regardless of how it goes!

Your routine can be as creative and silly as you like, and include any movements that you think your child will enjoy and be able to master.

Don’t forget…

Help your child in whatever way they need, remind them it is ok to make mistakes, and reward their efforts with praise and positivity!