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UBU-Unique But United: A Movement-Based Curriculum for an Inclusive Pre-School Classroom Focusing on Social-Emotional Learning

Julie Schadeck
Columbia College Chicago

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UBU – UNIQUE BUT UNITED: A MOVEMENT-BASED CURRICULUM FOR AN
INCLUSIVE PRE-SCHOOL CLASSROOM FOCUSING ON
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Julie Schadeck

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Committee:

Susan Imus, MA, BC-DMT, LCPC, GL-CMA

Chair, Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling

Laura Downey, MA, BC-DMT, LPC, GL-CMA

Research Coordinator

Kim Rothwell, BC-DMT, LCPC, CADC

Thesis Advisor

Rena Kornblum, MCAT, BC-DMT, DTRL

Reader

Abstract

The purpose of this program development is to address the problem of true inclusion by focusing on the role of the body and movement in social-emotional learning (SEL) among pre-school children. Every year, millions of 3 to 4 year old children leave the safe cradle of their home and embark on a life-long journey of discovery where they soon find out that not everyone is like them. To teach them that different does not mean necessarily separate, I used the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension logic model to develop a movement-based curriculum for an inclusive pre-school classroom focusing on SEL. Specifically designed to be implemented by dance/movement therapists, these can be assisted by teachers in a shared endeavor to achieve inclusion of all children, whatever their needs are. I have sought insights and ideas for such a program by observing blended pre-K classrooms and conducting interviews with professionals in the field of special and regular education and dance/movement therapy. My final project, *Unique But United*, provides a collection of movement-based methods and strategies compiled into 10 themed sections that encourage individuality and creativity, favor strengths over disabilities, and make children bound to thrive. Future adaptations, implementation, and evaluation, even though not in the scope of this thesis, have also been explored.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	11
Chapter 3: Methods	43
Chapter 4: Introduction to the Curriculum	51
Lesson 1: Introductions and Regulations	74
Lesson 2: Body Awareness	80
Lesson 3: Spatial Awareness	93
Lesson 4: Emotions 1	101
Lesson 5: Energy Modulation & Impulse Control 1	107
Lesson 6: Boundaries, Trust & Assertiveness	114
Lesson 7: Energy Modulation & Impulse Control 2	119
Lesson 8: Emotions 2	125
Lesson 9: Social Interactions	132
Lesson 10: Empathy & Attunement	136
Chapter 5: Discussion	141
References	148
Appendix A: Logic Model	175
Appendix B: Consultant Contract	176
Appendix C: Signs To Teach In Class	177
Appendix D: Signs For Emotions	180

Chapter One: Introduction

Whenever I am asked about the work that I do as a developing dance/movement therapist, I like to refer to a moment in one of my groups where a young child with special needs, who was withdrawn and never wanted to participate in anything, suddenly, found the courage to get up from his mat and join the others in their movement explorations. Once it was his turn and he realized that the movement that he suggested to the group was immediately accepted and mirrored by every single child, he just couldn't stop anymore: he tried another movement, and another, all mirrored readily and joyfully by the others again, and he eventually ended up leading for the remaining of the session, growing more and more self-confident while making his friends dance his very own personal dance with him. Witnessing the power of such simple movement support on this young boy has not only reinforced my belief in the work that I do, but also instilled within me the longing to give every child the chance to be supported in his dance by bringing the elements of inclusivity, movement, and pro-social interaction into early childhood education.

Recent developments in education show a strong tendency of moving away from a segregated model of education towards a more inclusive one (Harjusola-Webb et al., 2012). The FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy (CPEIP) (2002) defines an inclusive classroom as a supportive environment where children with and without special needs learn alongside each other, have equitable opportunities for personal growth and skill development, and receive the necessary help to learn and participate in the general education curriculum and society in meaningful ways.

Research has indeed shown that when properly implemented, inclusion and interactions between children with and without special needs can have a cornucopia of benefits for all: a greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences; enhanced self-esteem and self-concept (Rubin, Bukowski & Laursen, 2009); a genuine capacity for friendship between children of all abilities (Bunch & Valeo, 2004); the acquisition of functional, social, and behavioral skills (Vakil et. al, 2008); and the development of self-regulatory behaviors in children with special needs (Brown, Bergen, House, Hittle, & Dickerson, 2000).

Unfortunately, however, inclusion is still doomed to fail because teachers often lack the necessary training, resources, and assistance to effectively address the needs of all their students (Brice & Miller, 2000; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2009) and because teachers, families, and related professionals fail to collaborate as interdisciplinary teams to create meaningful learning experiences for the children (Smith 2004). Thus, even when instructed in the same classroom, there still persists a demarcation between children with and without special needs. Children with special needs are children who, because of their unique medical, mental, physical, or developmental difficulties, have needs in addition to those of their regularly developing peers (CICC). Consequently, because of such impairments and related needs, they are often socially excluded (Provost, Lopez & Heimerl, 2006) as they do not have the necessary skills to interact with their peers and their peers do not have the necessary skills to relate to them. Fortunately though, as Shapiro (2004) explained, psychologists have found that social skills can be taught and learned, and professionals have started arguing that social-emotional learning should be part of the school curricula. Social-

emotional learning (SEL) is the “process by which children develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success; use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts” (Illinois State Board of Education, 2013, para.1). This thus entails that children cannot only learn to regulate their emotions and increase self-control, but they can also learn how to interact with others and build friendships. Hence, it is not surprising that DiGennaro et al. (2011) argued that social skills instruction makes the difference between successful and unsuccessful inclusion, and schools should therefore provide children with a time, place, and space where the latter are actively assisted in SEL (Danby, Thomson, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012).

On another side, Burrill (2011) then argued that movement is another important element that needs to be incorporated in school curricula as the body represents the primary source through which natural learning and meaning making occur. Young children learn about their world and others through movement and body-sensing, which then become intertwined with emotional learning, relating, and expression (Burrill, 2010; Dissanayake, 2001; Kestenberg, 1985). These learnings, when rehearsed and adapted through play, ultimately extend into and form rational and conscious cognition (Buzzell, 2007; Pearce, 2007). Sure enough, research supports this view as it has indeed been observed that movement and creative dance helped children increase body awareness, self-control, self-esteem, confidence, cultural understanding and respect, communication of feelings, and their sense of belonging and participation in the whole school community

(Lutz and Kuhlmann, 2000). Further, dance helped improve psychomotor, affective, and cognitive development (Purcel, 1994).

Nevertheless, the surging focus on academics reduces opportunities to explore SEL (Campbell, 2004; Harjusola-Webb et al. 2012) or physical activity (Dow, 2010). Consequently, the body is being neglected as a vital source of learning, a child's chances to learn vital social-emotional skills are lowered, and issues in inclusion and behaviors continue to exist. Now, even though there are many existing and effective curricula that focus on SEL, many of them do not include the body as a learning tool and mostly rely on cognitive thinking in order to teach new skills. Thus, it seems that what is needed is a proactive, early-intervention approach that acknowledges the importance of learning social-emotional skills as well as the importance that movement plays in embodying and learning these skills. A movement-based curriculum does exactly this: it is a social and emotional learning program that uses a combination of movement explorations, discussion, and creativity to educate and work towards change (Kornblum, 2002). Using the principles of dance/movement therapy (DMT) as a framework for such movement interventions, helps to further create a supportive environment where the mind and body are interconnected; the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of the individual are nurtured and fostered; and his/her experiences and expressions validated (ADTA, 2014). Creating such a curriculum is exactly what this project intended to do.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to address the problem of true inclusion of children with and without special needs in the educational setting. The thesis project set out to answer the following questions: How can the use of movement interventions and

activities informed by the principles of DMT assist in fostering social emotional learning in pre-school children with and without special needs and create a more inclusive classroom? What is the role of movement in SEL in pre-school children with and without special needs? How can movement interventions informed by DMT help children with and without special needs in connecting and relating to each other? As such, this project honed in on the role of the body and movement in social-emotional learning among pre-school children and explored the effects of movement on self-expression, social relationship building, self-control, emotional regulation, creativity, and social relatability among children of all abilities.

Additional issues that this project addressed include the lack of involvement of and resources for teachers in designing and successfully implementing inclusion; the segregation of students with special needs (Brice & Miller, 2000); the lack of opportunities for children to engage in positive social interactions with their peers (Harjusola-Webb et al., 2012); and the complications of developing friendships between children with and without special needs (DiGennaro, McIntyre, Dusek, & Quintero, 2011).

Motivation for the Project

My motivation for this project arose from personal and professional experiences of working with various children and adolescents with special needs, as well as prior involvement with creative dance curriculum development and evaluation. When working at a special education school with children aged 3 to 8 as part of my internship, I realized that a lot of the children exhibited difficulties in expressing themselves and relating to their peers. Especially in the blended pre-kindergarten classrooms, children with various

special needs had trouble being and feeling fully integrated within the classroom because they did not know how to approach and interact with their peers who did not have such needs and vice versa. Each of them had his/her very unique movement vocabulary, which was more readily understood by some than others. And while some people would surely dismiss certain individual's movement vocabulary as unintelligible, it quickly became clear that the unique use of movement was a strengths-based source of early communication for those children who struggled with self-expression and interpersonal connection. Thus, rather than being dismissed, it needed to be supported, nurtured, and further developed. Being witness to all of this consequently instigated my wish to create a movement-based program that would help all of the children to better understand themselves, each other, and feel validated in who they are. Focusing on their strengths instead of their weaknesses, I set out to create an empowering and relational program that involves the whole person and gives all of the children an equal opportunity to strive and learn from each other.

Value of the Project

Dance/movement therapists and teachers who are involved in the education of children with and without special needs will find value in this project. Even though the program is specifically designed to be implemented by dance/movement therapists, teachers will be informed about the intentions and the workings of the program and further be encouraged to act as assistants. The final project provides a collection of movement-based lesson plans that include activities, methods, and strategies that can help make inclusion more successful. While adding to the academic debate of how inclusion can be achieved, the primary benefit though is reserved to the children with and without

special needs: assisting them in SEL will prepare them to meet the challenges of lifelong learning and help them develop relationships among each other, as well as with their educators and caregivers.

Theoretical Framework

Developing a program allowed me to use the integrative theoretical orientation that informs my clinical work. Not influenced by one specific technique or belief, my theoretical framework is a rather eclectic one, made up of a different values and principles from different fields of study.

Starting with the field of DMT, my work and beliefs have definitely been influenced by major pioneers such as Marian Chace, Blanche Evan, and Alma Hawkins. Though these pioneers differed in terms of their techniques and concepts, their work reflects the underlying belief that we communicate through our bodies and movement and that the ability to communicate and relate well with others begins with an embodied sense of self. More specifically then, I agree with Marian Chace that communication is a basic human need (Levy, 2005), and I believe that the body and movement are both developmentally the primary and at the same time deepest forms of such communication. As Siegel explains, nonverbal communication plays an important role in the interpersonal neurology of the developing mind of a child and is an infant's first means to forming an attachment relationship with a caregiver, thus serving as foundation for all relationship and communication (Siegel & Bryson, 2011). This desire to communicate, thus stems from an even deeper need and desire to connect and relate to one another, and to belong, and whenever we fail to establish this connection and get these needs met, we retreat to negative behaviors and isolation (Levy, 2005). In such manifestations, we consequently

express in movement and our bodies what we are unable to express in words (Levy, 2005). This is especially true for children who do not yet master the verbal language skills to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs. Our fast-paced, individualized society and the recent surge in technology keep forcing us “to adapt to tempos external to our own inner rhythms” (Levy, 2005, p. 31) and to value the power of the mind, at the expense of the body. Consequently, as Blanche Evan, another pioneering dance/movement therapist, explained, children are thrown into physical and emotional isolation (Levy, 2005) due to a lack of embodied social-emotional interactions. Thus, I believe that teaching children to move and sense their own body and restoring their body-mind connection is crucial if we wish to help them become integrated, resilient human beings. As Alma Hawkins suggested, in order to perceive ourselves and to relate in larger context, we must indeed first have a strong sense of self (Levy, 2005).

Along these lines, and similar to Hawkins, my work is further influenced by existential-humanistic psychology and thus rather than looking at an individual’s parts, I have come to perceive the whole person and his/her potential in self-actualization (Ivey & D’Andrea, 2012). Following the teachings of positive psychology, I am not interested in people’s disabilities or weaknesses, but am much more curious about the strengths that enable them to thrive and persevere (University of Pennsylvania, 2014). Thus, like Hawkins, I do believe in an inherent talent and capacity that resides within each one of us (Ivey & D’Andrea, 2012) and made it my mission to help adults and children alike to tap into this hidden brilliance. So rather than “just fixing what is broken, [I seek to] nurture what is best within [them]” (Seligman, 1998, para. 5) and strive to nourish people’s

confidence in their own abilities in order to help them develop a positive sense of self and self-worth.

I do believe that these theoretical frameworks allow me to attend to social-emotional learning through a holistic, body-based approach and effectively address the issue of inclusion from multiple perspectives. Group activity and symbolism; guided movement experiences, relaxation and imagery; and creative movement, improvisation and verbalization of thoughts and feelings are the methodologies that were used by Chace, Evans, and Hawkins respectively to help create the values they believed in and" have thus been adapted and given a place in the curriculum.

Contribution of the Project

First, this project thus contributes to the need of a systematic, collaboratively created program that will help describe and define the process of SEL. Second, the project uses movement and the body as an inroad for interventions and provides dance/movement therapists who work in educational settings with needed proactive strategies to promote SEL and help teachers create more inclusive pre-school classrooms. Third, this movement-based project provides children aged 3 to 5 with a concrete learning experience that is viable and accessible to them, no matter their level of needs. Fourth, this project offers an integrative framework for meaningful teaching and learning in an environment that values the individual and encourages respect, safety, and mutual acceptance. Given the uniqueness, individual developmental levels, and different intelligences of each child, this program ultimately creates a relational and multimodal learning environment, which positively influences the development of the socio-affective Self (Schore, 2001; Stern, 2000), encourages creativity, favors strengths over

weaknesses, and makes children bound to thrive.

In the following chapter, I will provide a context and background for this thesis project through a review of the existing literature related to child development, children with special needs, inclusive education, social-emotional learning, the body as a learning tool, DMT, as well as existing curricula focusing on SEL.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Reaching the age of three or four, children have left behind their toddlerhood and entered the stage of early childhood (Boyd & Bee, 2010). As preschoolers they learn many new life skills; stretch their cognitive, social, and emotional abilities; and start to form a personality and a mind of their own. Curiously exploring their surroundings, taking adventurous risks, and investigating their unprecedented autonomy are all on the daily order of their active childhood life, and made possible by the recent developmental increase in mobility and gross motor skills (Erikson, 1982). Thus, when tottering into a new classroom for the first time, this is exactly what they will do: explore, take risks, and try to be independent. Once they have become acquainted with their new surroundings and all the wonderful toys and distinctive faces, they will soon find that they do in fact have some control over their surroundings. This, in return, will spurt their curiosity even more and before we know it they are taking initiative, forming new relationships, and directing play and interactions (Boyd & Bee, 2010; Downey, 2013). Throughout their preschool years, children will thus live through what Erikson termed as the developmental stage of “Initiative vs. Guilt” (Erikson, 1982). To keep children from experiencing the guilt and shame that result of an inability to assert power over their environment, it is crucial that teachers encourage children at this stage in their life and give them the freedom to play and be creative so as to promote enterprise and instill a feeling of success (Boyd & Bee, 2010).

The Preschool Age and Development

Children truly are gifted with imagination at this stage in their life. Alongside being imaginative, children are further observed as being egocentric (Piaget, 1954) and,

consequently, often deemed unable to see the world from someone else's perspective except their own. Modern research, however, has shown that, as early as age three, young children begin to understand that others might feel differently than they do (Higgins & Pittman, 2008). They begin to understand that people have different intentions and do in fact comprehend someone else's emotions enough in order to respond in supportive and sympathetic ways if that someone is hurt (Boyd & Bee, 2010). A simple indication of a child's capacity for pro-social or altruistic behavior might be as plain as a child offering a toy to a peer (Boyd & Bee, 2010).

This ability to make a connection between people's thinking, feeling, and behavior is one of the first steps in developing theory of mind and empathy. Theory of mind is a "set of ideas that describe, explain, and make predictions about other's knowledge and behavior based on inferences about their mental states" (Boyd & Bee, 2010, p. 225) whereas empathy is "the feeling that you understand and share another person's experiences and emotions" (Merriam-Webster, 2014a). In other words, theory of mind is the ability to think what someone else is thinking, whereas empathy is the ability to feel what someone else is feeling. These two concepts are part of what Daniel Siegel described as *mindsight* – the way we can share mind with another by focusing our attention on the nature of our own internal world and that of someone else (Siegel, 2010) - and both are essential tools for social and behavioral functioning and are crucial for developing healthy relationships. In fact, research suggests that the rate at which a preschooler develops theory of mind is an important predictor of future social skills development (Watson, Nixon, Wilson, & Capage, 1999). Similarly, studies found that children who were more empathic were more popular with peers (Mayeux & Cillissen,

2003), showed increased capacity for emotional regulation (Eisenberg et al., 1996), and displayed less aggression (Findlay, Girardi, & Coplan, 2006).

Pretend play – also variously referred to as role-play, make-belief, symbolic, or fantasy play (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2008) – serves children with the perfect opportunity to develop a theory of mind and related social skills by experimenting with different social roles (Kopas-Vukašinić, 2009). By acting out familiar or novel scenes, imitating adult behavior, and practicing motor skills, children process emotional events about themselves and others by adapting techniques that allow them to enhance self-regulation, improve behavioral choices, and cultivate relationships, such as for example being sensitive to others' feelings or initiating cooperative play (Thompson & Goodvin, 2005). Exploring their world through play, and consequently their body and movement, children learn about their world, gain new knowledge about themselves and others, foster important social and emotional skills, work out the rules of social interactions, use their imagination, and form new ideas (Boyd & Bee, 2010; Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978).

Early childhood thus surely marks a time of extensive social, cognitive, and communication leaps (Tortora, 2006). It marks the transition from a categorical self – I am a boy, I have blond hair, and I like cars – to a social and emotional self (Boyd & Bee, 2010). It marks the beginning of the first stable friendships (Hay, Payne, & Chadwick, 2004) and while falling in and out of friendships can surely be a very emotional experience for children, it is also one of the main contexts in which they learn about themselves and others (Singer & Doornenbal, 2006). With it being such a crucial time in their development, caring and developmentally appropriate support and guidance are an

absolute necessity in order to assure a child's psychosocial growth and support successful interpersonal relationships throughout life.

Children with Special Needs

Every child comes into the world with an abundance of basic needs: to be nurtured, fed, dressed, educated, loved, and cared for among other things (CICC, n. d.). Despite these common needs, each child's course of development will be different from the next. While one part of the development is determined by nurture, meaning the environment within which the child grows up, the other part is determined by a child's nature, more specifically genetics (Boyd & Bee, 2010). Development is thus formed by an interaction of a child's personal experiences and innate biological, neurological, and physical traits (Tortora, 2006). As a result, every child is unique in and of itself, and thus some children might have more specific or *special needs* than others (Boyd & Bee, 2010). Consequently, a child with special needs is basically "a child who, because of his or her unique medical, mental, physical, or developmental difficulties, has needs in addition to those of his or her peers" (CICC, n.d.).

Even though some people prefer the expression *children with disabilities*, we choose to use the term *special needs* for the purpose of this paper as it is specifically used in educational settings and accurately calls attention to the "particular educational requirements resulting from learning difficulties, physical disability, or emotional and behavioral difficulties" (Merriam-Webster, 2014b). Further, rather than putting the focus on a child's disability itself, we wish to focus on the child's abilities and how we can use those to help the child learn and grow. Special needs then can range from mild to severe and be manifested in the areas of social-emotional development, expression and

communication, fine and gross motor skills, and adaptive behaviors (Brown, Bergen, House, Hittle, & Dickerson, 2000). Initial delays and the need for special support may only be a sign of delayed maturation in one specific area, but can also be an indicator of diverse childhood disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disorders, Intellectual Disorders, Communication Disorders, Motor Disorders, Emotional Disabilities, or others (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In educational settings, these conditions are referred to under the umbrella term of *developmental disabilities* (CDC, 2013). In order to identify such developmental disabilities at an early age and intervene appropriately, educators, psychologists, and pediatricians examine a child's motor, cognitive, social, and emotional development and refer for testing and diagnosis to professional, clinical, or educational diagnosis if they deem the child's behavior potentially problematic to him or herself, or others (CICC, n.d.). Despite the fear of stigmatization that comes by labeling a child with "special needs" or as "developmentally disabled", such a designation can help the child to get access to needed assistance in the areas of concern. The need for such educational and health services for children is becoming more and more substantial as the number of children with disabilities has increased from 12.84% in 1997 to 15.04 % in 2008 (Boyle et al., 2011).

The Need for Early Intervention

Early intervention has become crucial as it can tremendously influence a child's development, prevent future problems, and determine whether a child can participate in, or be excluded from daily activities and social interactions with other peers (CICC, n.d.). Young preschoolers who lack the necessary social and emotional competencies, all too

often exhibit significant discipline problems, challenging behaviors, and are at risk for not achieving academic success (McClelland, 2006). A so-called challenging behavior might be any behavior that results in “self-injury or injury of others, causes damage to the physical environment, interferes with the acquisition of new skills, and/or socially isolates the learner” (Doss & Reichle, 1991, p. 215). These behaviors do not only prevent a child from taking part in positive social interactions with peers (Harjusola-Webb, Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012), but such conduct problems at an early age further heighten the probability of school dropouts, delinquency, substance abuse, and violent behaviors (McClelland, 2006). In addition to this, children who frequently engage in challenging behaviors have an increased tendency to develop emotional and behavioral disorders later on (Harjusola-Webb, Parke Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012).

Unfortunately, these are not single occurrences. Research shows that the prevalence of aggressive behaviors in preschool affects about 10% of children, and is possibly as high as 25% for those who come from families with low socioeconomic status (Webster-Stratten & Reid, 2004). If no proper, developmentally appropriate interventions are made, such a child’s behavior will stabilize and patterns of social problems will arise around the age of eight (Berk, 2010). However, due to a number of reasons, the child will often be expelled even before that, at age six (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). Given such facts, effective early intervention becomes crucial and the need for it indisputable. As Stone and DiGeromino (2006) explain, “there is no debate or doubt: early intervention is [a] child’s best hope for the future”.

Inclusion and Integrated Education

In addition to early intervention, another possibility to help children with and without special needs learn the necessary social skills, interpersonal competences and enhance academic learning is through integrated education and inclusion. However, many students with special needs are currently educated in restrictive placements where they have been completely removed from the regular educational environment or they are part of pullout programs where they are taken out of the regular classroom during the typical school day and placed in alternative programming and self-contained classrooms that provide students with a smaller class setting and more individualized attention (IDEA, 2004; Joy, 2015). While such settings can be advantageous in helping the student stay at grade-level through enhanced academic support (Chen, 2015), it has been noted that such programs pose an issue with the social aspect of alienation of students with special needs from their peers without such needs, often leading to teasing and isolation (Joy, 2015). Inclusion, as such, attends to such issues of restrictive placements and steers away from pullout programs in an effort to allow a child with special needs to interact, learn, and play alongside his or her more typically developing peers (Allen & Cowdery, 2005; Brice & Miller, 2000).

Aware of these hindrances, recent development in education indeed shows a strong tendency of moving away from a segregated model of education towards a more inclusive one (Harjusola-Webb, Parke Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012). Since 1975, federal law in the United States demands that children with special needs have access to free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), meaning that a child who has special needs should have the opportunity to be educated with

typically developing peers to the greatest extent appropriate (Florida Department of Education, 2008). A fully inclusive classroom is currently the LRE that exists. Yet, even though the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) continues to require school districts to provide FAPE and LRE to children with special needs, it does not mandate inclusion in the legislation (Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2008).

Nevertheless, a movement has developed among professionals, families, and advocacy groups such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) in an effort to educate young children with special needs alongside children without special needs in regular early childhood programs (Harjulosa-Webb, Parke Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor & Kline, 2008). This endeavor upholds the United Nations' vision to endorse the fundamental rights of children with special needs towards education and, according to Ministers of Education and heads of delegations of 153 UNESCO member states, such inclusion is fundamental in achieving human, social, and economic development (International Bureau of Education, 2015).

According to Brice and Miller (2000) then, inclusive education represents an integrated setting in which all children, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses, learn together; where no child is unduly labeled or identified as special needs learner; where educational benefits are maximized; the need for separate curriculum minimized; and all children become active parts of the school community. In order for this to happen, it is imperative that children feel accepted in their environment and that they are cared for and supported in their learning, as well as their physical, emotional, and social well-being (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

It should be made clear that even though children of all abilities learn side by side, an inclusive classroom still keeps offering children with special needs, as well as those without, the necessary assistance and educational supports to facilitate their personal growth, learning, and social interactions, and ensure success when needed. Rather than a placement, inclusion thus represents a method of educating children by providing them with services that are developmentally, culturally, and age appropriate and tailored to individual needs (Allen & Cowdery, 2005) thus allowing all children to have similarly tailored guidance so that their learning is not compromised and their capacity fully engaged. With all of this in mind, for the purpose of this project, we will define an inclusive classroom as a supportive environment where children with and without special needs learn along and with each other, have equitable opportunities for personal growth and skill development, and receive the necessary help to learn and participate in the general education curriculum and society in meaningful ways (CPEIP, 2002).

Benefits. As mentioned previously, since at least 1980, research on the outcomes of preschool inclusion indicates that children with special needs who are enrolled in inclusive settings make at least as much progress on standardized measures of cognitive, language, motor, and social development as children in non-inclusive preschool special education classrooms (Odom et.al., 2004). Research also shows that teaching children with more severe disabilities alongside their peers in inclusive classrooms can positively affect the development of self-regulatory behaviors in children with special needs (Brown, Bergen, House, Hittle, & Dickerson, 2000) and has added to the acquisition of functional, social, and behavioral skills in them, as well as in children without special needs (Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2008). Further, it was found that children with

disabilities made significant gains in both the area of language development and classification/communication skills when instruction was delivered in an inclusive setting (Klein, Geiss, Kushner, & Hill, 2003). Additionally, when parents of children without special needs were asked about the perceived benefits of inclusion on their typically developing child, parents reported potential social and affective outcomes, such as increased acceptance and sensitivity to individual differences (Leyser & Kirk, 2004). Indeed, inclusion generally brings about an enhanced self-esteem and self-concept as well as greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences (Rubin, Bukowski & Laursen, 2009) and thus generates a genuine capacity for friendship between children of all abilities (Bunch & Valeo, 2004).

As research findings suggest, friendships are of uttermost importance at the preschool age as they are an indication of healthy child development (Rydell, Bohin, & Thorell, 2005) and play an important role in a child's well being (Matheson, Olsen, & Weisner, 2007) and quality of life (Geisthardt, Brotherson, & Cook, 2002). According to Hartup (1996), secure friendships have a positive effect on the development of cognitive and social skills such as creativity, task-mastery, problem solving, altruism, and cooperation. In return, failure to establish or sustain such bonds has been linked to negative outcomes such as maladjustment, social ostracism, antisocial behavior, and psychopathology in future life (Deater-Deckard, 2001; Lewin, Davis, & Hops, 1999). Additionally, children who are unable to form friendships may exhibit withdrawn, neglected, or rejected behavior patterns which lead to feelings of loneliness and an inability to develop social skills (Schmidt, Demulder, & Denham, 2002). Such children might also run a higher risk of victimization, bullying, and related negative peer

behaviors such as moral disapproval, group access denial, physical and verbal intimidation, aggression, domination, and termination of social contact (Asher, Rose, & Gabriel, 2001).

Without adult intervention, interactions among children with special needs and their peers without such needs are rather rare in natural and educational settings (Beckman, 1983). In a 2010 study, Solish, Perry, and Minnes found that when compared to children with intellectual disabilities (ID) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), typically developing children participated in more social and recreational activities, cultivated more reciprocal friendships, and had a greater tendency to have a best friend. This might be due to the facts that children with special needs might not yet possess the skills and competencies to do so, are at a different developmental level (Solish, Perry, & Minnes, 2010), and, consequently, often are rejected or socially neglected and viewed as less socially desirable (Geisthardt, Brotherson, & Cook, 2002; Manetti, Schneider, & Siperstein, 2001). This, however, can be prevented by changing the classroom context from a segregated to an inclusive one (Solish, Perry, & Minnes, 2010). Inclusive educational settings are more conducive to friendship formation among children with and without special needs than more restrictive environments because of reasons such as constant exposure to and routine contact among children of different abilities (Bunch & Valeo, 2004). This repeated exposure to typically developing peers in a variety of social situations in a safe environment helps children with special needs and those without learn how to interact with each other. They learn both incidentally as well as with guided instructions, which implies a greater probability for newly learned skills to be generalized across different situations and settings (Raab & Dunst, 2004). Both children with and

without special needs can thus greatly benefit from attending an inclusive educational setting. Meeting different children who are almost quite like them, but not completely, ultimately helps preschoolers to develop a greater understanding of disabilities and an increased sensitivity to differences, which, in turn, results in an atmosphere of diminished teasing regarding ability differences and a heightened acceptance of diversity (O'Connor & Kline, 2008; Odom et al., 2004).

Challenges. Unfortunately, despite this list of merits of inclusive education, as of these days, inclusion is still often doomed to fail as teachers frequently lack the necessary training, resources, and assistance to effectively address the needs of all their students (Brice & Miller, 2000; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2009). Specifically the lack of support in general for teachers and specifically behavior management training, which teaches specific classroom management techniques to deal with negative behaviors (Universal Class, 2015), pose a problem (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCromick, & Scheer, 1999; Scott, Vitale, & Masten, 1998) as teachers report that disruptive behaviors still constitute one of the biggest challenges they encounter in managing their preschool classroom (Jalongo, 2006).

Additionally, as Reid (2012) explains, even though, in theory, inclusion is for everyone, only children with learning disabilities tend to be included, whereas children with more severe behavioral or emotional disabilities are not. At some times even children with low socio-economic status, or various ethnic groups are being omitted from inclusive programs (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2001). This again, despite many other factors, is partly due to the lack of teacher trainings about program modifications and curriculum adaptations. There is no doubt then that a truly and fully inclusive educational

setting necessitates thorough planning, qualified teachers, and support staff. And while inclusion surely is a challenging endeavor, research has repeatedly shown that when properly implemented, inclusion can have a cornucopia of benefits and be effective for every child, and is therefore worth the challenge (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Hammond, 2001).

Achieving Inclusion Through Social-Emotional Learning

Despite this lack in trainings and a lack of studies that explain how exactly the benefits of inclusion can be achieved, we know by now that in order for inclusion to work, all children need to be supported and have opportunities where they can exchange their thoughts and feelings with others and participate in social communicative interaction with their classmates and teachers (Harjusola-Webb, Parke Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012). In alignment with that, some researchers have specifically argued that it is social skills instruction that makes the difference (DiGennaro Reed, McIntyre, Busek, & Quintero, 2011) and that schools should provide children with a time, place, and space where they are actively assisted in social-emotional learning (SEL) (Danby, Thomson, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012).

Social-emotional learning is the “process by which children develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success; use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts” (Illinois State Board of Education, 2013, para. 1). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2005) SEL consists of skills such self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship

skills, and responsible decision-making. Helping young children learn to effectively express their emotions and form positive relationships with their peers and adults might reduce their risk for developing academic, behavioral, and mental health problems (CASEL, 2005). Fostering these skills is just as critical for success and positive life outcomes as it is for academic advancement (Goleman, 2006; Richardson, 2000).

Early childhood marks the perfect time for such social and emotional skills interventions as young children are just at the verge of developing such important abilities (Schultz, Richardson, Barber, & Wilcox, 2011). Desired skills at that age include, but are not limited to, the ability to control and express one's emotions, asking someone to play, joining a game, offering help, and sharing toys (Berk, 2010). As discussed, for some children, learning such skills comes easily and happens instinctively, while other children who manifest cognitive, behavioral, emotional, or social skills deficits need to be explicitly and systematically taught how to interact with others (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2003). The key to true inclusion and effective learning then is to make whatever adaptations and accommodations that are being used available to every single child, no matter his or her abilities (Brown, Bergen, House, Hittle, & Dickerson, 2000). This way, every child in the classroom can receive informal help and benefit from these additional resources (Greenberg et al., 2003), interactions among all children are fostered, and a clear demarcation between "special needs" and "typically developing" no longer exists (O'Connor & Kline, 2008).

In fact, research has found early intervention programs focusing on SEL to be quite effective. When a group of researchers from CASEL (2005) carried out three meta-analyses of 317 studies examining the effectiveness of programs focusing on SEL in

children from kindergarten to eighth grade, they found significant and moderate effects of such programs on such factors as skill competence, academic achievement, conduct issues, and emotional distress (Payton et al., 2008). Another team of researchers found that students with emotional behavioral disorders who were part of a social skills intervention program scored a 64% improvement in relation to the comparison groups (Gresham, 2002). Other researchers agree with these findings, proposing that direct social skills interventions not only improve the social skills of both preschool and elementary school children (Caldarella, Christensen, Kramer, & Kronmiller, 2009; Kamps & Ellis, 1995), but also enhance interactions between adults and children, as well as academic and social competence (Schultz, Richardson, Barber, & Wilcox, 2011).

The Pre-School Body in Crisis

Despite all this research, the recently surging focus on academics reduces opportunities to explore SEL, creativity, friendship building (Campbell, 2004; Harjusola-Webb, Parke Hubbell, & Bedesem, 2012), and physical activity (Dow, 2010), consequently lowering children's chances to learn some of the most vital skills for success. Even recess time has been reduced or eliminated to make room for assessment or assessment preparation (Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006) and "direct instruction" (Bereiter, 1986). Direct instruction is a skills-oriented, teacher-directed, explicit approach of teaching that uses carefully structured and sequenced lesson plans, lectures, and demonstrations in order to teach cognitive skills (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarve, 2013). It diverges from more exploratory and independent models of learning such as social discussions, workshops, problem-solving, observations, group activities, or active learning. Rather than promoting child-initiated inquiry-based learning

and creative activities it focuses on core academic topics such as reading, writing, and math (Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarve, 2013). As such, it differentiates from developmentally appropriate practices and curricula as it solely focuses on cognitive development and does not take into account the individual physical, social, emotional, and cultural development of the whole child (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007).

The long-term risks of such instruction have been investigated in a longitudinal study by Hart, Yang, Charlesworth, and Burt (2003) who found that children who received direct instruction experienced more emotional problems than did those who were part of a developmentally appropriate curriculum. By third grade, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status, children receiving direct instruction exhibited more stress than their peers. Such stress further predicted the emergence of hyperactivity, distractive behaviors, as well as heightened aggression and hostility (Hart et al., 2003). Such hypothesis is not unfathomable if one considers how school is limiting children's freedom of movement and seeks to produce "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p. 136) and adult minds with the help of regulated and constructed activities. Thus, when children have less opportunity to be active physical players, the academic, social, creative, and emotional skills that spontaneously emerge from free movement are threatened (Zigler & Bishop-Josef, 2006) and, with it, their ability to self-regulate. "Self-regulation is central to our conception of what it means to be human – [it is] the foundation for choice and decision making, for mastery of higher cognitive processes, and for morality" (Berk, Mann, & Ogan, 2006, p.74). Failure of such capacity thus often results in a diminished sense of the self as an emotional, social, and cognitive being (Thom, 2010).

Yet still, “from the living room to the classroom, children are being increasingly programmed and structured – as are teachers who teach them” (Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer; 2006, p.3). Work and the mind are being worshiped, while play and the body are being neglected as viable sources of learning. Despite adults’ shifting strategies in education, children remain the same: They still need to physically experience concepts and objects, explore and get to know their own body and its limitations in order to fully comprehend them (Pica, n.d.). And their favored modes of doing so always have been and always will be movement, play, and active learning (Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006; Pica, n.d.).

Ed Tronick thus surely made – and is still making – a point when he asked years ago: “Is the process of ‘meaning making,’ in which humans make sense of themselves in relation to the world, only in their heads, or is it in their bodies as well” (as cited in Bloom, 2011). Educating the whole child not only involves the cognitive, but results of an integration of the cognitive, the psychomotor, and the affective domains (Schultz, Richardson, Barber, & Wilcox, 2011). Researchers, neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, affect psychologists, and dance movement therapists alike urge that if we do not move away from a body/mind dichotomy we will not be able to ever fully comprehend a child’s emotions and behavior in every-day life and barrier his or her way to success (Golinkoff, Hirsh-Pasek, & Singer, 2006; Siegel & Bryson, 2011; Mehta, 2011; Bambling, 2006; Bainbridge-Cohen, Nelson, & Smith, 2008; Thom, 2010; Tortora, 2006; Kornblum, 2002). Zigler and Bishop-Josef (2006) agree with this and undoubtedly offered an answer to Tronick’s question when they wrote that presuming that cognitive

skills can be considered in isolation and not intertwined with the physical, social, and emotional systems “is shortsighted, if not futile” (p.22).

Learning by Moving

According to Piaget, pre-school children are living through the sensorimotor stage, a stage where their body, specifically the sensory and motor systems, serve as the major source of exploring, responding to, and learning about their environment (Boyd & Bee, 2010; Piaget, 1970). Gottlob and Oka (2007) certainly align with Piaget’s premise, stating that “the intrinsic biological qualities of the human body – its form, size, and modes of moving and perceiving – generate, in constant interaction with the environment, the first schemata of knowledge” (p. 14). Neuroscientists support this view as well, stressing that movement is the core organizer of a child’s development from conception until around fifteen months of age (Bainbridge-Cohen, Nelson, & Smith, 2008; Hannaford, 2005) and continues to form one of the most, if not the most viable source of learning up until age seven, when the brain starts to fully develop the capacity for ego-consciousness, voluntary movement control, and expression (Blomberg & Dempsey, 2007; Hannaford, 2005; Pearce, 2007).

What and how children learn becomes easily observable in their play, especially make-belief play where they embody people or other characters and act out ideas or plots they might have witnessed and adapted through social learning (Bandura, 1971) or have created themselves. By interacting and reacting to each other, children gain new knowledge about others, their bodies, and themselves. They can then choose whether to repeat their movement and behaviors or to adapt them to their newly gained knowledge. Such playful, movement-rich experiences are hence of uttermost importance as they will

ultimately give children the ability to process information, and formulate and express new ideas which will shape their logical and conscious thinking patterns (Buzzell, 2007; Pearce, 2007; Thom, 2010).

This idea of movement as the major source of learning, however, directly opposes the current educational belief that children learn best when seated still, in their chairs, reading books (Pica, 2011). In fact, movement activates and reorganizes the brain by forming new and strengthening existing neuronal pathways, creating new links through new and repeated experiences (Blomberg & Dempsey, 2007; Blythe, 2005; Hannaford, 2005; Siegel & Bryson, 2011), whereas prolonged sitting leads to quick fatigue and loss of concentration (Pica, 2011). In a discussion titled “Teaching children who just won’t sit still” Hannaford, a neurophysiologist, suggested that we learn 80% of what we experience on a physical and sensory level, but only 10% of what we read, adding that “if we didn’t move, we wouldn’t need a brain” (as cited in Pica, 2011). As Burrill (2011) believed: “freedom of movement and expression are foundations for natural learning processes and should therefore be included as core structures in school learning” (p. 111). Engaging in active learning activities that involve the whole body, children become more directly and concretely immersed in the learning process, and their appetite for new knowledge becomes more enriching, persistent, and intrinsically motivated (Pica, 2011).

Thus movement does not only help children learn about social and relational matters, but it also aids with academic learning. Researchers such as Cook, Mitchell, and Goldin-Meadow (2008), for example, explained in their study that spontaneous gesturing can help children learn and remember mathematical notions and the researchers evinced the theory that gestures “offer an alternative and embodied way for people to organize

abstract ideas” (Thom, 2010). Similarly, Scott and Panksepp (2003) suggested that rough-and-tumble play, such as pouncing, chasing, and wrestling, is likely to not only provide children with physical release, but it might as well promote friendships and encourage pro-social behavior. Analogously, a study with children with, or suspect of, developmental coordination disorders (DCD) revealed that when compared to a control group of children without motor problems, children with DCD received significantly lower scores on measures of attention and learning, such as reading, writing, and spelling (Dewey, Kaplan, Crawford, & Wilson, 2002). Further, they also exhibited greater difficulty in psychosocial adjustment than the control group. By showing how motor problems can negatively affect the learning process, this research only further reinforces the idea that the body and its movement truly is a child’s greatest learning tool, whether it is academic or SEL (Dewey et al., 2002).

The Emotional Preschool Body in Social Context

As early as 1987, Elias argued that every emotion has feeling, behavioral, as well as bodily components. Basically, in other words, it is through our bodies that we feel, act, and react to the world around us (Lyon, 1996). This is especially true for pre-school children since at this time in their development their right hemisphere is more dominant than the left (Siegel & Bryson, 2011). So rather than being logical, literal, linguistic, and linear, children at this age act more spontaneously and emotionally as they have not yet developed higher cognitive functioning. In order to communicate and interact with others and express emotions they cannot verbally name yet (Siegel & Bryson, 2012), children will thus often revert to other modes of expression and rely on nonverbal signals such as facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, space, postures, and gestures to make sense

of the world. A study by Harden (2012) illustrates this notion by describing how young children, when asked to describe diverse emotions of a fictional character, most children showed a preference for nonverbal descriptions by either acting out the emotions or portraying facial expressions of the character. This evidently shows that in addition to relying on nonverbal signals children also use their own body to understand someone else's emotion. With the help of mirror neurons that mirror the behavior of others as though the observer were himself acting, the children form a "tactile empathy" (Keysers et al., n.d.), imagining the bodily sensation they would feel in their own body when they were in that person's situation (Winerman, 2005). Yet, Harden's study also had participating children who referred to verbal language, but rather than naming emotions such as "worry" or "fear," they described the bodily sensations of such feelings, explaining that "you feel a kind of cramp" or "you feel like your body's tight" (Harden, 2012). Despite the importance of nonverbal expression, being able to express themselves verbally is especially crucial in social communication, specifically when used to describe phenomena of discomfort instead of acting out on such sensations by crying, screaming, whining, or hitting. SEL is an experience-based form of learning and as such is as much about learning what works as well as what does not work in specific social and emotional situations (Jowdy & McDonald, 2008). Thus, learning to use their words is as crucial for children as using their bodies. The key is to start with the acknowledgment of the right hemisphere phenomena, the first task being to learn how to manage and befriend the occurring sensation, and then build the link to their left brain as they start the process of describing and naming the experience, thus integrating the two hemispheres of the brain (Siegel & Bryson, 2011).

With that in mind, it is unmistakable that children use their bodies to express themselves more fully and to communicate with others more effectively. Gestures, postures, and facial expressions do in fact add clarity to verbal communication by spontaneously expressing a child's emotional state. Through their body children can express emotions more vividly, indicate their personal opinion more clearly, make a conversation more fluid, and demonstrate affection more fully (Kopas-Vukašinović, 2009). Once we, as adults, grasp the importance of nonverbal cues, we realize that we must help children develop their right hemisphere not only because we know that they will be better able to express themselves, but also because we know it will help them become more understanding, empathetic, and sensitive to what other people say, feel, and need, especially if those people are not using words (Siegel & Bryson, 2011). By being aware in which way, shape, or form they express their emotions while also being sensitive to other people's body language, children learn how their emotional experiences might be similar to others, but also unique. They can see how their emotions are shared and interpreted by others, and consequently gain greater sensitivity, awareness, and appreciation for temperaments and diversity among their peers, and will form deeper relationships (Thom, 2010). As Simek (2012) explains, people need to learn to use their eyes, ears, and hearts in order to connect with the people around them.

Consequently, it becomes clear that "emotion is to do with flesh and blood selves" (Burkitt, 1997, p. 54), it is multi-faceted and interactive and always happens in context of something or someone else. Rather than being entirely biological or social, emotions reside at a complex intersection of the two and always occur in relation to others, never in isolation (Harden, 2012). Indeed, our emotionally expressive bodies form the basis of

self, social interactions, meaning in life, and of our daily performances in the socio-cultural realms of our society (Williams & Bendelow, 1996).

Dance/Movement Therapy and SEL

Dance/movement therapy (DMT) is grounded in the evidence-based postulation that the body and mind are interconnected and is defined as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of the individual” (ADTA, 2014). Indeed, the learning that is gathered from movement and sensations is intertwined with emotional learning and cognitive appraisal and consequently forms new knowledge and behavior patterns (Burrill, 2010; Dissanayake, 2001; Kestenberg 1985).

The task of a dance/movement therapists is thus to use the body, movement, and dance to transform body-based emotional, psychological, and behavioral patterns (Bloom, 2011). This can either happen in individual or in group sessions. As discussed before, body movements constitute a means to communicate feelings and as such dance offers a way for children to learn about themselves and express their feelings towards other people, objects, or situations (Stinson, 1998; Lynch-Fraser, 1991). By making use of creative movement and improvisation, and consequently fostering greater body awareness, DMT has the ability to increase children’s emotional development and social cognition (Frith & Frith, 2007). According to Blanche Evan, dance improvisation is a “medium through which one’s creative and emotional potential can be drawn out and actualized” (as cited in Levy, 2005). Dancing and moving gives children a concrete experience that lets them explore the world around them as well as within them. This way, DMT can help children express various thoughts and feelings that might seem

frightening to them, are forbidden in other contexts, or which they simply can't express in words (Levy, 2005). According to dance/movement therapist Suzi Tortora, it is within our body that all our experiences are stored, and only by bridging the body and the mind, will we be able to forge a greater understanding of ourselves and others (as cited in Simek, 2012). As Bill T. Jones (1996) explained, "movement begins to negotiate the distance between the brain and the body." In other words, movement forms the link between the visceral emotional bodily experiences and the higher cognitive functioning (Thom, 2010). Consequently, fostering this interconnection of children's somatic experiences, emotional expression, and cognitive appraisal will help them to better manage their own behavior and recognize, express, and regulate their emotions to a greater degree (Thom, 2010).

DMT also works in helping preschoolers to recognize and embrace differences among each other as well as commonalities. Each child's movement or dance will be unique, with their very own and unique movement vocabulary. Indeed, DMT does not aim to teach children a technique or aesthetic, but instead lets them be creative and express themselves without the confines of being right or wrong, and hence sets them up to experience continuous success in their movement explorations which will lead to a heightened sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy, in short, is a child's belief in his or her capability of successfully completing a task (Fall & McLeod, 2001; Johnson 2009) and hence crucial for success in life. Additionally, having their nonverbal expressions acknowledged also gives children a sense of agency (Tortora, 2006); a concept that refers to a person's perception of what he or she can do, including controlling his/her own actions (Duggins, 2011). Further, DMT groups offer children a

safe and supportive environment where individuality and adaptability are cherished, where they can feel confident in their expressions, relate to and learn about each other, and are supported to take creative risks and build relationships.

One should point out here that while DMT might positively affect the developmental progression of motor development, it mostly works with movement development. Whereas motor development refers to the maturation of fine and gross motor skills, movement development is concerned with the qualitative aspects of movement (Tortora, 2006). Movement development, connected to the expressive and communicative aspect of movement, involves muscular tension, strength, timing, and spatial orientation (Bartenieff, 1980; Cohen, 1997; Tortora, 2006). Expanding this repertoire of different movement qualities will help a child to gain a more sophisticated understanding of other people's nonverbal social and emotional cues (Tortora, 2006). Further it will also increase children's ability to regulate their own reactions to feelings such as anger, fear, or joy, as they learn different ways of expressing and releasing emotions, hence increasing their options of responding to arising internal phenomena such as feelings, energy, or tensions (Lutz & Kuhlmann, 2000).

Though its main focus is on the body and the nonverbal, DMT does use verbal language to lead and reflect on explorations. Beginning to articulate emotional experiences through verbal descriptions or naming or through bodily expressions and having those expressions heard and acknowledged helps preschoolers understand that they are being seen, understood, and respected for who they are (Thom, 2010; Tortora, 2006). This reflection and appraisal process helps children to strengthen the interconnection between their bodily experiences, sensations, cortical control and

regulation. In other words, it strengthens the connection between the left and right hemispheres of the brain (Siegel & Bryson, 2011).

All of the afore-mentioned observations and theories have been evidenced by numerous researches. For instance, when Kourkouta, Rarra, Mavroeidi, and Prodomidis (2014) analyzed a large number of articles written on the effects of dance on children's psychophysical development and self-expression, they found dance to have a positive impact on children who were suffering from emotional disorders and learning disabilities. Dance not only helped these children to better regulate the emotions that hindered their learning process, but other listed benefits included increases in children's self-esteem, emotional expressive ability, capacity to complete tasks, relaxation, social interaction, and group coherence (Kourkouta et al., 2014). Additionally, Ritter and Low (1996) found that DMT can favorably influence socialization, emotional expression, self-esteem, tension release, and body control.

In a different study, Lobo and Winsler (2006) analyzed the effects of an eight-week instructional creative dance/movement program on the social competence of low-income children, and found notably gains in children's social competence as well as both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. Such creative movement instruction further seemed a great method to improve social competence and behavior in at-risk preschoolers (Lobo & Winsler, 2006). Similarly, Lutz and Kuhlmann (2000) observed that creative dance and movement helped children increase body awareness, self-control, self-esteem, confidence, cultural understanding and respect, communication of feelings, and their sense of belonging and participation in the whole school community.

Existing Educational Curricula Focusing on SEL

A prominent curriculum that is taught through different grades is the Strong Kids program, a sequence of evidence-based SEL modules created to decrease student's internalizing problem behaviors in a developmentally appropriate way (Merrel & Gueldner, 2010). *Strong Start Pre-K* (Merrell, Withcomb, & Parisi, 2009) is part of this curriculum. Focusing on the social, emotional, and cognitive needs, this program is highly structured and partially scripted and uses literature and a mascot to address specific topics that aim at preventing mental health problems and help children learn how to verbally express their feelings. According to teacher's ratings of their students, children involved in the curriculum exhibited increased emotional regulation, less internalizing behaviors, and a better relationship with their teacher (Gunter, Caldarella, Korth, & Young, 2012). This not only speaks to the effectiveness of such a program but also shows that positive teacher-student relationships provide children with the safety to better develop emotional regulation and achieve academically and socially (CASEL, 2010; Gunter et al., 2012; Voegler-Lee & Kupersmidt, 2011). The research team further suggested that encouraging the children to use their new social-emotional skills across all areas in their school routine could strengthen these skills (Gunter et al., 2012).

Another developmentally informed program focusing on SEL that is being widely used in pre-K classrooms is *Als Pals*. This program, which has been evaluated (Lynch, Geller, & Schmidt, 2004) and nationally recognized as evidence-based model prevention program uses puppets, music, and effective teaching approaches to focus of SEL such as self-control, problem-solving abilities, and healthy decision-making in children ages 3-8 years old (Wingspan, 2013).

Second Step is another successful violence prevention curriculum focusing of SEL that has proven greatly effective among children of different ages (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2013), varying socio-economic status (Cooke et al., 2007), and in various countries such as the United States, Germany (Schick & Cierpka, 2005), or Norway (Holsen, Smith, & Frey, 2008). Similarly to other programs, *Second Step* uses music, puppets, different activities, and a variety of cards for rules or feelings (Committee for Children, 2014).

PATHS is another research-based and proven-effective prevention program that can be used in preschool classrooms to help children develop self-control, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, as well as other social emotional skills (PATHS, 2012). The lessons can be taught at separate times, but also be incorporated into other activities that feature story-telling and reading, puppetry, singing or drawing, or science and math (PATHS, 2012). This curriculum has proven effective in general education (Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007; Greenberg, Kusche, Cook, & Quamma, 1995) and special education (Kam, Greenberg, & Kusche, 2004), as well as with children who exhibit conduct problems (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1999, 2010) or are deaf (Greenberg & Kusche, 1998).

Programs like these do certainly make a case for the effectiveness of extra-educational curricula in helping preschool children learn the necessary social-emotional skills in creative, less instructional ways. Almost all of these programs either use songs, games, and puppets, or a combination of these, in order to help children learn important social and emotional skills. Still, none of them directly uses the body explicitly as a source of learning.

Existing Movement-Based Curricula

S.M.A.R.T., which stands for Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training offers a developmental approach to teaching that is based on current brain research and its connection to the body (A Chance To Grow, 2015). Rather than teaching social-emotional skills, the program assumes that a child's brain is not fully developed to readily learn yet and thus seeks to improve gross and fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination through movement activities (2015).

Brain Gym International supports the idea that optimal learning can be achieved by moving with intention and hence offers movement-based activities that will stimulate the brain and re-pattern it to improve student performance and attitude towards learning (Spielmann, n.d.; Brain Gym, 2011). With their educational movement-based model they thus seek to ignite the joy of learning in children, value innate intelligence, increase the capacity to detect and respond to movement-based needs, while promoting self-expression, creativity, self-responsibility, and taking charge of their own learning (Brain Gym, 2011). To achieve this goal, Brain Gym practices 26 movements that refer to movements naturally done during the first years of life when children learn to coordinate eyes, hands, and the whole body (Brain Gym, 2011). However, rather than being expressive, these movements are of a more functional nature and encourage gross and fine motor skill development.

Play & Learn is another similar interdisciplinary, strength-, and motor-based curriculum that was specifically designed for preschool special education. Through social interaction, structure, repetition, motivation, music, and movement, the program seeks to help children of all abilities develop the essential "readiness skills" for kindergarten

(Coleman & Krueger, 2014). Even though facilitating friendships among children of different abilities and learning through movement and meaningful play with friends is at the core of this curriculum, it ultimately seeks to teach motor skill development, along with language and social skill development (Coleman & Krueger, 2005).

Dancing Through Barriers is an in-class residency comprehensive arts education outreach program developed by Dance Theatre of Harlem. Using a mixture of ballet technique and dance making, the program seeks to “foster self-actualization, a holistic worldview, and empowerment through active expression, creative literacy, social imagination, critical thinking, and reflection” (Dance Theatre of Harlem, 2012).

Existing DMT-Based Curricula

Now, despite using movement or dance in functional or more or less expressive forms, none of these programs is built on the foundations of DMT nor does it follow its principles or use related techniques. A few educational curricula exist that are based on DMT. One such well-known body-based curriculum developed by a dance/movement therapist and using the principles of DMT is Rena Kornblum’s *Disarming The Playground*. This specific curriculum targets violence prevention through movement and pro-social skills (Kornblum, 2002). Using the body and mind equally, the movement-based lessons teach the skills necessary to create a safe world for oneself using proactive and protective strategies (Kornblum, 2002). Positive outcomes resulting from this program have been noted in research and include increased emotional self-regulation, such as self-soothing and anger management; increased nonverbal attunement and empathy; more effective interpersonal communication; more effective cognitive skills;

positive risk taking; assertiveness; self-confidence; and interpersonal spatial awareness (Kornblum & Hervey, 2006).

A different DMT-based curriculum that also focuses on violence prevention is *PEACE Through Dance/Movement*. Through the use of movement, children's stories, and discussions, the program focuses on enhancing socialization, creative problem-solving, pro-social behaviors, and self-control in elementary school children (Koshland & Wittaker, 2004). First results showed that the program engendered a significant decrease in negative behaviors, an increase in students' sensitivity towards such behaviors, and a greater perceived self-efficacy in handling challenging behaviors themselves and assisting others (Koshland & Wittaker, 2004).

Another DMT-based curriculum is *Making Connections*. This practical and hands-on curriculum aims toward teaching middle and high school students the necessary language and tools to create a gender dialogue that is needed to restore and reinforce same-gender and cross-gender connections and relationships and build a supportive community (Beardall, Bergman, & Surrey, 2007). The program has been successful in increasing relational competence and creating enhanced learning environments (Beardall, Bergman, & Surrey, 2004) in hundreds of secondary students aged ten to eighteen.

With these reported findings, there is certainly no doubt to the effectiveness of educational curricula based on the principles and techniques of DMT. Still, the number of such programs is limited, and the need for more clearly exists. Further, it becomes obvious that even though a lot of the programs are prevention-based, they aim at different populations and pursue different objectives than the ones that we envision. We can say then that a movement-based curriculum as we envision it, one that is based on the

principles of DMT, geared towards pre-school children, and focusing on SEL, does currently not exist. But, as this literature review proves, there definitely is a niche, as well as a need for such a program.

Chapter 3: Methods

Methodology

As part of developmental process of my program, I used the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension logic model (2012) (appendix A). Following such a logic model constitutes the core of program development and the ongoing systematic process that is involved in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating such a program (University of Wisconsin, 2003). A logic model is a depiction of the processes and targeted outcomes of the program, and shows through a series of “if-then” relationships how the outlined and desired outcomes will be accomplished (University of Wisconsin, 2003). As such, it should be stressed that a logic model is not a theory or a reality, but rather a framework that serves to describe the relationships between investments, activities, and results (University of Wisconsin, 2003).

This specific model consists of seven major components outlined in a linear and logical fashion (University of Wisconsin, 2003). When developing my program I implemented the outlined steps in the following order: First, I decided to reflect on and write down all the *Assumptions* that I had about the environment, the program, and the people it is geared to. Making assumptions explicit is crucial as they underlie much of what we do. Explicitly naming those assumptions maintains awareness of them and helps to guard against them hindering the program’s success (University of Wisconsin, 2003).

The next step is to analyze the *Situation* and identify the pertinent needs of the population and setting that the program is geared to. The existing complex and changing conditions of the current situation in special and inclusive education as well as the related role of SEL were assessed through an extensive literature review as well as qualitative

data collection in the forms of interviews and observations, which were also analyzed. Understanding of the situation is the first measure in conceiving an educational and programmatic response (University of Wisconsin, 2003).

In a third step, short, mid, and long-term goals for the program were determined in the *Outcomes* section. This step follows as logical conclusion of the previously assessed needs as they describe the target outcomes that the program hopes to achieve and the conditions it hopes to change. Establishing the outcomes facilitates the determination of *Inputs* and *Outputs* that are needed in order to reach these goals. *Inputs* refer to the resources and investments that are needed to complete the desired activities, whereas *Outputs* describe the actual activities that the program does and the participants that it reaches. Only by knowing what exactly one hopes to achieve, can one explore and analyze what one needs to do so. In this case this included evaluating the most suitable DMT interventions and methodologies for the changes I hope to achieve.

The sixth step instructs to be alert to possible *External Factors* that might influence the program action, its process and outcomes. The last step of *Evaluation* was not included as part of this project.

Developing a program supported my two objectives of first having a concrete final product that can be adapted and applied to multiple settings, and second, using a methodology that permits me to use the integrative theoretical orientation that informs my clinical work – which includes the principles of positive psychology, Bandura’s social learning theory, as well as DMT – and hence allowed me to approach the problem of inclusion and learning through movement from multiple perspectives.

Population

In order to gain better insight and knowledge of the needs and current situation in the field of educational inclusion as well as work with special needs populations I decided to complete interviews with people currently working in these respective fields.

The population consisted of a group of eight professionals from various fields of study such as social workers, school psychologists, dance/movement therapists, or dance educators with either extensive knowledge and experience in working with pre-school children with and without special needs, and/or experience with curriculum development and implementation in educational settings. Seven of the participants were female and one was male. The exact ages of the participants were unknown, however all were over the age of 30 and under the age of 60.

Setting

The data collection process took partly place in the offices of the identified participants at Daniel C. Beard Elementary School, a specialty Chicago Public School that runs two pre-K classrooms that blend children with various developmental disabilities with normal functioning peers. Dance/movement therapists and dance educators were contacted via phone in locations that allowed for private conversations, such as their offices, cars, or homes.

Recruitment Procedure

The participants were recruited by emails and personal conversations. Once the participants had agreed to be a participant, they were then asked to sign the Consultant Contract Form (appendix D), which was either handed or emailed to them. Although the participants acted as consultants in assessing needs and generating ideas, it was made

clear in the Contract Form that I would be the sole developer of the program and that they will not hold any rights to it.

Data Collection Methods

The first data collection method included semi-structured individual face-to-face or phone interviews with the participants. All 8 participants were interviewed during the first six months phase of this project. While all participants were asked the same five structured and guiding questions, both their answers as well as previous interviews helped guide further aspects of inquiry. The guiding questions were “What do you believe is the biggest challenge in inclusion?,” “What have you noticed about social interactions among children with and without disabilities?,” “What do you believe is the role of the body and movement in social emotional learning?,” “What social emotional skills do you believe are most important to develop at this age?,” and “What is needed to achieve inclusion?” Additional questions included, but were not limited to subjects such as children’s spatial understanding and awareness, the therapeutic relationship, emotional expression, or self-regulation. The interviews varied between 30 and 40 minutes in length and were recorded using Garage Band (2013).

An additional form of data that I collected was in form of observations. As I was interning at Daniel C. Beard Elementary School during the first six months period of my project development, I recorded, in written form, weekly 30 minutes observations of social, emotional, and movement interactions among students in blended pre-K classrooms. During these observation periods I either acted as an outside observer or a participant observer. The observations were recorded in form of DIRP notes that included data, interventions, responses, and plans for the project.

Ethical Considerations

Even though this project was not strictly research, research ethics were still used to protect the rights and identities of all project participants. Participants were only interviewed after having signed an agreement to be interviewed and informed again at the time of the interview that their words would be recorded and transcribed. Additionally, transcripts omitted any identifying information and no copies were made. As for the observations, no personal names were used. Any notes, interviews, transcripts, and recordings were kept confidential, in personal keeping, and/or stored on password-protected devices.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis process was embedded in the data collection process. Data analysis happened right after every interview or observation and helped inform the consequent interviews and observations in terms of questions or areas of focus. Interviews were recorded using Garage Band (2013). As the intention to use Dragon Naturally Speaking Software for data transcription proved unsuccessful, I transcribed the interviews myself.

For the analysis of my interview transcripts and observations I used the qualitative data analysis method that was developed by Mark Chesler in 1987. Chesler's sequential analysis method follows a structured, seven-step process for coding qualitative data and deriving theory from this data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus after having transcribed interviews, I read through them and the observations and highlighted key terms or phrases. Then I went ahead and copied down all the highlighted terms in a separate word document in one list/column. Going through the single phrases, I then restated the key

phrases in a second column. In order to accomplish the third step of reducing phrases and creating clusters, I printed and cut out all the single phrases and grouped them in clusters based on main categories and themes from the interviews and observations. Though it is not required in this step, I already started labeling the clusters to make organization and overview easier. This process yielded 18 clusters. Next, through comparing and contrasting the clusters, I rearranged and reduced the clusters and attached a definitive label to each of them. Ending up with nine meta-clusters, the labels read as follows: the three-dimensional expressive body in movement, the role of an integrated dance/movement therapist, social and relatable skills that need to be strengthened, a developmental approach to child development and education, a school's needs to make inclusion work, inclusion from a child's perspective, effective ways to help and assist children of all needs in the school setting, how a child's experiences and background help or hinder social emotional development, and the imperative of respecting that we are unique but united. In the next step I reviewed the phrases in each meta-cluster and made generalizations about them. This process certainly simplified the following step of synthesizing the generalizations of each cluster into explanatory mini-theories. Lastly, I integrated all the clusters, themes, and mini-theories into an explanatory framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In contrast to a classical research thesis, these findings will not be individually discussed, but the generated information and insights were integrated and used to both develop the program's introduction as well as design the program itself.

As validation strategies I used data and methodological triangulations, as well as member checking. Using data triangulation as a validation strategy was possible because, through my interviews, I had been collecting information on a same topic from different

sources, or in this case different interviewees of various ages, nationalities, social situations, experiences, and professional backgrounds, and this concurrently enhanced confidence in ensuing themes. Finding common themes throughout all interviews certainly increased the validity of my findings. Through cross-verification of my different qualitative methods in form of interviews, observations, and journaling (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011) I was also able to utilize methodological triangulation as I was already combining several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. As for member checking, a list of the final themes and interpretations were sent to the individual participants so that they could validate the accuracy and applicability of the interpretative findings.

Presentation

Since this is a program development project and not research, the findings will be presented in form of a curriculum that includes an introductory chapter and a collection of movement-based activities compiled into 10 themed sections including setup information, discussion topics, list of materials needed, activity description, handouts, and suggestions for accommodations. It should be made explicit that the program is specifically designed to be implemented by dance/movement therapists. Still, teachers will be informed about the intention and the workings of the program and are further encouraged to act as assistants. The final project provides a collection of movement-based methods and strategies that can help make inclusion more successful. While adding to the academic debate of how inclusion can be achieved, the main merit though is reserved to the children with and without special needs: assisting them in SEL will prepare them to meet the challenges of lifelong learning, help them develop relationships

among each other, as well as with their educators and caregivers. Thus, not only children, but dance/movement therapists, caregivers, and teachers alike who are involved in the education of children with and without special needs will find value in this project.

Chapter 4: The Curriculum

Unique But United

Unique But United (UBU) is a movement-based curriculum for inclusive pre-school classrooms focusing on social-emotional learning (SEL). Honing in on the role of movement in SEL among pre-school children, the curriculum uses the body as an inroad to help children explore and develop self-expression, social relationship building, self-control, emotional regulation, creativity, and social relatedness. By doing so, this program aims to bridge the existing gaps between children with and without special needs and form more inclusive classrooms.

The Needs We Address

The needs that we intend to address with UBU are the following:

- The need for resources for teachers in designing and successfully implementing programs that promote inclusion.
- The need to reduce the segregation between students with and without special needs.
- The need to teach children the necessary social-emotional skills to relate to and form friendships with children of all abilities.
- The need to create opportunities for children of all abilities to engage in positive social interactions with their peers.
- The need to build on and celebrate the body as the learning tool that it is.

The Current Situation

Recent development in education shows a strong tendency of moving away from a segregated model of education towards a more inclusive one (Harjusola-Webb et al.,

2012). However, inclusion is still doomed to fail as teachers often lack the necessary training, resources, and assistance to effectively address the needs of all their students (Brice & Miller, 2000; Vakil, Welton, O'Connor, & Kline, 2009). Research has shown that when properly implemented, inclusion and interactions between children with and without special needs have a cornucopia of benefits for all: a greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences; enhanced self-esteem and self-concept (Rubin, Bukowski & Laursen, 2009); a genuine capacity for friendship between children of all abilities (Bunch & Valeo, 2004); the acquisition of functional, social, and behavioral skills (Vakil et. al, 2008); and the development of self-regulatory behaviors in children with special needs (Brown, Bergen, House, Hittle, & Dickerson, 2000).

Despite the extensive list of merits of effective inclusion, there is a lack of studies that explain how exactly these benefits are achieved. Yet a number of researchers and educators argue that social skills instruction makes the difference and schools should provide children with a time, place, and space where the latter are actively assisted in social-emotional learning (SEL) (Danby, Thomson, Theobald, & Thorpe, 2012; DiGennaro et al., 2011). SEL is the process by which children develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts (Illinois State Board of Education, 2013).

However, the surging focus on academics reduces opportunities to explore SEL, creativity, friendship building (Campbell, 2004; Harjusola-Webb et al. 2012), or physical activity (Dow, 2010), and the body is being neglected as an essential source of learning.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, we have thus set out to create a unique pre-school movement-based curriculum, which relies on the principles and techniques that are distinctive of dance/movement therapy (DMT) and works towards helping children of all needs build the necessary social emotional skills to relate to one another, thereby furthering inclusion among them.

Theoretical Frameworks

In the course of researching articles, interviewing professionals, and observing classrooms in order to develop and validate our program, we discovered a wide range of old and new ideas, practices, and techniques which influenced the program's development and shaped its theoretical framework.

Dance/movement therapy. Dance/movement therapy (DMT) is grounded in the evidence-based postulation that the body and mind are interconnected and is defined as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical, and social integration of the individual” (ADTA, 2014). Indeed, the learning that is gathered from movement and sensations is intertwined with emotional learning and cognitive appraisal and consequently forms new knowledge and behavior patterns (Burrill, 2010; Dissanayake, 2001; Kestenberg 1985).

Positive Psychology. “Positive psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play” (University of Pennsylvania, 2014). Thus, rather than focusing on an individual's weaknesses and disabilities, positive psychology focuses on their strengths and abilities, and builds on

them, and as such, rather than “just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best within ourselves” (Seligman, 1998, para. 5)

Social Learning Theory. “In the social learning system, new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others” (Bandura, 1971). As such we learn behavior by observing our environment, encoding the behaviors we see, and imitating them. Interestingly, people are more likely to imitate and adapt behaviors from people that are similar to them (McLeod, 2011).

Unconditional Positive Regard. This concept was developed by Carl Rogers and describes one of the important aspects of client-centered therapy: through basic acceptance and support of a person regardless of their words or actions, the therapist seeks to alter a client’s self-concept, attitudes, and self-directed behavior. Rogers believed that in order for a client to grow and achieve self-actualization, the latter needed an environment conveying genuineness, acceptance, and empathy (Rogers, 1959).

Self-efficacy Theory. Self-efficacy is “people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions” (Bandura, 1997) In other words, it is a person’s belief in his or her capability of successfully completing a task (Fall & McLeod, 2001; Johnson 2009). Thus, self-efficacy is the confidence in one’s own readiness and ability to manage stressors and overcome obstacles. The task thus consists in identifying negative emotions and beliefs about oneself and replacing them with more adaptive and affirmative beliefs. Although self-efficacy is not the same as self-esteem, developing a positive sense of capability will no doubt positively affect one’s sense of self-worth (Pajares, 2002).

Multiple Intelligences Theory. This theory was developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner as he perceived the traditional notion of intelligence based on I.Q. testing as being too limited given the uniqueness and individual development of each child (American Institute for Learning and Development, 2013). Thus, he proposed eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults and argued that schools should put equal attention on all. These intelligences are linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and naturalistic intelligence (American Institute for Learning and Development, 2013).

Our Mission

Unique but United is a systematically created movement-based curriculum that provides dance/movement therapists who work in educational settings with needed proactive strategies to promote SEL among children and help teachers create more inclusive pre-school classrooms. By promoting individuality and creativity, and focusing on strengths rather than weaknesses, it is UBU's mission to encourage children of all abilities to take creative risks, to teach them how to relate to each other, to assist them in building relationships, to support them in feeling successful and validated in their expressions, and to ultimately help them thrive. To attain this, UBU offers an empowering and relational program that involves the whole person, gives all of the children an opportunity to strive and learn from each other, and creates a supportive environment where diversity, particularly disability is a strength and valued within the curriculum. As such, this program is inclusive of differences and widens children's

perspectives of the world and its people in ways that are respectful as well as participatory.

Our Values and Beliefs

In order to achieve its mission, UBU is embedded with specific values and principles. UBU's work is guided by the conviction that each child, no matter his or her needs, is child first, and that all children have abilities and disabilities – or strengths and weaknesses. Community focus entails that we can all learn from one another and we all have something to teach one another. In this sense, our abilities and disabilities do not translate into value: though we might be different from one another we are all equally valuable and we all have something to offer the community and people around us.

Consequently, we hope to teach children about empathy and compassion – for themselves and others – and seek to instill self-empowerment and the accompanied belief that each person always has something to give. Ultimately, by using the abbreviation UBU – “you be you” we encourage children to be themselves, teach them that they are unique, yet united with others.

Our Goals

Following are the generated short, mid, and long term goals that UBU desires to achieve. These specific goals have immersed from interviews with professionals working in the field and observations of inclusive pre-school classrooms and further been aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards for social-emotional learning developed by the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition, they also work towards the five core competencies of Emotional Intelligence as developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Short Term. Short-term goals involve new learning and accompanied changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, opinion, aspirations, motivation, and behavioral intent.

- Develop self-awareness skills
 - o Develop body awareness and spatial understanding
- Identify and manage emotions and behavior
 - o Recognize and accurately label emotions
 - o Learn to synchronize the expression of feelings
 - o Identify how emotions are related to behavior
 - o Learn self-management and self-regulation skills
 - o Identify personal qualities and external supports
 - o Identify likes and dislikes, strengths and challenges
- Learn how to recognize feelings and perspectives of others
 - o Recognize that others may experience situations differently from oneself
 - o Learn skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others
 - o Identify other's strengths and positive qualities
 - o Describe the ways that people are similar and different

Medium Term. Medium term goals are action-oriented and thus include changes in behavior and decision-making.

- Use communication (verbal and nonverbal) and social skills to interact effectively with others
 - o Identify ways to work and play well with others

- o Demonstrate appropriate social behavior
- Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
- Demonstrate an ability to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.
 - o Identify problems and conflicts commonly experienced by peers
 - o Identify approaches to resolving conflicts together and constructively
- Demonstrate ability to control impulsive behavior
- Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in interpersonal contexts

Long Term. Long-term goals include changes in conditions, social well-being, and social interactions.

- Reduced aggressiveness / risky behaviors
- Enhanced social awareness
- Enhanced interpersonal skills
- Enhanced positive relationships among children of all disabilities
- Improved positive child-teacher and child-parent relationships
- Improved acceptance of self and others
- Increased number of friendships between children of various abilities
- Enhanced potential for success in school and life
- Increased responsible behavior in personal, school, and community contexts
- Improved confidence and self-efficacy in their skills and themselves

- Improved decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in interpersonal contexts

Our Program

The curriculum. UBU provides children aged 3 to 5 with a multimodal learning environment comprised of concrete and empowering experiences that are viable and accessible to them - no matter their level of needs.

The curriculum is comprised of 11 lessons, which are divided as follows:

Lesson 1: Introductions and Regulations

Lesson 2: Body Awareness

Lesson 3: Spatial Awareness

Lesson 4: Emotions 1

Lesson 5: Energy Modulation & Impulse Control 1

Lesson 6: Boundaries, Trust & Assertiveness

Lesson 7: Energy Modulation & Impulse Control 2

Lesson 8: Emotions 2

Lesson 9: Social Interactions

Lesson 10: Empathy & Attunement

What we do not do. It should be made clear here that UBU should not be considered as formal therapy, nor does it constitute counseling services.

The importance of adopting a team approach. In order for this inclusive program to work, the facilitating dance/movement therapist, the classroom teacher(s) and the related professionals need to collaborate as one supportive and dedicated interdisciplinary team of people who communicate together, believe in inclusion, provide

mutual support and affirmation, and assist each other in creatively addressing the needs of all children through meaningful learning experiences.

The importance of using a developmental approach. As a child's brain is far from being fully developed at a preschool age, it is crucial to adopt a developmental approach and cultivate an awareness and sensitivity of the children's developmental needs and limitations, whether these are of emotional, cognitive, psychological, social, or physical nature. Thus, when teaching new skills, caregivers should make sure to educate and nurture the whole child by setting realistic expectations and supporting him or her through the natural course of development while taking into account individual differences as well as the cultural and social contexts within which development occurs.

The Benefits of a Dance/Movement Approach For the Children

Children learn best through concrete experiences and interactions that allow them to follow their innate desires of play and movement. Bodily expression is the first language children learn and, in fact, continue to learn throughout their whole life. In order to best use this powerful tool, children need to increase their body and breath awareness and develop the full range of movement vocabulary that is available to them. By learning new movement qualities they not only learn new ways of expressing and coping with emotions and pro-social movement behaviors, such as respecting personal space and appropriate touch, but they also are capable of rewiring their brain and change the makeup of neuronal pathways (Siegel & Bryson, 2011). Movement is thus a potentially for developing physical, social, emotional, and cognitive attributes of a growing child (Purcel, 1994).

Physical development. While young children are naturally active, dance/movement offers an avenue to expand movement and motor development (Tortora, 2006). While engaging in creative movement activities, children develop awareness of their movements and consequently learn how to regulate and control their bodies. With awareness of their body boundaries and limitations, they further develop important spatial concepts such as a sense of personal space, an awareness of others, and knowledge of how to respectfully move in a shared space (NAEYC, 2010). Once children embody these unwritten laws of space and movement, they can translate them into other regular daily activities (Stinson 1988). Additionally, creative movement helps young children reinforce existing motor skills through repetition and assists them in discovering and developing new ways of moving. In doing so, they enhance their coordination, sensory awareness, balance, stamina, and overall strength (NAEYC, 2010).

Social awareness. Moving together in a space encourages social encounter, interaction, and conflict resolution. It offers a great opportunity for children to learn the necessary skills to cooperate and work within a group (Dow, 2010). They develop a sense of Self and begin to understand themselves in relation to others and learn how to communicate ideas through their movement and body. Further, movement based lessons offer an opportunity to learn other social skills such as listening to and following multiple-steps directions, offering ideas, waiting their turn, and considering others' ideas and inputs (NAEYC, 2010).

Emotional expression. Movement-based activities provide pre-school children with a structured outlet for physical release and consequently foster psychological health (Dow, 2010). Enhancing their sensitivity to body sensations and using movement to

express emotions, children enhance self-awareness and awareness of others (NDEO, 2009) and have the possibility to physically express and work through feelings and emotions that they are unable to explain verbally.

Cognitive connection. Unable to conceptualize abstract processes, pre-school children most readily learn through direct kinesthetic experiences that involve their whole being. Encountering creative movement problems that require spontaneous decision-making, children learn to think concretely and develop new knowledge about the world. Further, as Ratey (2008) explained, movement does in fact directly improve learning as it optimizes a person's mindset to alertness, attention, and motivation and it helps to encode new information by encouraging new synaptic connections among nerve cells.

The Benefits of Using a Dance/Movement Approach For the Teachers

Observing recent educational developments, it quickly becomes obvious that the pressure on education keeps increasing while classrooms become more and more diverse. Teachers are trying their best to balance the requirements of such high-stakes accountability standards while meeting the needs of their different students (Hobgood & Ormsby, n.d.). Not only though do they teach an increasing number of students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and from different socio-economical statuses, but also the number of students with special needs has also increased. Thus, even when inclusion is intended, it has become seemingly impossible to include all students at all times, especially without the necessary tools, training, and assistance. Rather than assisting teachers and equipping them with tools and practices to maintain inclusion as best as possible, the government has increased pressure on direct instruction and test taking, leaving teachers without resources to effectively implement inclusion. UBU was

developed to specifically act as such a resource that offers guidelines and activities to help foster inclusion to the greatest possible extent.

Probably the main benefit that a movement-based curriculum offers to teachers is instruction in a language that all children understand, no matter their backgrounds or abilities. Engaging with their students on such bodily level can further help teachers create a deeper bond with their students and stronger classroom cohesion through shared experiences that are accessible to all students in a classroom. This can help in reducing the stigmatization that occurs when children are pulled out of the classroom and furthers integration and feelings of belonging.

Further, participating in the lessons, the students are granted a break from academics where they can release body energy while learning new skills and can return to the classroom with more focus. Another advantage of the curriculum for teachers is that the movement activities require little in terms of equipment – no handouts or technology – and they are easy to implement in different early childhood settings.

Further, though it might seem hard or even superfluous to fit movement into an education program, as teachers are preparing for academics, one should note that academics and physical activity are not mutually exclusive (Pica, 2006). Movement sessions in fact offer a great forum to integrate physical activities with other aspects of the curriculum. For example, children can deepen their understanding of shapes by creating a triangle or a square with different body parts. They can learn about different social environments, increase their counting skills, and learn about spatial patterns or animals. In return, creative movement and the related skills that are taught in the curriculum can be used as guidance tools in the daily classroom. When upset, children can be reminded

to perform belly breaths or to consider their space bubbles when they are intruding in a neighbors' space. Thus, once children develop new skills, these skills can easily be practiced and reinforced across different settings and situations and learning becomes consolidated.

For the Facilitator and Assistants

For reasons of training and experience, the curriculum was designed to be taught by an accredited dance/movement therapist. However, the success of the program heavily relies on the support of the classroom teachers and paraprofessionals who are encouraged to participate in the program and take on the role of assistants during the lessons so as to provide additional attention, help, and support to the children.

Structure of curriculum. The finished program is compiled of 34, 30-minute long lesson plans divided into 10 topics and themes. Every theme focuses on specific social emotional skills, and builds upon the previous one. Rather than a set curriculum, the program should be viewed as a guidebook. Despite the first and last lesson, which should always be included, the facilitator is free to either explore all remaining lessons, choose a specific theme that children need to work on, or use specific activities from each theme without having to do them all. This allows for greater adaptability to the needs of the class and individuals, as well as greater flexibility in planning and implementation, and better time management. Thus, lessons can be skipped, repeated, built upon, or revisited at a later time. The lessons all follow the same outline of a check-in, a movement activity, a short discussion, and a closure at the end. The check-in and closure will remain the same throughout all the lesson plans in an aim to provide the children with structure and allow for a maximum time to fully explore the different movement

activities. These activities help the children learn the theme-related social and emotional skills through movement explorations that are either performed individually, in pairs, or as a whole group. While some leading questions are listed for every activity with the aim to help the facilitator guide the experience, a more elaborate and open discussion is planned at the end of the lesson during the closure. Each session will then finish with a closing ritual dance, which emphasizes breath work and stabilizing movements in order to center the students for the subsequent academic activities.

The program operates on the notion that learning is a process and not a product. And thus, rather than trying to get through the activities, it is important to explore and process the different social-emotional concepts and the focus should remain on the learning experiences of the children and the validation of such. We are aware that no one model or method of teaching will fit everybody. With this in mind, lessons and activities can and should be repeated or revisited to adapt to the needs and match the experiences of the children.

The role of the facilitating dance/movement therapist. When implementing the program, the facilitating therapist is encouraged to create a warm environment that feels safe to the children. In order to create such a space of mutual trust and acceptance the dance/movement therapist would ideally adapt an approach defined by unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding. It is greatly recommended that the facilitator still works through a child-centered lens by following the children's lead and helping them gain awareness of their kinesthetic experiences by describing, naming, or shaping their movements, thus allowing them to find freedom within a structure. The ultimate goal for the therapist is to use his/her movement experience to attune to the children and

meet them – no matter their age, developmental level, or physical and cognitive skills – at their level and help them develop new social-emotional skills and a better understanding of themselves, as well as others.

The importance of being a role model. Often, children of different abilities do not interact with one another, as they do not know how. A first step in changing that situation is to educate children about their likeness, rather than their differences. Once children comprehend this idea, the next step is to teach them the necessary skills to interact with children who might have different abilities than they do. The program offers many ideas on how to do this.

By instructing this, and modeling how it can be done, the teachers and facilitator not only help their children learn and interact with another, but they take on the roles of positive role models who lead by example. As Bandura (1977) posited, it suffices for children to watch adult behaviors or attitudes to adopt and incorporate such manners themselves.

Suggestions for teaching the curriculum. The ideal space for the sessions would be a gym room or an indoor play area. Activities can also be performed in a classroom, however the space should be well defined, clear of obstacles, and the children should have enough room to move around without touching each other.

A tool that is recommended to help manage the children would be a tambourine or a drum to give the children auditory cues and get their attention. A musical pattern can be developed together with the kids in a call and response format to get them to focus when needed. Some children might also need visual cues and reminders for which pictures or drawings can be used.

Further, since children love games, directions are often more readily followed if turned into such a game. Thus, for example, when you would like the children to get up you can see who can get up the fastest, or give them a specific amount of counts by the end of which they have to be standing. The more enjoyable and fun you make the learning for them, the quicker and easier they will learn.

When leading the groups it is important to use simple language and set clear and consistent rules, which children can understand and follow. Diverse activities in the curriculum will help you in setting such rules together with the children. In case of distress, it is helpful to not negate a child's experience, but instead to try and normalize it so that he learns he is not alone and still feels accepted. In case of negative behaviors it might be useful to give the child a break in a specially assigned area where a child can go to refocus and return to balance. Through continued and guided redirection, children will eventually learn how to redirect their feelings themselves. Further, through investigating the cause of the negative behavior together with the child, such behaviors can be prevented in the future.

No matter what, it is important to reinforce positive behaviors whenever possible. Letting children know they did a great job will both increase their sense of self-efficacy and self-esteem, and make it more likely that they keep up these behaviors.

Adaptations to the curriculum. Each child is different and each child has specific needs that others might share or not. Thus, when teaching this curriculum it is important to keep reminding children of just this: that all children have both strengths and weaknesses, that everyone can learn, and some just take longer than others. In an attempt

to reinforce this, you should make it clear that there is a “zero tolerance” policy in the class against any kind of teasing, bullying, or making fun of others for any reason.

The curriculum was designed in a way that all movement activities can be modified and adapted to allow all children to participate. The facilitator and the assistants can help guide the children towards adapted forms of expression, reminding everyone that there is no right and wrong in movement and thus any movement is valid.

Despite having included adaptations for every single movement activity, following are more general guidelines for implementing the program in a special needs setting, as well as more specified ideas for adaptations to specific disabilities that you might encounter in the classroom, which can be helpful in accommodating the diverse needs of your students.

Personal assistance. A child’s need and level of assistance may vary from day to day and task to task and may range from occasional check-ins to continuous support . While it is important to provide all children with the needed assistance, one should not always assume a need for help and make sure the child gets the chance to develop some independence, which, in return, will help them build self-confidence (Head Start, 2014). Thus, it is advised to ask first if the child needs assistance before giving it. Adults can provide this assistance or peers can be given the chance to learn how to help, learn more about the other child, take responsibility, encourage them, build a relationship, and learn to take “no” as an answer of their classmate does not desire their help. While children with special needs will certainly require the greatest assistance, it is advised that other students should be attended to as well so as to promote equality and reduce any stigmatization.

Environmental setup. The arrangement of the room is an important aspect to be considered. The room should be well defined, clear of obstacles, and the children should have enough room to move around. Further changes in lightning, noise level, visual and auditory input, physical arrangements might be needed depending on the children's needs (Head Start, 2014). These aspects are discussed more specifically for each group of disability later on. Make sure to set up a timeout or safe zone for children who might become overwhelmed or withdrawn during activities, or might need a quiet space to take a break.

Learning outcomes. While this curriculum has specific learning outcomes and goals, it should be made clear that these are general goals and that not every child will have reached them at the end. To better assist and track the progress of the different children, it may be appropriate to individualize these objectives (Head Start, 2014). Thus when performing an activity with the parachute for example that works on time modulation, the focus for a child with motor development delays might simply be on reaching and grasping skills.

Teaching strategies. A child's success in the curriculum will further rely on the teaching style of the facilitator and assistants. In order to increase a child's ability to participate, the teachers will need to adjust to the children's needs and consider including visual information, simplifying directions, using concrete examples and materials, repetition, verbal prompts, and/or direct physical assistance (Head Start, 2014).

Structure. One aspect that will be important for most children with special needs is a predictable routine that will allow a child to know what happens next (Head Start, 2014). You should try not to change activities abruptly and alert the children ahead of

time to give them the necessary time to transition. At the beginning of each lesson, it is advised to tell the children what you will be focusing on and doing that day. This way, the children will know what to expect and transitions will be smoother. If you find that a child has an especially hard time to transition you might consider using transitional objects to redirect their focus and let them know that a new activity will begin.

Encouragement and no pressure. Children should not feel forced to participate in activities they don't feel comfortable with. You can give them some time to practice new activities with an adult away from the group or to have them watch an activity before they participate. Whenever possible, give children physical and verbal reassurances and encouragement. Praise their effort even when they did not do everything or did not do everything exactly right. Constant encouragement will increase their confidence and turn your students into active participators.

Teaching specific language and skills. One of the objectives of this curriculum is to teach the children the necessary skills to relate to each other. This includes teaching children with special needs the necessary words and skills to find or be a playmate such as asking "do you want to play" while looking at someone directly. Typically developing children, who might already have such skills, can be taught how to talk and play with children who have certain disabilities. For example, a gentle touch on the shoulder of a child with a hearing impairment might be one way of getting this child's attention.

Following is a compilation of specified adaptations for specific disabilities that were retrieved from Brown (n.d.), Child Action (2015), Extension (2011) and Head Start (2014).

Visual disabilities:

- Use communication during all activities to guide the children and keep them oriented. Give specific directions and use descriptive language.
- When giving instructions, call the child's name first.
- Make sure your space is free of any hazardous objects. One you have rearranged the room, stick with the same arrangement as children might rely on it to navigate and move through it.
- Adjust the lights of the room, avoiding glaring lights or suddenly switching the lights on or off.
- Whenever using visual aids, make sure they have clear and big pictures that are easy to see.
- Prepare for hands-on assistance whenever needed, but allow the child to complete the steps she/he can do independently. For example, rather than giving the child an object into her hand, you can place it on her lap so that she can reach for it herself.
- Encourage sensory experiences and verbal expressions and descriptions.

Hearing disabilities:

- Provide visual cues when communicating with the child. Use a gentle tap on the shoulder to get a child's attention, make eye contact before you speak, look at the child while you are talking to him, and encourage him to watch your lips.
- Encourage everybody to use gestures along with language to communicate and introduce the class to sign language symbols.

- Use pictures to explain different activities and give step-to-step instructions.
- Be sure you have the child's attention before giving instructions.
- Encourage the child to let you know when she does not understand something by using a special signal. Try and rephrase the sentence.

Speech and language delays:

- Be a good listener and observer, describing what you or the child is doing as you are doing it.
- Encourage the child to talk about what she is doing by asking clear and specific questions.
- Include children in discussions by considering their sounds, gestures, facial expressions, postures, and body language as active engagement and participation.
- When the child says something, repeat what she said, add missing words, or build on it by adding new information.

Learning and developmental disabilities:

- Give breaks or shorten the length of activities to adapt to a child's attention span.
- Break activities into small steps rather than a long list of instructions.
- Provide opportunities for children to practice new skills repeatedly to help them reinforce and master them.
- Demonstrate how to do an activity. If needed, physically guide them through the motions to get a feel for it. As they become more competent, decrease your level of assistance and encourage them to do more themselves.

- Pair children with peers who can serve as guides or peer models.

Physical and neurological disabilities:

- Provide encouragement and patience for children to do things on their own.
- Work with caregivers to find a comfortable way for the child to sit on the floor and join his peers on the same level.
- Provide appropriate tools that children can use to grasp and hold to mobilize and stabilize.

Social emotional disabilities:

- If needed, help children regulate and manage their own feelings, especially anger and frustration.
- Teach children to problem-solve by helping them identify the problem, find possible solutions, choose one and test it out. Peers can help brainstorm solutions.

Final Remark

This curriculum should be an opportunity for all children to have fun and learn about each other, and be a rewarding experience for everybody involved. Though it might be a lengthy and challenging process, you should never forget that you are helping these amazing young children to engage with the world around them and within them, thus nurturing their sense of wonder, inspiring them to believe, and teaching them that though they are one and united, they have the right to be unique and different.

Lesson 1: INTRODUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES

This lesson focuses on:

- Practicing social interactions
- Rules and rule making

1A: GROUP GREETING RITUAL

Warm-up: Introduce the curriculum

Time needed: 5 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Inform the children about the purpose and workings of the curriculum.

Leading Question:

- What does it mean to be unique?
- What does it mean to be united?
- What is UBU?

Activity Description:

- Invite the children to come to the middle of the room and sit down in a big circle and tell them about the work that you will be doing together: You will meet each other regularly and do some exercises and games together that will allow them to have fun and to get to know themselves and their other classmates better.

Tips and Adaptations:

- To help the children form a circle in the beginning, you can tape a circle on the floor.
- If you have children who have a hard time sitting still you can try one of the following to assist them:
 - o Put something heavy on their lap that will give them some stimulation and keep them grounded
 - o Make sitting still a game: see who can sit still the longest
 - o Give them wiggle breaks every couple of minutes and bring them back to sitting still by using the rhyme “criss cross applesauce”
- If you have a child with physical disabilities, be ready to move the circle to one of the corners of the room so that the child can use two walls for physical support to sit upright and join his friends on the floor.

Main Activity:

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of personal and cultural differences in greetings
- Create an inclusive greeting ritual that will serve as check-in for future sessions

Leading Questions:

- What are different ways of saying “hi” to someone?
- How do you introduce yourself?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Introduce the idea of greeting other people and ask how they say “hi” to other people by using our voices and/or their bodies.
- Ask the children to demonstrate different possibilities and have the others kids of the group mirror the greeting.
- Point out that there are many ways to greet someone and that greetings are different in different cultures, countries, or even families.
- Explain to the children that this group will be like a little family with its specific rules and way of greeting someone and that you are going to create your own greeting for your group that you are going to use to greet each other at the start of every lesson.
- Together with the children, figure out a way of greeting each other that everyone can perform and be included in. You can use anything the children have come up with before and it can include anything from movements, gestures, signs, or sounds.
- This greeting will look very differently for each group and depend on the various abilities of the children. The most important thing is that all children will be able to perform it.
- Tell the children that this greeting will be your greeting and serve as a check-in for all future groups you have together and will be referred to under the name of “Group Greeting Ritual”

Tips and Adaptations:

- If you have children with selective mutism, who are hard of hearing, have autism or have other disabilities that impair their speech, your greeting might be a silent one that uses signs, gestures, a nod, and/or smiles instead of words.
- If you have a child with autism who can only produce a certain sound, this sound might become part of the greeting.
- If you have children with a limited range of motion in one body part, pick a body part they can move and invite all the children to use that body part for the greeting.

Closure: The Rainbow Dance

Time needed: 5 min.

Props: none

Activity Description:

- Keep the children seated in a circle.
- Tell the children that it is almost time to say goodbye to each other. Ask how you can say goodbye to someone by either using your words or body, or both. Invite some children to show how they say goodbye and have everyone mirror the action.
- Tell them that you are going to teach them a dance that you will use to say goodbye to each other at the end of every group.
- Teach them the Rainbow dance.
 - o Start sitting with crossed legs.
 - o Reach your hands up to the sky while inhaling.
 - o Bring your hands down to the earth while exhaling.
 - o Open your arms wide to the side while inhaling.
 - o Close and cross your arms over your chest while exhaling.
 - o Reach your hands forward and wiggle your fingers while inhaling.
 - o Roll back on your back with bend legs and come back up while exhaling.
 - o Reach your arms up again while inhaling.
 - o Open them to the side like a rainbow, waving goodbye to everybody while exhaling.
- You will revisit this dance at the end of every lesson, so if children do not get it the first time around that is perfectly fine.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If a child needs physical assistance with this dance, you can ask one of the facilitators to give him/her the necessary support.
- Once children get to know each other better, you can ask one of them to be the facilitating assistant and even rotate the children who are helping their friend so that everyone gets to experience to be a helper.

1B: DEVELOPING GUIDELINES

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: We are going to develop our own guidelines today.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Chart paper

Large pen

Purpose:

- Participate in the process of developing guidelines
- Understand that there are consequences if such guidelines are broken

Leading Questions:

- What are guidelines?
- Why do we have guidelines?
- Are there rules to how we interact with one another?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to sit in a circle.
- Tell the children about the goals and intentions for the upcoming lessons: you will spend a lot of time together moving and playing and you will be there to help them learn how to play with others, how to express their feelings, etc. in a safe and fun environment.
- Introduce the idea of guidelines – what they are and why we have them – and ask which guidelines could help you to achieve the afore-mentioned goals together.
- Explain that guidelines are important for keeping people safe and happy. Guidelines tell us how we should behave and interact with others so that we or other people do not get hurt and so we can keep bad things from happening.
- Brainstorm some guidelines that you would like to have for your time together. Write them down and hang them up for everybody to see.
- Rather than focusing on what children shouldn't do, formulate the rules in such a manner that they say what the children should do. Some rules you want to have on there are:
 - o Listen with big ears
 - o Use your inside voice
 - o Keep your hands to your body
 - o Be a friend
 - o Have fun
- Explain that everybody will have to follow these rules. Agree that everybody gets a warning when not following a rule, and will have to sit out for the ongoing activity if he/she keeps breaking the rules. He/she can ask to join in again for the next activity.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Use this rule board in future lessons to remind the children to stick to the rules at all times. Add pictures that illustrate the different rules so that all students, whether they have a hearing or learning disability or autism, can understand and see them. The rule board can look as simple as shown in the handout.
- Teach your students general signs of sign language as well as signs for the different rules so that everybody will understand them when shown or told and that typically developing children can communicate with their friends who have hearing impairments (Appendix C).

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

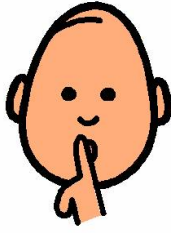
- Why do we need guidelines?
- How do guidelines help us interact with others?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance

GUIDELINES FOR CLASS



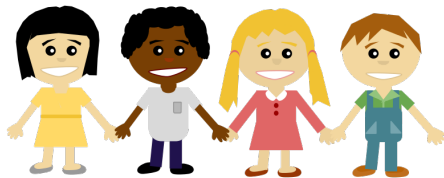
USE YOUR INSIDE VOICE



LISTEN WITH BIG EARS



KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOUR BODY



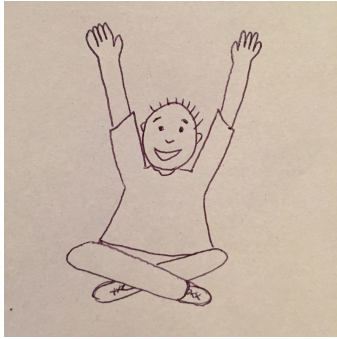
BE FRIENDS



HAVE FUN

Sources: www.clipartpanda.com
www.cliparts.co
www.plus.google.com

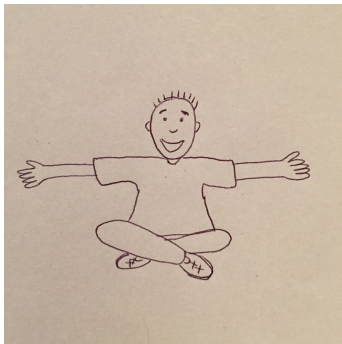
The RAINBOW DANCE



Arms Up



Arms Down



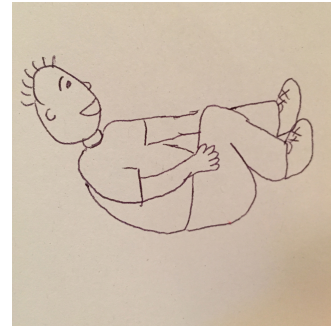
Arms Open



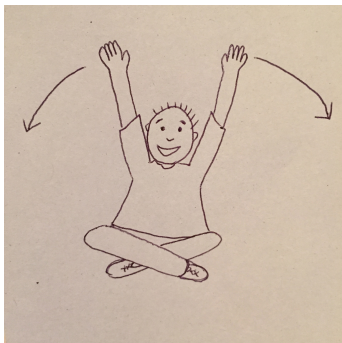
Arms Closed



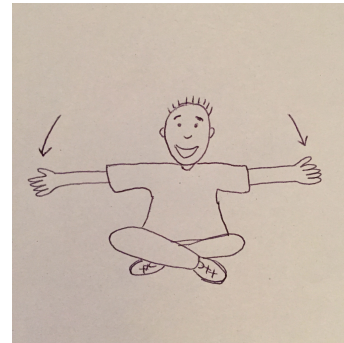
Arms Forward



Roll Back



Arms Up



Open arms like a rainbow

Lesson 2: BODY PART AWARENESS

This lesson focuses on:

- Body awareness
- Developmental movement progression
- Awareness of others
- Touch boundaries

2A: BODY PARTS

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to explore our body parts through movement.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Doll or stuffed animal

Purpose:

- Increase body awareness through differentiating body parts
- Increase group coherence

Leading Questions:

- How can we wake up our different body parts?
- How can we greet others with our body parts?

Activity Description:

- Remaining in a circle formation, ask the children to stand up, if possible. If not, they can remain seated or provided with something to hold onto.
- Explain that you will wake up your body now and see how your different body parts can say hello.
- Lead them through a body part warm-up starting at the bottom with their feet and move your way up to the head. Make sure to include the following body parts:
 - o Feet, ankles, and toes
 - o Legs and knees
 - o Hips
 - o Back and spine
 - o Shoulders, arms, wrists, hands, and fingers
 - o Head, eyes, nose, mouth, and ears
- While waking up the different body parts include movements such as rolling, twisting, stretching, turning, circling, shaking, opening, closing, lifting, lowering, bending, or stretching, as well as rhythmic activities such as swaying, marching, stomping, or clapping.

- Rather than telling the students the next body part, ask them what they think the next one is they have to wake up. Ask everyone to repeat the names of the body parts out loud and/or touch that body part.
- Move back and forth between suggesting movements yourself, mirroring what the children are doing, and asking the children if they can think of any other ways a specific body part can say hello.
- Once you have made your way up to the head, have the children greet each other with their whole body while taking some deep breaths.

Tips and Adaptations

- If some children do not have the ability to move a certain body part:
 - o Provide them with a doll or stuffed animal and have them move it in the same way the other students are moving.
 - o Ask a friend to touch or move their body part if they are okay with touch.
- If children with autism engage in self-stimulating movement, include them and their movement and have everyone mirror it.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How did it feel to wake up your toes?
- Which body part was the most fun to wake up?
- How do our elbows say hello?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance

2B: MOVING THROUGH PATTERNS OF CONNECTIVITY

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to explore how our body parts are connected to each other and all the ways we can move

Main Activity

Time needed: 20 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase body integration
- Reinforce developmental movement patterns

Leading Questions:

- How does it feel in your body to move the connectivities?

- What makes your body feel connected and coordinated?

Activity Description:

- Lead children through a movement exploration following the six Patterns of Total Body Connectivity. This might take more than one session. Provide the children with animal cues for the different movement patterns.
- Do all the movements with them.
- *Breath Connectivity*: Slowly move down to the floor like melting ice cream. Lie on the back and focus on your breath, imagine that you are blowing up a big balloon in your belly that is getting bigger as you breathe in and smaller as you breathe out.
- *Core-Distal Connectivity*: Start stretching out all your limbs now as you breathe in and then make your body really small as you breathe out. Do this opening and closing movement on your back first. Then sit up and continue the pattern, imagining being a turtle stretching and looking out of its shell, and hiding back in it. To make it more fun you can play with the element of time.
→ Children in wheelchairs can just perform the movement with their upper body.
- *Head-Tail Connectivity*: Sit on your heels and imagine that your spine is a leaf of grass in the wind or an alga in the water and move from right to left in a wave-like motion. Lie down on your stomach and move around like a snake in tail motion, without using your arms and leading with your head. Move around leading with your tail. Sit back up on all fours and alternately round and extend your spine like a cat.
→ Children in wheelchairs can just round and straighten their backs, or sway from side to side.
- *Upper-Lower Connectivity*: With a neutral spine, rock back and forth, alternately increasing pressure in your hands and feet. Come to a squat and hop around like a frog, leading with your arms and upper body and then tucking your lower body and legs back in. Then stand up and sit down using your upper and lower body connectivity.
→ Children in wheelchairs can just mobilize the upper body, using their lower body as a stabilizer.
- *Body Half Connectivity*: Lie on the floor and, without using arms or legs, roll over to one side and back. Have them imagine opening and closing their bodies like a book. Then crawl around using the same hand and leg at a time. Then stand up and waddle around like a penguin. Explore how you can lead your movement with one side of the body.
→ Children in wheelchairs can just move the two halves of their upper body to for example imitate a waddling penguin with their arms.
- *Cross-lateral Connectivity*: Walk around the room normally. Stomp your feet with swinging arms. Move back down to the floor and crawl around with opposite legs and arms.
→ Children in wheelchairs can swing their arms, or can reach up and out diagonally and come back to the center.
- At the end, crawl back to your places in the circle.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- Which movement was your favorite?
- How did it feel to move like a ...?
- Were there any other animals or images that you thought of?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

2C: TOUCH BOUNDARIES

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to talk about body parts that are private.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Pictures of different body parts

Pictures of a boy and a girl in swimsuits

Purpose:

- Learn about boundaries and appropriate touch
- Becoming aware of touch boundaries

Leading Questions:

- What are the guidelines about touch in this class? (refer to the guidelines you developed together)
- What are your private body parts? (parts to be only touched by the child him/herself)
- What parts are ok to touch on a friend? What parts are not ok to touch on another person? Why?

Activity Description:

- Have the group stand in a circle.
- Explain and model the concept of two body parts touching each other.
- Then move through some ideas with the children, such as touching your toes with your fingers, making your elbow touch your hip, have your finger touch your nose...
- Ask the children to come up with additional ideas and have the class mirror them.
- Divide the children into pairs and have the pairs spread through the room and face each other. Ask the children to touch each other's hands, toes, feet, knees, heads, and elbows as if they were each other's mirrors. Make sure to put children into groups where there is one child who can accommodate the needs of the other if necessary.

- Introduce the idea of private space and boundaries. Explain to the children that their private parts are the parts of their body that are covered by a swimsuit (handout). Explain that we do not share or show our private parts if anyone asks to see or touch them. And if someone does, we say “no” and tell an adult (exceptions might be going to a doctor). Emphasize that everyone has their private parts and they should respect that and not touch them.
- Regroup the children so that they are now in groups of 4.
- Repeat the touching body parts exercise that they just did in pairs. Ask the children to come up with other ideas while using safe touch and being mindful of everybody’s private body parts.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If children cannot touch certain body parts, you can provide them with pictures of individual body parts that they can touch.
- Put children into groups where there is one child who can accommodate the needs of the other if necessary, so that one child might touch her elbow to the other one’s if he can’t move it.
- Teach children signs and simple words such as “no touch” or “my body” to communicate assertively.
- Some children might need a physical prompt to know which body part to connect with their friend: You can tap their elbow and tell them to touch their friend’s elbow, or help them by pointing where they need to move their body part to.
- Note that for a child in a wheel chair private body parts might differ from others: they may have someone help them toilet all the time. Make sure to address this and be sensitive about it.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- What are the guidelines for touch in this class?
- How do you recognize when some touch doesn’t feel good?
- What can you do if someone does not respect your private body parts?

→ Tell the children the when not feeling like being touched they can simply say “no” or that they want their privacy. When being touched, they should speak up saying “I don’t want to be touched there” or “my body belongs to me”, or sign “no touch” and reach out to an adult always if they need further help.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance

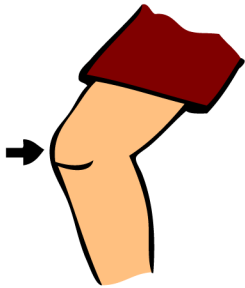
BODY PARTS



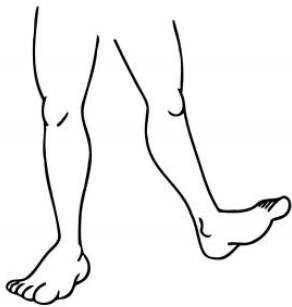
FOOT



TOES



KNEE



LEGS



HIPS



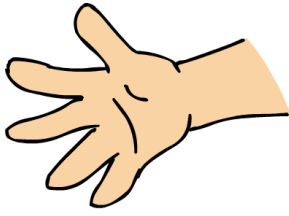
BACK



SHOULDERS



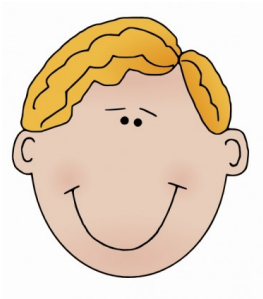
ARM



HAND



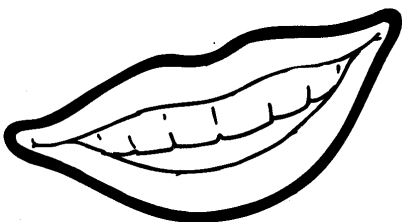
FINGERS



HEAD



NOSE



MOUTH



EAR

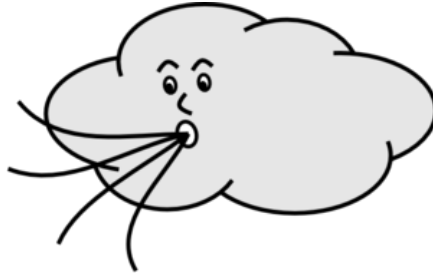
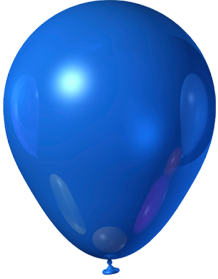


EYES

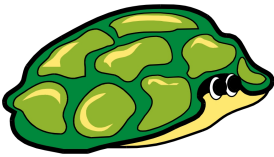
Source: www.clipart.co
www.clipartpanda.com

Patterns of Total Body Connectivity

1. Breath



2. Core-Distal



3. Head-Tail



4. Upper-Lower



5. Body Half



6. Cross Lateral



Sources: www.maplecityrubber.com
www.clipartpal.com

www.clipart.co
www.pixgood.com

www.fotosearch.com

SAFE TOUCH



Lesson 3: SPATIAL AWARENESS AND BOUNDARIES

This lesson focuses on:

- Spatial awareness
- Spatial preferences
- Personal space
- Adapting use of space to social situations
- Visual orientation to space

3A: SPACE BUBBLES

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: We are going to learn about space bubbles today.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Hoberman Sphere (large)

Stretch Cloth

Cut outs of a small, medium and big circle

Purpose:

- Learn about personal space
- Increase spatial awareness of self and others

Leading Question:

- What is personal space?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Introduce the idea of personal space by asking the children if they know what it means and what it is. Explain that personal space refers to the space around their body that helps them feel comfortable near other people and helps other people feel comfortable near them. Invite them to imagine that their personal space is like an invisible bubble around their body that they carry with them.
- Explain that a space bubble can have different sizes (small, medium and large) and that the smaller our space bubble is, the closer we can get to other people. Add that some people like to have bigger or smaller bubbles than others.
- Use the Hoberman sphere to help explain the concept of the space bubble. If you have a large enough sphere you can ask a small child to get up and you can put the sphere over his/her head and body so that the child ends up in the middle of the “space bubble”. Then put the sphere away.
- While you have the children remain seated, stand up and use your body now to demonstrate the same concept:

- o *Big space bubble*: Root your feet in the ground and reach out your arms in all directions, explaining that this is a big space bubble and in a big space bubble we can spread out our bodies and make big movements without touching anyone.
 - o *Medium space bubble*: Bring your feet a little closer and bring your elbows in to your waist with your hands facing out. Explain that this space bubble is smaller, but you can still make some movements in this bubble. The medium space bubble allows you to get closer to people without touching them.
 - o *Small space bubble*: Make a pin shape with your body with feet together and arms by your side, explaining that this is the small space bubble and that your movements are very tiny, and you can get really close to other people without touching.
- Tell the children that you are going to count “ 1, 2, 3, Go” and when you say “Go” they all have to jump up and take a step back.
 - Invite the children to try out what you just demonstrated. Start with a big space bubble, then do a medium one, and end with the small one.
 - Explain that your space bubble gets bigger or smaller depending on the shapes or movements that you make.
 - To make sure that all children understand the concept, ask the children to mirror you doing different shapes, such as a ball, a star, a candle; and ask them to tell you the size of the space bubble.
 - One by one, ask the children to make their own shapes. Have the class mirror the shape and tell if it is a shape using a small, medium, or big space bubble. Make sure every child gets a chance to do a shape.
 - Explain the children that in order to respect boundaries, their bubble should not touch anybody or anything else. You can demonstrate what could happen if they are not aware of their space bubble: they could hit a wall, or run into an object, or run into other people.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Use a stretch cloth to further illustrate this idea and give it to students who seem to have a hard time understating the concept of space bubbles as it makes the concept more concrete: explain that the cloth is loose when they move in a small bubble and becomes tighter as their bubbles gets bigger.
- The stretch cloth is also great for students who need additional stimulation or containment or to help children in wheelchairs to get a better sense of the different sizes of the space bubble. A friend can join them in the stretch cloth and help them make their space bubble bigger.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- Why are space bubbles important?
 - Why is it important that we pay attention to space?
- Explain the students that space is important to keep others and ourselves safe.

Closure:

Time needed: 5 min.
Perform the Rainbow Dance.

3B: MOVE YOUR BUBBLE**Group Greeting**

Time needed: 5 min.
Explain: We are going to play with different sizes of space bubbles today..

Main Activity

Time needed: 10 min.
Props: Cut outs of a small, medium and big circle in different colors

Purpose:

- Increase spatial awareness
- Learn about personal spatial preferences

Leading Questions:

- What is it like to move with a big or a small space bubble?
- How do you feel in the different bubbles?
- Do space bubbles make it easier not to bump into other people and objects?

Activity Description:

- Tell the children that you are going to count “ 1, 2, 3, Go” and when you say “Go” they have 5 counts to find a place in the room where they can be in a big space bubble without touching any of their friends.
- Invite them to move their space bubbles across the room now. Remind them that they have to make very big movements to move with a big space bubble, and very small movements to move with a small one.
- Guide them through moving with different space bubble sizes. Use the circle cut outs to help them know which bubble size to move with.
- Introduce time (decelerating and accelerating) and levels (high, middle, low) to make the activity a little more challenging.
- Ask them to stop and come to stillness in between different styles of moving.
- Ask them to move with a big space bubble last and then slowly guide them back to a circle by gradually making their bubbles smaller, finally sitting down with crossed legs and hands on their knees.
- Tell them that when sitting in a circle they should always have a medium space bubble. Have them put their elbows to their waist and hands out to make sure they are not touching any of their neighbors. Have them adjust their space as necessary.

Tips and Adaptations:

- For the following sessions designate space watchers who will make sure that all children sit with medium space bubbles at the beginning and end of the lessons.
- For children who have a hard time with impulse control and might be invading other children's space, you may use a reward system starting with 5 points. The child will lose a point every time he/she oversteps intrudes someone else's space. Make sure to praise the child every time he/she keeps the distance.
- Further, to help some children keep their bubbles and space, develop a signal that can serve as a reminder. You can thus call their name and move both hands, facing out, in front of your body as to remind him/her to back off.
- Teach this sign to the whole class so that other children can use this sign to safely let someone know if he/she is too close and they need more space.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- What are your personal space preferences?
- Why is it important that we pay attention to space?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

3C: ADJUST YOUR BUBBLE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: We are going to learn when we should use big, medium or small space bubbles.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Yarn

Purpose:

- Learn appropriate use of space in different social situations

Leading Questions:

- When do we need a small, medium or large bubble?
- What happens to our space bubble when we move between big and small spaces?

Activity Description:

- With children seated in a circle, ask if they can name some situations or activities when they would need a small, medium or a big space bubble. Examples include:
 - o *Small*: riding on a crowded train, taking an elevator with a lot of people, carrying a glass with water, or reading;

- o *Medium*: sitting in a circle, walking in a line, or eating;
- o *Big*: playing soccer, recess, or gym time.
- o Use the pictures of the different activities in the handout to have children either name them when shown the picture, or decide how they would move in that situation.
- On the count of “1, 2, 3, Go” give the children 5 counts to move to any of the 4 walls in the room.
- Use yarn to create a big circle in the middle of the room. It should be big enough for all the children to comfortably stand inside without touching each other.
- Tell the children that you will count to 10 and that by “10” everybody needs to be in the circle and no one is allowed to touch anybody. Once inside, give them 10 counts to move within the circle, without stepping outside. Then give them 5 counts to move out of the circle. Repeat this action 2 more times. Use the tambourine here to give them the counts and/or have them count with you.
- Readjust the size of the circle, making it gradually smaller, and repeat the activity.
- You can have the children move very slowly into the circle, and very quickly out of it. Ask the children tiptoe into the circle, and stomp out of it. The idea is for the children to get a sense of how to adjust their use of time, space, weight, and effort in order to successfully move into a smaller space. Guide them towards the idea of slowing down and decreasing the size of their space bubble in order to move into smaller spaces.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Have a friend guide a peer with visual impairments, or push his friend in a wheelchair into and out of the circle.
- Children who are physically unable to tiptoe into the circle can imagine being as light as a cloud, or you can support them or give them something to hold on to.
- You can make this a game by telling the children that whoever takes the longest to get into the circle will be the winner. Though this is tricky, it can help children to slow down and become more aware of their peers as they are trying to figure out who is slower than they are.
- If the activity gets too messy, call names of children to move into the circle first, second, and last. This structure helps children with impulsive control issues to listen and wait, as well as use self control to adjust their speed to move into the circle last if the circle is crowded. With this variation, a child who is already in the circle, can invite friend to come and join them by calling their name.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How do we adjust our space bubbles different situations?
- How do we know when we need to make our bubbles bigger or smaller?

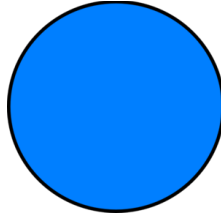
Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

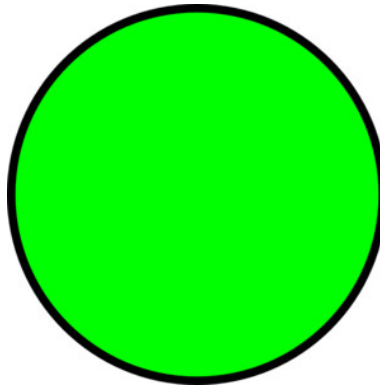
Perform the Rainbow Dance.

SPACE BUBBLE SIZES

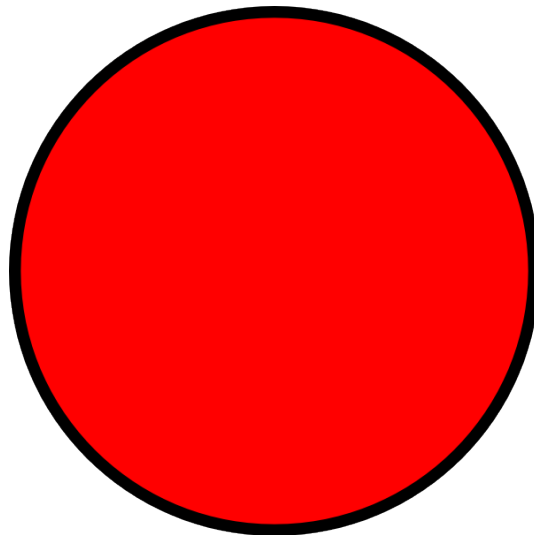
Small



Medium



Big



Source: www.clkr.com

EVERYDAY SPACE BUBBLES

Small Space Bubble



Riding a crowded bus



Carrying water



Reading

Medium Space Bubble



Sitting in a circle



Walking in a line



Eating

Large Space Bubble



Playing soccer

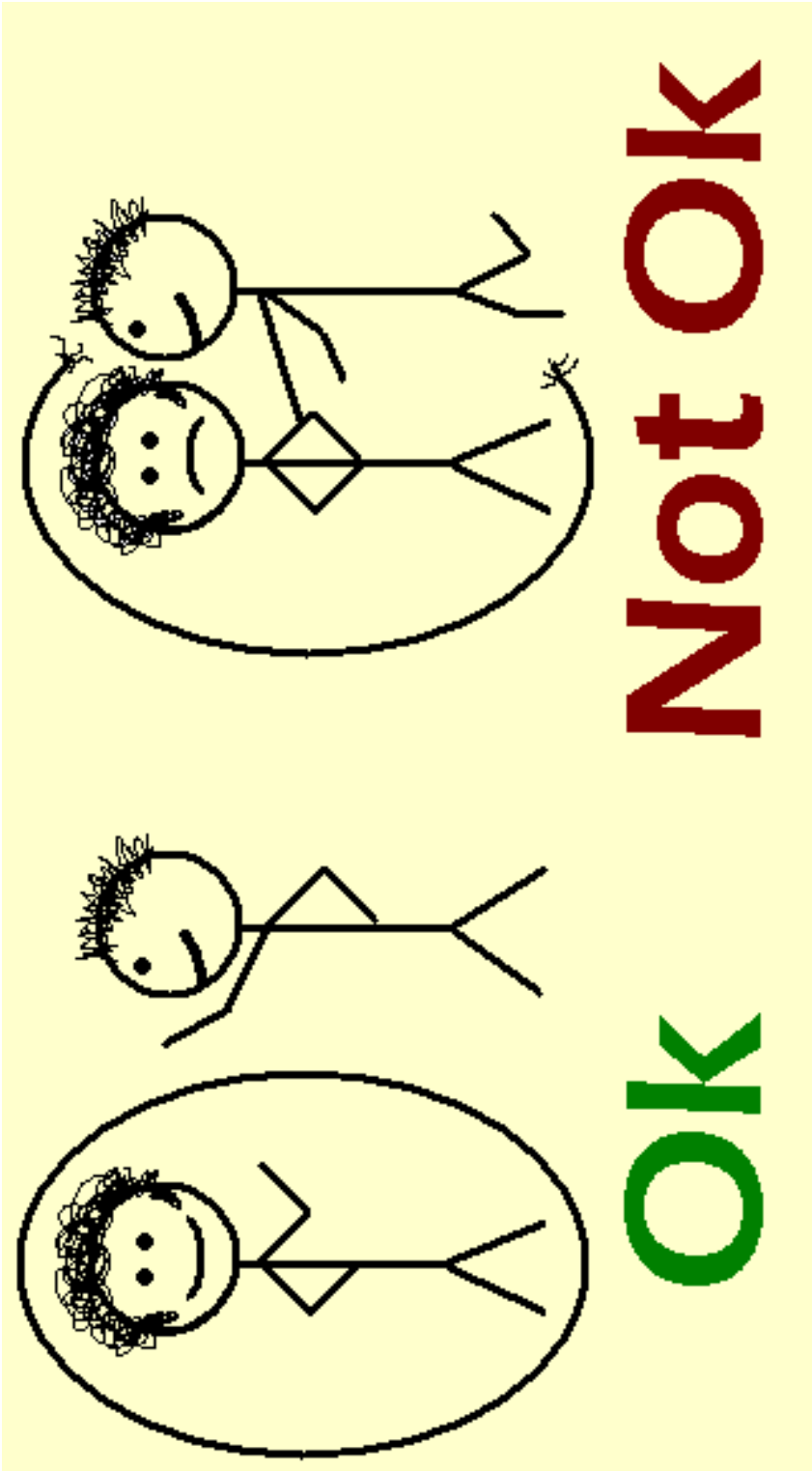


Recess

Sources: www.triptigblogspot.com
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www.clipartsheep.com

www.dreamstime.com
www.pixgood.com
www.sowegalive.com

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www.domitall.com



Source: www.clipartsheep.com

Lesson 4: EMOTIONAL AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION

This lesson focuses on:

- Emotional awareness
- Emotional recognition
- Bodily expressions of emotions
- Becoming more accurate at expressing and interpreting feelings

4A: EMOTION CHARADE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we will learn about different feelings and use our faces to express them.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Feeling cards with happy, sad, mad, silly, surprised, and scared faces

Purpose:

- Increase facial recognition and expression of emotions
- Learn how to tell how someone is feeling from verbal and nonverbal expressions

Leading Questions:

- How can we tell from someone's body how somebody is feeling? How can we tell from someone's face how they are feeling?
- What can we do to find out how somebody is feeling?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Ask how we can tell how somebody else is feeling? How can we find out? Have the children come up with answers and guide them towards ideas such as observing what others are doing, looking at their face, looking at their body posture, or simply asking them.
- Explain that sometimes a person may share how they are feeling with words, and other times they may not say anything, but their faces and movements may show how they feel.
- Take one feeling card at a time and have the children guess how the person in the picture is feeling. Ask them how they can tell and ask them how they know the person is feeling that way. Then ask all of them to make the face on the card.
- Once you have gone through all of the feeling cards, have one child at a time choose one of the feelings on the cards and express it with his/her face.
- The other children are to look at the face and guess what emotion it is and explain how they can tell.
- Go around the circle until everyone had a chance to try out an emotion.

Tips and Adaptations:

- For children with autism, put the feeling faces on objects to have them guess the feeling. Building on this, you can eventually generalize the feelings to people.
- For children having a hard time grasping certain emotions, use social stories to help explain and illustrate such emotions.
- Teach signs for different feelings if you have children with speech or hearing disabilities (Appendix D)

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we know how other people are feeling?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow dance, labeling on emotions:

- o Reach up: happy
- o Reach down: sad
- o Open: surprised
- o Close: mad
- o Reach forward: as if looking for something
- o Roll back: scared
- o Reach up and rainbow waves: happy

4B: MOVING EMOTIONS

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to move our emotions through our bodies.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Chart paper with names and pictures of feelings: Happy, sad, mad, surprised, and scared

Purpose:

- Increase synchronization of expression of feelings (congruency)
- Identify and describe the nonverbal ways through which people show their feelings

Leading Questions:

- How do feelings feel in our bodies?
- What body sensations tell us how we are feeling?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to stand up and spread out in the room, making sure they have enough room to move. Remind them of their space bubbles.
- Turn the lights off and say “Show me how you look and move when you’re happy.” Turn the lights on and have the children move around in a happy way. After they get the idea, have them freeze as you turn off the lights again.
- Repeat this pattern with all of the other feelings on the list.
- Every time the children are moving a feeling ask them how it feels in their bodies. Do they feel light or heavy? Do they feel like moving slowly or fast? Do they feel like making big movements or small movements? Do they feel like they have a lot of energy or do they feel tired? Do they feel like making any sounds? Do they feel other sensations or anything else in their body? Encourage imagery as it arises.
- After you have gone through all of the feelings, ask the children to come back to a circle and sit down.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Use music to facilitate the emotional expression of the different feelings.
- When there are one or more children in a wheelchair, get chairs for all the kids and ask them to move the different emotions in a chair. This way they will need to express emotions differently than they might be used to – as for example jumping up and down when they are happy – and gain deeper understanding of their peers who have physical limitations.
- If you have children with visual impairments, use a drum instead of the lights to signal them to change the feeling they are moving.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How do the different feelings feel in the body?
- What is your favorite emotion to move in your body?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, labeling on emotions.

4C: MIRRORING EMOTIONS

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we will mirror one another’s feelings through our bodies.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Chart paper with names and pictures of feelings: Happy, sad, mad, surprised, and scared

Purpose:

- Increase attunement and empathy
- Increase social interaction

Leading Question:

- How does it feel to move like another person?
- Can we understand someone else's feeling by moving with them?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to partner up and face each other.
- Decide who will be the leader and who will be the follower. Ask the leaders to choose a feeling from the list and express it with their face and body. Invite the followers to mirror the leaders and play close attention to what the leaders are doing: observe their face, shoulders, hands, and other body parts.
- After a short time, stop the class, and ask the followers to guess the feeling that their leader was expressing.
- Repeat this so that the leader can move various feelings. Then reverse roles.
- Invite the children to sit back in a circle.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If one of the partners requires sitting on the floor or on a chair, have the second partner do the same. Instruct children to be conscious to only move slowly and only in ways that their partner can move too. This will help them to increase awareness of and empathy for their friend.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- Why is it important to express our feelings?
- Can people express the same feeling in different ways?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow dance, labeling on emotions

4D: FEELING CIRCLE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we will guess each other's feelings when we are moving.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase attunement and empathy

- Increase awareness of different emotional expressions of a same feeling

Leading Question:

- Can people express the same feeling in different ways?

Activity Description:

- In a circle, have three students at a time get up, secretly tell them an emotion and ask them to form a corresponding shape in the middle of the circle.
- Ask the others to guess the emotion.
- Repeat until all students had a turn.
- Focus on how different children used different shapes in different ways to express the same emotion. Together with the class, find things that shapes have in common (slouched shoulders, moving slowly, etc.) and point out the differences that might be unique to each mover.
- Once everyone had a turn, repeat the activity by having children move an emotion in the circle.
- To increase the difficulty of this activity, ask two or three students at a time to make shapes for or move different emotions and ask the others to guess all of them.
- Explore the idea that while people feel the same feelings, they all express it differently. Maybe a person who is happy will lift her arms and jump up and down, but maybe another person who is also happy might just run around, or another might just smile. Similarly, a person who is mad might stomp his feet, while another person who is mad crosses her arms, or becomes very quiet.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If one of the children in your group of shape makers/movers has a physical disability, encourage the others to adjust their shapes and movements to that child. For example, if a child has to remain seated on the floor, ask everyone to make a sad shape on the floor. Similarly, if a child can only move her right arm, ask the others to move around happily only using their right arm.
- Invite the children to help each other make their shapes and movements clearer and more convincing.
- Children with autism might only move the emotion in their face, might need more specific instructions on how to move, or might benefit from visuals and a concrete story that you either tell them or have them watch.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

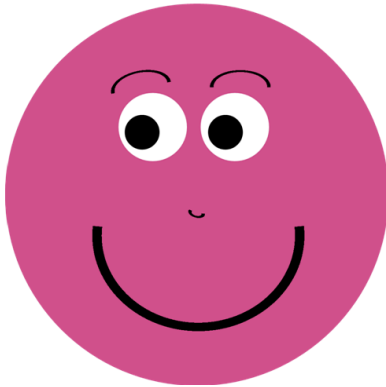
- How can we tell that a person is feeling sad, mad, etc.?
- How can someone tell how you are feeling?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow dance, labeling on emotions

FEELING FACES



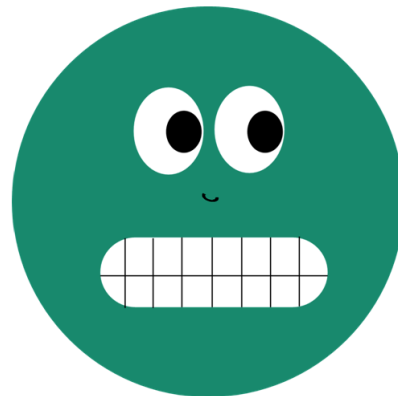
HAPPY



SAD



MAD



SCARED



SURPRISED



SILLY

Lesson 5: ENERGY MODULATION AND IMPULSE CONTROL I

This lesson focuses on:

- Energy modulation skills
- Body control
- Impulse control

5A: FREEZE SHAPE DANCE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to play the freeze game.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Music

Purpose:

- Increase impulse control
- Increase self-control

Leading Questions:

- How can you stop moving your body as quickly as possible?

Activity Description:

- With the children seated in a circle, explain the concept of the Freeze Shape dance. Tell them that you will be playing some music and as long as the music is playing everybody gets to dance to it however they want. But once the music stops everybody has to stop dancing immediately and freeze in place.
- Say “go” and give the children 5 counts to find a spot in the room. Tell the children that they have to stay in place when they are dancing and are not allowed to travel around the room.
- Turn on the music and try out the activity. Vary the durations you have the children freeze and dance.
- Once the children get a feel for it, stop the music and explain that you will now show them a shape before they start dancing, and once the music stops, everybody has stop and do that shape.
- Show them the first shape, turn on the music and have them dance. Once you stop the music do the shape with them. Try the same shape again until they all get it. Then, try out a different shape.
- Start with simple shapes such as putting your feet together and putting your hands on your hips or your head. You can make shapes more difficult as you go along, maybe even having them balance on one foot.

- Once they seem to start remembering the different shapes by themselves, you can make the activity harder for them by no longer doing the shape with them when they have to freeze. This way they will have to stop and think what the shape was.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Here are some other variations of the freeze dance to use to adapt to the level and needs of your children:
 - o Dancing with the music and sitting down on the floor to freeze
 - o Dancing and freezing in place
 - o Dancing on the floor and freezing on the floor
 - o Dancing on the floor and freezing in a standing shape
 - o Dancing with a small space bubble when the music is quiet and increase the size of movement with the volume of the music
 - o Dance and freeze while putting a specific body part on a chair, touching tape on the floor or a wall
 - o Dance and freeze in the shape of an animal
 - o Dance and freeze while creating a connecting shape with a partner

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we stop our movement?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

5B: BALANCE THE BEANBAG

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to balance a beanbag on different body parts.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Beanbags for every child

Purpose:

- Increase body control
- Increase ability to regulate movement

Leading Questions:

- How can we keep the beanbag from dropping?
- What happens in our bodies when we balance a beanbag?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to seated in a circle.
- Hand out a beanbag to every child.
- When you say, “go” give them 5 counts to find a place in the room where they can have a big space bubble. By “5” they have to freeze.
- Invite them to move around with the beanbag on the back of their hand without dropping it. You can have them change speed and change levels. Freeze them for 5 counts, then ask them to shake out their bodies for 5 counts. Change hands.
- Repeat the activity by balancing the beanbag on the elbows.
- Repeat the activity by balancing the beanbag on the head. Come up with different body parts for students if needed,
- Once you finish, have the children shake out their bodies as hard as they can. Then give them 5 counts to come back and sit in a circle.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Children in a wheelchair can balance the beanbag on different body parts another child drives them around. This way they can work as a team and both have to control their movements in order to keep the beanbag from falling.
- A friend can help children who are impulsive by balancing the beanbag together. This way their friend can help them regulate and they are working as a team.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we control our bodies?

→ Touch on ideas such as slowing down, concentrating, paying attention, tensing our muscles, and/or using our breath.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

5C: BELLY BREATHING

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn how to breathe with our bellies.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Learn self-calming techniques
- Increase breath support

Leading Questions:

- How does your body feel when you take deep belly breaths?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Tell them that breathing is one of the best things we can do to help calm our bodies and make us feel better when we feel out of control.
- Demonstrate and explain the abdominal breathing technique:
 - o Lie down on your back, put your hands on your stomach, and start taking deep abdominal breaths.
- Invite the children to try it out, either with bent or straight knees. Talk them through it as you walk around.
- Use the imagery of having a big balloon in your stomach, which fills up with air and expands every time you breathe in and deflates when you breathe out.

Tips and Adaptations:

- To assist children who have troubles accessing their breath, you can:
 - o Show them again how to do it and have them put a hand on your belly so they get a tactile feeling of the rising and falling of the abdominal wall.
 - o Lie next to them and do it with them.
 - o Ask permission to touch their bellies and then hold your hand a little over their belly. Encourage them to try and touch your hand with their belly as they breathe in, and move away from it as they breathe out.
 - o Tell them to put their beanbag on their belly and watch it rise and fall.
 - o You can also put your hand on top of their hand which lies on their belly and have them push against your hand when breathing in and help them by softly pushing their belly down when they exhale.
 - o Use a balloon or a party horn that they can blow into.
- Children in wheelchairs can do the exercise remaining seated and putting their hand on the belly, trying to push it forward and back, or they can join their friends on the floor.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we relax our bodies?
- Why is it important to relax our bodies?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance very slowly, in an indulging and stretching kind of way.

5D: TENSION RELEASE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn how to tense up and release our muscles in a safe way.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase awareness and sensations of body tension
- Learn to regulate and relax body tension

Discussion Topic:

- What is body tension?
- When do you feel tense? When do you feel relaxed?
- How do you know you feel tense or relaxed?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to stand up and remain in circle formation.
- Introduce the idea of tension and release by asking the children what they think those words mean. Explain that when we tense up we contract our muscles and make our whole body or a part of our body really tight and hard. Use your hand as an example by making a fist and releasing it. Continue explaining that when you release the tension all the muscles relax and your body, or part of it, will feel relaxed and almost as if it were asleep.
- Ask the children to stand still and glue their feet to the floor. Guide them through a tension release exercise.
 - *Hands*: Inhale and make a fist with one hand, squeezing it really hard. Feel how the whole arm is getting tight. Then release it while breathing out. Repeat with the other hand, then with both. Have the children feel how much more relaxed their hands feel now.
 - *Arms*: Breathe in and move your arms over your head and stretch them as high as possible. Feel the tension building up. Exhale and release the arms, leaving them hanging alongside your body. Repeat 2 more times.
 - *Shoulders*: Inhale and bring up the shoulders trying to make them touch your ears. Feel the tension. Exhale and let the shoulders drop. Repeat 2 more times.
 - *Face*: Inhale and scrunch up your face, wrinkling your nose and bringing your eyebrows together. Feel how your face is getting tighter and smaller. Exhale and release. Repeat 2 more times.
 - *Stomach*: Inhale and tighten your stomach so that it turns hard. Place a hand on it to feel how hard it is. Relax your stomach as you breathe out. Repeat 2 more times.

- *Legs*: Inhale and tense up your legs and try to push them down into the floor. Exhale and release the muscles in your legs. Repeat 2 more times.
- *Whole body*: Inhale and tense up your whole body: your hands, arms, shoulders, face, stomach and legs. Exhale and release everything. Repeat 2 more times.
- Ask the children to sit back down. Ask them if and how their body feels different now. Ask about situations when children feel relaxed and situations where they feel tense in their bodies.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If children are unable to voluntarily tense their muscles, ask permission to touch them and lightly squeeze their different body parts and let go again.
- Focus on one body part, such as their hands and give them an object to hold and squeeze in order to activate their muscles.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

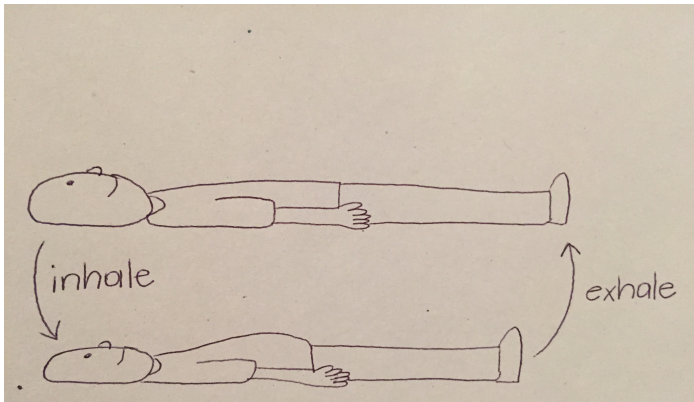
- What can we do when we feel tense?
- How can we help a friend who feels tense?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, alternately tensing and then releasing your muscles.

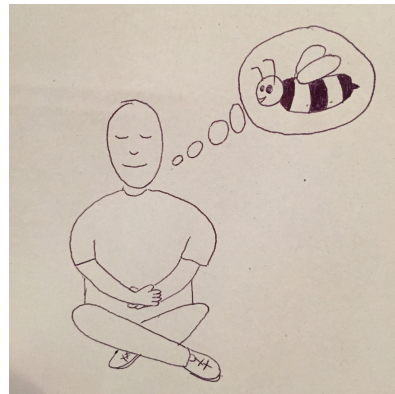
CALMING TECHNIQUES



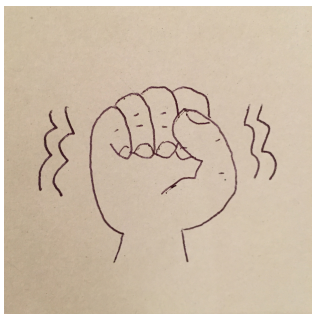
Belly Breathing



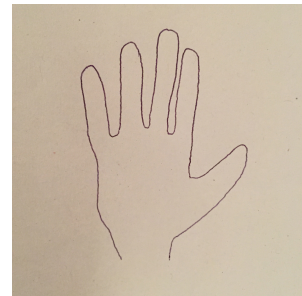
Self-Talk



Bee Breaths



Tension and Release



Lesson 6: BOUNDARIES & TRUST

This lesson focuses on:

- Personal boundaries
- Building trust
- Learning to cooperate and communicate with others
- Attunement and empathy
- Developing assertiveness

6A: TRUST WALKS

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to guide each other around the room with one person having their eyes closed and the other leading them.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Build trust
- Increase social interactions

Leading Questions:

- What does it mean to take care of someone?
- What does it mean to keep someone safe?
What does it mean to guide someone?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle. Discuss the concept of trust. Explain that to trust somebody means that we believe them that they won't hurt us and that they will protect us.
- Divide the class into pairs. One child will be the "blind" person and the other child will be his/her guide.
- Instruct the partners to move to a designated wall in the room and hold hands. Explain that one of them will close their eyes and their friend will guide them in a straight line from one side of the room to the other. Ask the "blind" child to try his best to keep his eyes closed, but that peeking is allowed if he gets too scared. The "guide" has the responsibility to keep his partner safe.
- After a first round, you can then switch roles and repeat the same activity so that everybody gets to experience both roles.
- After the activity, invite the children to sit back in a circle.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Consider having every pair cross the room one by one in order to increase safety.
- Children in a wheelchair can be pushed around in their chairs or dragged on a piece of cloth with eyes closed when they are performing the role of the “blind person”. When being the guides, they can agree to have friend sit with closed eyes on their lap while driving her/him across the room.
- If children wish to not perform one or both roles, their partner can be paired up with another pair, having two guides or two followers.
- Make sure to set clear expectations about the responsibility of the guides: They have to keep the other person safe, they should adapt their movement to them, they should check in with them to see if they are doing okay.
- Tape lines on the floor that the guides have to follow so as to decrease the chance that a guide will run off with his person.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How does it feel to be guided around with closed eyes?
- How does it feel to take care of someone else?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance

6B: STOPPERS AND MOVERS

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn how to keep boundaries..

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Stop signs

Purpose:

- Reinforce concepts of boundaries and personal space
- Increase awareness of body sensations related to feeling safe and feeling discomfort

Leading Questions:

- How do you feel when someone comes too close?
- How do you know when you feel uncomfortable?
- What does it feel like to stop someone?

Activity Description:

- Divide the class in half and have the two groups line up facing each other on opposite sides of the room. Children facing each other will be partners for this activity.
- Design one side to be the movers and the other side be the stoppers. The movers can only move forward when their partners tell them “go” and have to stop when their partners say, “stop”. The stoppers thus have control over the movers and should stop them when they feel that if the movers came any closer, they would feel uncomfortable.
- Ask the movers to walk slowly so that the stoppers can stop them easily at the place they want them to stop.
- Repeat the activity a couple of times, using different variations such as:
 - o Switching roles
 - o Switching partners
 - o Increasing or decreasing the speed at which the movers approach
 - o Stoppers using a stop gesture instead of saying “stop”
- After every repetition, ask the children to look around and observe the different distances between people.

Tips and Adaptations:

- For children who are invading other’s space, explain that not everyone likes other people to be close. Further, children can use the gesture they learnt during previous exercises to let their partner know to back off: putting both hand with palms out in front of their body.
- If children are hard of hearing, they and their partner can use the “stop” and “go” signs to communicate.
- For children with autism, the assistance of a facilitator or eventually a friend is helpful. This facilitator or friend can help the child to stop when told to by giving them tactile cues such as a tap on the shoulder when they need to stop, or a tap on the back when they can move again.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we have our boundaries respected?
- What can we do if someone does not respect our boundaries?

→ Touch on the idea of assertiveness and the importance of respecting other people’s boundaries and trusting that they will respect ours. Teach the children to assertively tell someone “you are too close” or “you are invading my space”, or ask them “please step back”.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

6C: BALANCE TOGETHER

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to work in teams to balance different body parts together.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Build trust
- Learn to cooperate with others

Leading Questions:

- How can you help your partner balance?
- How can you manage this activity together?

Activity Description:

- Invite the children to partner up and spread out in the room.
- Ask the children to sit facing their partner with crisscrossed legs. Help them make sure that there is nothing behind them and that they have enough space to lean back.
- Demonstrate the following exercises with a teacher or a child before you have the children try it out.
 - o *Seesaw*: While sitting cross-legged, have the children hold hands and gently rock back and forth. Tell them to be mindful of their partner and not hurt him/her by pushing or pulling him/her too far.
 - o *Touching Feet*: Have the children release hands, uncross their legs, and put their soles of the feet on the floor with bent knees. Have them hold hands inside their knees. Then slowly have them touch the bottom of their foot to that of their partner as if they were mirrors. Once they have found each other's foot, have them gently press into it and slowly start lifting their feet together and lowering it down again. Make sure they keep their knees bent. Then repeat the action on the other side. Move around to see if you can help any children by supporting their hands, feet, or backs.
 - o *Flying Feet*: If the children are up to it, increase the challenge and have them try and push into and lift both feet in the air at the same time while still holding hands. Guide and cue them to slowly and carefully bring up their feet into the air and down again. Only have them release hands once everybody's feet are on the floor.
- Introduce the ideas of cooperating and being sensitive to the other person's physical limits.
- Still in pairs, invite the children to turn around and sit cross-legged back-to-back with their partner.

- Let them rest their backs against each other and tell them that they will now support their friend's back and their friend will support theirs.
- Invite them to take some deep breaths and breathe with each other and see if they can feel the other person's back move and push into theirs. While they are doing the activity ask them how it feels to breathe with somebody.
- After you feel the energy coming down, bring the children back into a circle.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Have the children lie down on their backs with knees bent and feet facing their partner. Then just have them straighten one leg until they touch their partner's foot and can lift and lower the leg.
- Have them perform the exercise with their hands, sitting crisscrossed on the floor or in chairs across from each other.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- What are important things to do when you work together?
- How does your breath help you to calm down?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance holding hands.

Lesson 7: ENERGY MODULATION AND IMPULSE CONTROL 2

This lesson focuses on:

- Energy modulation skills
- Body control
- Impulse control

7A: SHOW US YOUR ENERGY LEVEL

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to explore how energy feels in our bodies.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Maracas

Purpose:

- Increase body awareness
- Increase social interaction

Leading Questions:

- What is energy?
- How does energy feel in our bodies?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Start by introducing the idea of energy and explain to the children that we feel different levels of energy during the day depending on how we feel. Ask and discuss what energy is and how it feels in the body.
- With the use of the maraca, demonstrate and explain possible energy levels by shaking the maraca vigorously with big and fast movements to express a lot of energy and feeling excited, shaking it moderately to express a stable energy level and feeling ready to learn, and shaking it softly with sustained and smaller movements to express feeling tired and low energy.
- Ask the children to pass the maraca around the circle, showing you their energy level while dancing with the maraca, and then let the group mirror their movements.
- Finish when all the children expressed their energy level.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Use the idea of a car and the visual of an energy gauge to explain the concept. Instead of shaking the maraca they can point at the gauge to tell you their energy level or tell you the color of their energy level.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we increase our energy level when it is low?
- How can we decrease it when it is high?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, using different speeds. Do it 3 times in a row: first with medium speed, then really fast, and then slow down for the last one.

7B: 1,2,3 STOP

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to play a stop and go game.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Tape

Purpose:

- Increase impulse control
- Increase body control
- Demonstrate listening and focusing skills

Leading Questions:

- Was it hard to suddenly stop moving?
- How did it feel to freeze for a long time?

Activity Description:

- Start with children seated in a circle.
- Say “go” and give them 5 counts to move to a designated wall. By “5” everybody has to touch the wall with their backs.
- Tape a line on the floor that is parallel to the wall. This will be the starting line.
- Tape down a finish line on the other side of the room, parallel to the starting line.
- Explain and play the 1,2,3 Stop game:
 - o The goal is to get to the finish line.
 - o Children are only allowed to move when you, the counter, is counting “1,2,3” and have your back turned to them.
 - o Once you turn to face them and say “stop” everybody has to freeze in place and hold a shape.
 - o They have to hold their shape for as long as you are looking at them. Once you turn your back again they are allowed to continue moving towards the finish line.

- o If one child moves during the freeze time, everybody has to move back to the starting line.
- In order to accommodate everyone tell the children that they can move to the line in whatever way they like or move in pairs if they have a friend who needs help.
- You may experiment with counting slower or faster and increasing or decreasing the time the children have to stay frozen.
- Give the children a high five once they cross the finish line. Start a new round once all the children have crossed the finish line.
- Once the children understand the game, make it nonverbal by leaving out the verbal cues of counting and saying stop, and only use nonverbal signals such as turning your back or a stop gesture to indicate move and stop for the children. Once you are done with the game, turn your back to the children and give them 10 counts to come back and sit in a circle in the middle of the room.
- Join them in the circle and ask them if it was hard to suddenly stop moving and how it felt to not be allowed to move for longer times.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If you have a child in a wheelchair or who has difficulty moving quickly, you can have friends drag her across the room on a piece of cloth.
- If you have children with hearing impairments, make sure to use gestures and signs to let them know when to move and stop.
- You can have a facilitator or peers help a student who might need tactile cues to stop and go.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we control our bodies?
- How can we regain control of our body when it feels out of control?
- Why is it important to be in control of our bodies?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Activity Description:

- Have the children seated in a circle.
- Perform the Rainbow Dance, using different speeds.

7C: PARACHUTE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to play with a parachute all together and learn to move it in different ways.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Parachute

Purpose:

- Increase energy modulation skills
- Enhance team work
- Increase breath support

Leading Questions:

- How can we breathe with the parachute?
- How do your arms feel differently when we move them slowly or quickly?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated while you bring out the parachute.
- Count to 3 and have everybody get up. Open the parachute and have the children hold onto it.
- The goal is to move the parachute up and down together. Guide and cue them as you try it out.
- Once they get the feel for it, add the element of breath: Breathe in as you raise your arms and the parachute, and breathe out again as you lower everything. You might have to adjust the speed (slowing down) and range of the movement (bring hands up over their heads) to accommodate the length of the breath.
- Experiment with increasing and decreasing time, modulating from long sustained movements to a quick shaking of the parachute. Introduce the idea of flow here and have the children notice the free flow of their arms when moving slowly, and the bound flow that is necessary to shake the parachute quickly and vigorously.
- Play around with modulations of weight by decreasing pressure and feel their bodies get really light as they lift the parachute, and then increasing pressure, directing energy into the floor, as they move the parachute down.
- Make sure to help the children end the activity with calm minds and bodies by ending the activity with some big breaths with the parachute.

Tips and Adaptations:

- In case you have students who are unable to stand by themselves, perform the activity with everybody seated.
- Be ready to give hands-over assistance to children who have difficulty holding onto and moving the parachute. If it is not possible for them to do, have the children sit down in the middle underneath the parachute as the rest of the class is moving it up and down. This way, they can still be included in the activity.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

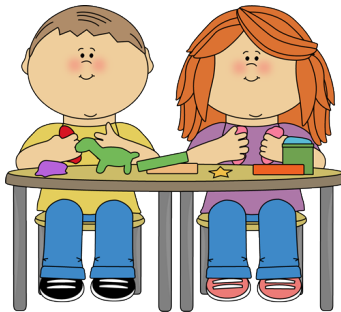
- How can we keep control as a group?

Closure

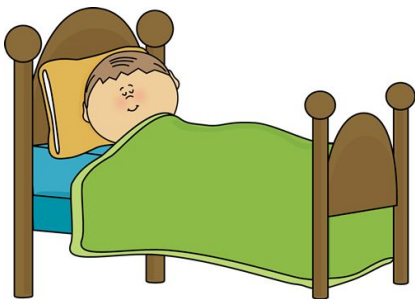
Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, using different speeds.

ENERGY LEVELS



MEDIUM



VERY LOW



VERY HIGH

Source: www.cliparts.co
www.dreamstime.com

Lesson 8: EXPRESSING AND DEALING WITH EMOTIONS

This lesson focuses on:

- Self regulation skills
- Emotional expression
- Recognizing feelings in self and others

8A: HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn to express how we are feeling.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Feeling shakers/maracas

Purpose:

- Learn to ask how someone else is feeling
- Practice talking about feelings

Leading Questions:

- How do you feel?
- What makes you feel that way?
- Do others feel the same way?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- One by one, go around the circle and have the children inquire about one another asking questions such as “How do you feel?” and “Why do you feel this way”
- If children are unable to express how they are feeling, you can ask the class to help you find out by describing their body posture and facial expression.
- Vary this activity by using shakers or maracas and paste the different feeling faces on them. Thus when asked how they feel, children will have to choose the corresponding shaker and tell the class how much they feel of this emotion: if they are very happy they can shake it really hard, and if they are just a little happy they can shake it very softly.
- Another possibility is to read social stories to the class and ask the children how they think the people in the stories feel.
- Note that you might not be able to ask every single child to explain why they feel a certain way.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If children cannot tell you how they are feeling, ask them specifically “do you feel sad?” or if you have a sense of how they are feeling, show them two feeling faces and pick the feeling they are feeling.
- Even if you do not intend to ask the children how happy, sad, etc. they feel, the feeling shakers might be helpful to assist children with autism in expressing how they feel.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How does it feel to be happy, mad, sad, etc.?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance while feeling happy, sad, mad, etc.

8B: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN...

Group Greeting

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn different ways to express our emotions in safe ways.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Help children release feelings in different ways
- Enhance sensitivity to emotional expressions of others

Leading Questions:

- What can you do when you feel sad or mad?
- What does it mean if someone is doing this movement?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Ask every other child to stand up and take two steps forward so that the group is divided into two.
- Explain that there are different things that we can do when we are mad or sad.
- Invite the children to stand in the middle of the circle think of something that made them sad and then make a shape to show “sad” with their bodies.
- Ask the children sitting on the outside of the circle what their peers could do to express their sadness or release it from their bodies. When a child responds, validate his/her idea, and have the “sad people” try out their suggestion. Keep

- asking the children to come up with more ideas until you have a few. Different possibilities for expressing sadness include crying, telling someone “I’m sad”, being alone, or asking somebody for a hug.
- After this, switch the groups and repeat the activity asking the children what they can do when they feel mad. Different possibilities include stomping your feet, throwing your arms in the air, crossing your arms in front of the body, running in place, blowing air out, or saying “I’m mad”.
 - After expressing each feeling, clarify that these are different safe things that they can do if they feel that way.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If you have children with autism who engage in vocal sounds; rigid, repetitive movements; or self-stimulatory behaviors this is a great opportunity to explore these different movements together with the class as a means to deal with certain emotions. Thus it might be helpful to rock back and forth to calm yourself when you are scared, or pace around when you are mad, or flap your hands when you are excited. Ask all the children to try it out and make it clear that when they see their friend performing this movement in the future, it might mean that he is feeling sad or happy, etc.
- Some children might not be able to stomp their feet, to walk it off, to scream, to jump, or say how they feel; make an effort to find out how they cope with different emotions or help them figure out a way. For example, instead of stomping with her feet, a child in a wheelchair might “stomp” her hands. Similarly, a child who can’t talk might use big arm movements if he feels like screaming.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we tell if we are about to get mad or sad?
- How can we express our feelings in a safe way?
- What can we do to help us calm down and feel better?

→ Help the children bring awareness to the body sensations related to different emotions. Make them understand that it is okay to feel sad or mad “inside” but it is not okay to act on it by hitting or hurting someone else. Make it clear that hurting others is never allowed. Advise students that telling someone they trust about what happened and how they feel is always a good thing to do and will make them feel better.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, labeling on different emotions,

8C: BODY MAPPING

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to draw what different feelings feel like in our bodies.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Copies of a body outline for all children

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of body sensations related to anger
- Express body sensations through art

Leading Questions:

- How do you feel when you are angry?
- Where do you feel the anger in your body?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to stand in a circle.
- Hand out the copies of the body outlines.
- Give the children a moment to think how their body feels when they are angry. Do they feel it in their tummies? Do they get tense shoulders? Does their throat feel tight?
- Ask them draw how their body feels when they are angry.
- Then repeat the activity with the other emotions the children have learned about.
- Go around assisting children with further questions or clarifications when needed. Make sure that everybody gets enough time to draw.
- Once everybody is done, and if time allows, ask some children to share their drawing and explain it to the class. Help them by describing what you see and asking them some guiding questions.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Note that this activity will take a great amount of time; especially if you decide to have the children draw all feelings.
- Invite the children tell you what to draw in case they cannot do it.
- Ask the children to describe what their anger feels like, where they feel it, what color it is, or if there are any images related to their anger in order to help them figure out how anger (and other emotions) feels in their body.
- If you have more time and wish to make this activity into a more fun and creative class project, you can use life-size body maps by having children draw each other's body contours on large pieces of parchment paper.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How does your anger, happiness, etc. feel like?
- Do your feelings have different colors?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, labeling on emotions.

8D: SELF-TALK

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn how we can talk to ourselves to help us calm down.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase repertoire of self-calming techniques
- Increase awareness of what you are saying to yourself every day

Leading Question:

- What can you tell yourself to calm down?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Explain that they can help themselves calm down and feel better when they are mad or sad by using the belly breaths that they learned or by doing the following exercise:
 - o Tell them that this exercise involves a technique called “self-talk” and that self-talk includes all the things that we say to ourselves out loud or in our heads every day. For example, when we are afraid we might tell ourselves “it’s okay, there is nothing to worry about” and that can help us feel better. In the same way, we can tell ourselves to calm down if we are feeling too many things in our body and have a hard time controlling it.
 - o Demonstrate and explain the exercise:
 - First sit on your shins and knees with your legs together and your hands in your laps.
 - Then imagine that you take all of your feelings, brush them off your body, and push them into the floor. Do this by coming on all fours and yielding your hands into the floor.
 - Maybe you have to push a couple of times until your feelings are all gone away. Do this by slowly rocking back and forth on all fours, repeatedly increasing the pressure in your arms and hands.
 - Then sit back on your shins and lift your arms up to the side and up and reach high for the calmness of the sky.

- Then bring the calmness down to your body by putting both hands on your head and telling yourself “I can calm down”.
- o Repeat this a couple of times with the children.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If a child has a speech disorder, he can either just tell himself in his mind “I can calm down” or you can ask a friend to help him by telling him “you can calm down” while he is performing the exercise.
- If a child is not able to perform the yield and push movement on all fours on the floor, modify the movement and have him yield and push into a wall when standing up or sitting. Another possibility is for a facilitator to act as counterbalance by having the child yield and push into the facilitator’s hands.
- If a child is not able to move her arms, put your hands slightly in front of her shoulders and have her yield and push into your hands with her torso. Then put your hands upon her head and apply some soft pressure while you or the child repeats the words “you can calm down”.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

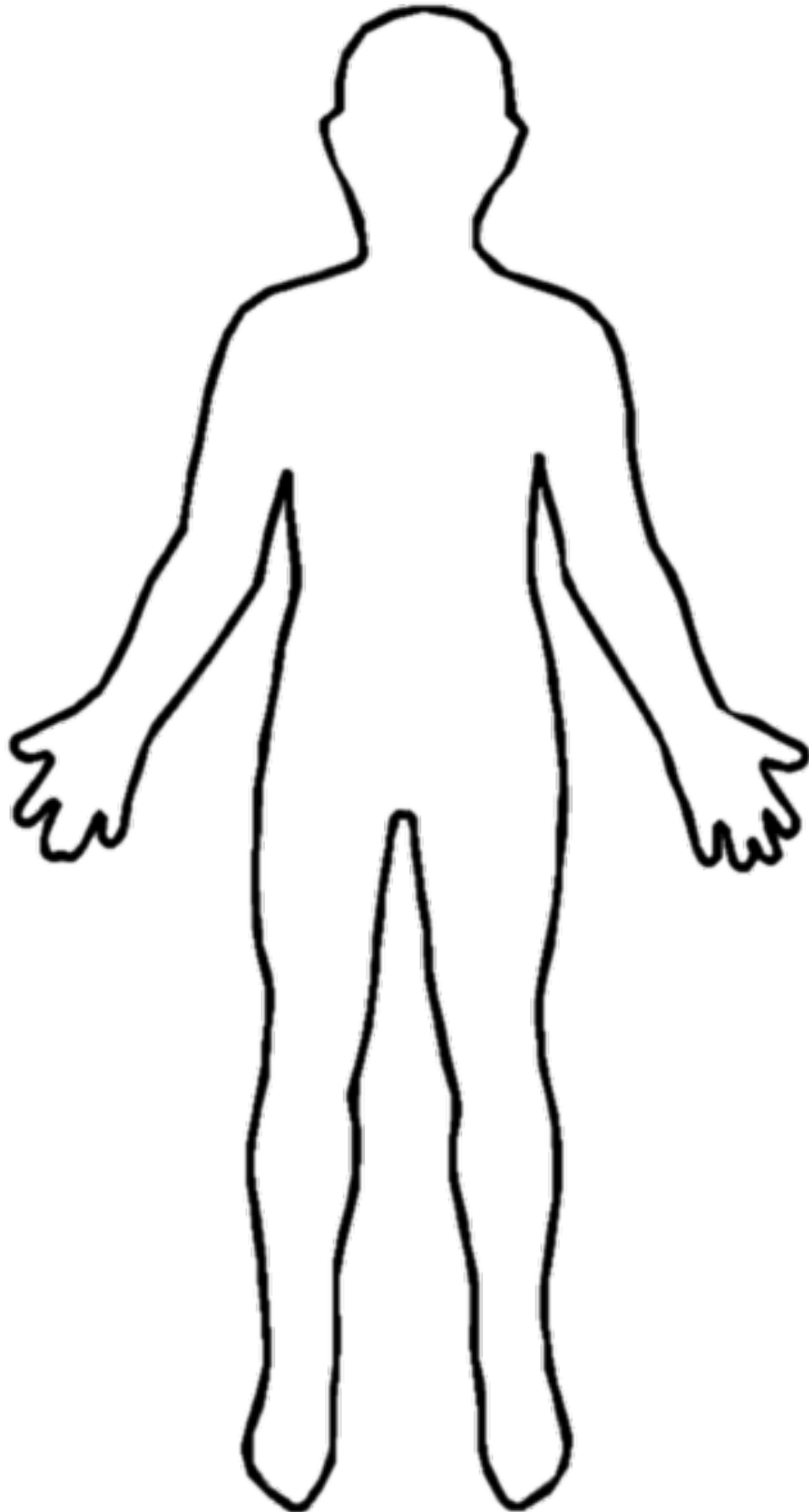
- What can we do to help us calm down and feel better?
- Review the different techniques learned so far: belly breaths, tension release, and self-talk.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance.

BODY MAP



Lesson 9: SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

This lesson focuses on:

- Social interactions
- Team building
- Empathy
- Giving and receiving compliments

9A: ROLL THE BALL

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we will learn how to get someone's attention and ask them questions about themselves.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Ball

Purpose:

- Increase social interaction
- Learn how to ask questions and tell something to a friend.

Leading Question:

- How can you get your friend's attention to roll the ball to him?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle and take out the ball.
- Start by inviting the children to roll the ball to each other. Before rolling the ball to somebody they have to say that person's name. This helps with teaching them the importance of getting someone's attention. Try this out for some time.
- Next there are two options which you can try:
 - o Tell the children that they get to ask the child they are rolling the ball to a question.
 - o Roll the ball without calling names and simply using eye contact. Before a child can roll a ball to another child, he/she has to make eye contact with that child, and can only roll the ball once that child is looking back at him/her.

Tips and Adaptations:

- You might have to tell some children who to roll the ball to. Make sure that the other child is looking at them and showing them with their body that they are ready to get the ball.
- If a child can't say someone's name, tell the child to clap and look at the person they want to roll the ball to.

- Children with physical disabilities might need some hands-over assistance or you can agree that this child is allowed to kick the ball with another body part to roll it to a friend. In this case, just go ahead and make a game out of it and see which body parts the children can come up with to use to roll the ball to a friend.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can we get someone's attention?
- How do we know if someone is ready to get the ball?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance. Perform it twice without holding hands and twice with holding hands.

9B: MIRRORING

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to explore what it is like to lead and follow someone.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase empathy
- Increase social interaction

Leading Questions:

- What is it like to be a leader?
- What is it like to be a follower?

Activity Description:

- Partner up the children.
- Decide who will be the leader and who will be the follower or the "mirror". Tell them that you will switch roles so that everybody gets to be a leader.
- Tell the leaders that they will start moving slowly and smoothly and instruct the "mirror" to closely watch the leaders and follow their movement without touching.
- Tell the followers that they should try and mirror the leaders' movements as closely as possible and tell the leaders that it is their responsibility to perform movements that the "mirror" can follow precisely.
- Start by having the leaders only move their upper body. Then switch roles.

- Switch back to the first leaders who can now move their upper and lower body. Then switch roles again.
- After the activity give the children 10 counts to sit back in the circle next to their partner.
- Discuss what it was like to be the leader and the follower and ask the children if they had a preference for either role.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If one of the partners requires sitting on the floor or on a chair, have the second partner do the same. Instruct children to be conscious to only move slowly and only in ways that their partner can move too. This will help them to increase awareness of and empathy for their friend.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- Do you prefer to be a follower or a leader?
- How does it feel to have someone mirror the movement you are doing?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance. Perform it twice without holding hands and twice with holding hands.

9C: BALLOON BOP

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to play balloon bop and learn to work as a team.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Balloon

Purpose:

- Increase team building and friendship skills
- Learn to anticipate and accommodate each other's actions

Leading Question:

- What can you do differently to help your friend get the balloon?

Activity Description:

- Split up the children into 4 teams and designate each a corner area of the room. Ideally there will be an adult with every team. If there are less than 4 adults, decrease the number of teams.
- Ask each team to form a circle and sit down on the floor.

- Give each team a balloon, and tell them that they are about to pass the balloon to each other and the balloon isn't allowed to touch the floor.
- The adult in the group participates and keeps count of how many times the group passes the balloon. When the balloon drops to the floor, the group has to start over. The group with the highest count wins the game.
- Before you start the game, have the children imagine that they have been glued to the floor and that they can only move their arms and upper body. Further instruct them that they have to be very quiet so they can hear the adult counting.
- As the children pass the balloon, try to use events that come up as teachable moments. For example, when somebody tosses the balloon and their friend does not get it and the balloon drops, ask the "tossers" what he/she could maybe do differently next time so that his/her friend gets the balloon. Similarly, if one child maybe keeps dropping the balloon and the rest of the group starts to get mad at him, ask the group what they could do to encourage and help their friend to be a better player. Maybe they can adjust their toss, or they can encourage him/her, and then compliment him/her the next time he/she gets the ball.
- Start this activity by sitting closely together with rather small space bubbles, and have the space between the students increase if you feel they are up to it.
- Before you end the activity, warn the children and give them a countdown of 10 counts for the last passes. When the time is over, have the children give the balloons to the adults and freeze.
- Ask the adults how their teams did and if they have any compliments to give to their team members.
- Go around and ask every team what their highest score was, and declare the winner.

Tips and Adaptations:

- Some children with physical disabilities might need hands-over assistance during this activity. If there is another body part other than their arms that they can use safely to bop the ball with, then you can allow them to do that. If this activity turns out to be too difficult, ask them to help the adult with the counting.
- Children with attention difficulties might need a verbal or physical prompt when the ball is heading their way.
- Ask the children to give compliments to their teammates.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- What does it mean to be a team player?
- How can we encourage and support each other?
- Why is it important to work as a team?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance. Perform it twice without holding hands and twice with holding hands.

Lesson 10: EMPATHY & ATTUNEMENT

This lesson focuses on:

- Empathy
- Attunement
- Friendship building

10A: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FRIEND?

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to explore what it means to be a friend and build a “friendship board”.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Large sheet of paper

Pen

Stickers

Purpose:

- Learn about the concept of friendship
- Learn about important qualities of a friend

Leading Question:

- What does it mean to be a friend?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to remain seated in a circle.
- Pass the ball around the circle, asking the children what it means to be a friend to someone and what qualities a friend should have. The person who has the ball has to share a thought or movement about friendship before passing the ball to the next person.
- Ask the children to brainstorm ideas and write them down on the sheet of paper to create a “friendship board”.
- Then, one by one, go around the circle and invite the children to share a shape or movement about friendship. Ask the rest of the class to mirror it. Then let the child pick a sticker to add to the friendship board so that the board will have a contribution of everyone.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If a child has a speech disorder, prepare some pictures about friendship that they can choose from and add to the friendship board.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- What is a friend?
- Why are friends important?
- How can you be a good friend?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, holding hands.

10B: HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to learn how to solve different problems that we may see or that might happen to us.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: none

Purpose:

- Learn to problem solve social situations in kind and positive ways
- Teach children how to identify with and understand another person's feelings (empathy)

Leading Questions:

- What is happening?
- How do you think the different people are feeling?
- How can you help?

Activity Description:

- Invite the teachers to role play the following scenarios:
 - o Excluding someone from playing with them
 - o Someone hurting him/herself
 - o Someone breaking his/her toy
 - o Someone says something mean to someone else
 - o Someone breaks another person's toy
 - o Someone hits somebody else
 - o Someone is being made fun of
- For all the scenarios, proceed through the following steps:
 - Describe the situation: Ask the children what they think is happening and have them explain the situation.
 - Describe the feelings: Ask them to try and identify the feelings of the people involved. See if they can explain why they think that

person is feeling that way. Encourage them to look at the people's body language and/or think how they would feel if they were in their position.

- Brainstorm: Ask the children what they could do to make the person feel better or what they could do if they were in that situation themselves.
- Demonstrate: Once the children come up with possible solutions have them demonstrate how they would go about them and/or have them role-play it in small groups for the class to see.
- Make sure to give children a break in between the scenarios. For a minute have them perform one of the following:
 - o Shake out their bodies and dance in place
 - o Take some belly breaths on their back
 - o Stretch their bodies
 - o Take some "bee-breaths" by taking a regular big breath in and then creating a humming sound when exhaling the air.
- If time allows, ask the children if they recently experienced any similar situations like the ones that were just role-played, or ask the teachers about anything that might have come up in the classroom.

Tips and Adaptations:

- In this activity it is essential that you make it clear that, no matter his or her needs and disabilities, every child can help. For example, a child might not be able to physically stop another child from hitting someone, but he can still call for help or tell a teacher. Make sure to figure out ways of how everybody can help in different situations. Knowing that they can help will not only empower children, but it also instills a certain responsibility to act when a situation arises.

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance, holding hands.

10C: OBSTACLE COURSE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today we are going to work in teams and help each other move through an obstacle course.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.

Props: Scarves or ropes

Material to build an obstacle course (which might include slaloms, tunnels, and bars to step over)

Purpose:

- Learn how to cooperate with a partner
- Increase problem solving skills

Leading Questions:

- Did you have any problems with your partner?
- How did you fix this problem?

Activity Description:

- Say “go” and give the children 5 counts to get up and find a place at a designated wall.
- Set up the obstacle course.
- Demonstrate how to move through the obstacle course.
- Ask the children to form a line and have them move through the course one by one. A person can only start when given a “go” by an adult at the starting point. When finished, have the children return to the back of the line.
- Invite the children to move through the obstacle course 2 times. Accommodate the course or itinerary according to the children’s needs.
- After this, partner up the children with someone they have not yet worked with. Invite them to move through the course with their partner, holding hands.
- After this, tie up the partners by tying up one of their feet. Before you let them move through the obstacle course, tell them that they have to be very careful and should go slowly and respect their partner. There should be no falling, pulling, or pushing.
- Let the children move through the course 2-3 times depending on time.
- Ask the children to stand back by the wall and have the teacher help them untie their feet as you put the obstacles away.
- Say “go” and give the children 10 counts to move back into a circle and sit down.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If you have a child with a wheelchair, simplify the course so that he can participate as well. Thus you might only put up cones and omit tunnels or bars.
- When pairing up with a partner, his partner can either push him through the course or, if it is safe, the partner can sit on his lap and a facilitator can guide them through the course.
- If a child has visual impairments, instruct her partner to help her by verbally guiding her through the course, i.e. “there is a cone in front of us and we have to go around left”, “there is a bar we need to step over”, “we have to kneel down and crawl through a tunnel”.
- If some children cannot be tied up by their foot or you find it to be too risky, tie them by their wrists or just instruct to help each other through the obstacles.

Discussion

Time needed: 5 min.

- How can you work together to solve problems?

Closure:

Time needed: 5 min.
Perform the Rainbow Dance, holding hands.

10D: CIRCLE MIRRORS**Group Greeting Ritual**

Time needed: 5 min.
Explain: Today we are going to mirror each other's movement as a whole group.

Main Activity

Time needed: 15 min.
Props: none

Purpose:

- Increase awareness of others
- Increase acceptance among the students

Leading Questions:

- How does it feel to be a leader?
- How does it feel to be a follower?

Activity Description:

- Ask the children to stand in a circle with medium to large space bubbles.
- Start with a simple repetitive movement that the children can mirror.
- Then go around the circle giving the children the chance to come up with a repetitive continuous movement themselves and feel what it is like to be a leader to the class.

Tips and Adaptations:

- If one of the partners requires sitting on the floor or on a chair, have all the children do the same. If a child can only move here right arm, have the children only use their right arm when coming up with a movement. This might increase the difficulty of the activity, but also make it more fun and everybody can be included.

Discussion:

- Time needed: 5 min.
- How does it feel to have everyone do your movement with you?
 - How does it feel to move together?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.
Perform the Rainbow Dance, holding hands..

10D: CLOSURE

Group Greeting Ritual

Time needed: 5 min.

Explain: Today is our last group together and we are going to say goodbye to each other.

Main Activity

Time needed: 20 min.

Props: none

Discussion Topics:

- What have you learned about each other?
- This is our last time together. What was your favorite part?
- What is something that you learned about yourself?

Activity Description:

- Seated in the circle, discuss with the children what they learned today.
- Explain to them that this is your last group together and ask them what they liked best about your time together.
- Children should be encouraged to share something new they learned about their friends or give them compliments.
- Invite them to share their feelings about this program coming to an end.
- Every contribution to the discussion is welcomed whether it's words, signs, sounds, movements, gestures, smiles, or hugs.

Discussion

- What is empathy? How can we know how someone else is feeling?
- How can we build a friendship with somebody else?
- How do you feel about our time together coming to an end?

Closure

Time needed: 5 min.

Perform the Rainbow Dance one last time holding hands.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The goal of this project was to solely develop a movement-based curriculum, not to implement or evaluate it. While the implementation and evaluation of UBU will definitely be part of future studies, I cannot, at this point, talk about the program's outcomes or success. However, the following is a discussion about some limitations that the program has, factors that should be accounted for when implementing the program, and possible methodologies and methods for evaluating the program once it will be implemented.

Implementation and Limitations

Ideally, the program would be implemented in an inclusive public school pre-school classroom counting up to 20 students with and without special needs. As the program does not follow a strict structure, the curriculum can be adapted and implemented according to the teachers wishes: all lessons can be taught or only a few, some can be repeated and others can be skipped, they can be taught once a week or used everyday.

A first potential limitation of the program, and the use of a logic model in its design, is that the program currently only represents an intention and not a reality. Though most of the activities have been taught and tried out in some form or another with different populations, they were implemented independently and out of the context of this program. Thus, at this point, though they are grounded in theory and research, the overall workings and goals of the program remain theories, which can only be fully tested once the program is implemented and evaluated.

An additional limitation of the program itself is that only accredited dance/movement therapists can implement it. This has the disadvantage that the school needs to hire such a

person, rather than just having one of its teachers implement the program in his or her class. The advantage, though, is that the hired dance/movement therapist will bring with her/him a new perspective and all the necessary skills and training needed to implement the program and thus no thorough teacher trainings or workshops will be needed. Further, only having dance/movement therapists teach the program substantially increases implementation fidelity as these therapists have all gone through similar education and training programs. The implementation fidelity is further enhanced by clearly identified objectives, detailed activity descriptions, as well as specific discussion questions for processing.

When developing the program the best was done to not only allot each activity with the necessary time to execute and discuss it, but possible situations that might arise were also factored in. It is impossible to foresee what exactly will happen during the lessons and how the different children will react and thus unexpected and unintended problems may arise at any moment and affect the progression of the curriculum. With this in mind, though the program was developed to be as flexible and adaptable as possible, teachers should be ready to make the necessary arrangements and take the needed measures to accommodate such possible contingencies.

Another limitation of the program is its generalized objectives and goals. While they certainly fulfill their main function of emphasizing the main values of the program and the social-emotional developmental aspects it seeks to further, these goals are not geared towards the specific individual needs of every single student. Some children might already possess the targeted skills, while others will need more than this curriculum to eventually learn those skills. This is not to say that this program will leave them

unaffected; on the contrary, it will support them in their learning and their journey to reach their fullest potential, but it is important to keep realistic expectations despite the set goals.

In this sense, it is crucial to keep in mind that even though it is the program's intent to conclude in success for all students, it simply might not work for everybody. The truth is that every child is unique in his/her expression, development, and learning process, and thus what might work for one, does not necessarily work for another. Even though the program was designed with the awareness of the different level of abilities and special needs of the children, it is impossible to create a classroom program that is tailored and adjusted to every individual child. Nevertheless, or actually because of this, the introduction of the program offers different frameworks, advices, and tips on how to support and work with children using different perspectives, approaches, and ways of thinking. Additionally, the curriculum itself also offers possible adaptations of exercises in order to accommodate the children's needs. Yet, surely other changes will need to be made, and in addressing such modifications the teachers and implementers should work as an interdisciplinary team.

With this in mind, this program should not be considered as a means-to-an-end or an outcome-based model of social-emotional education. To view it as such will only increase the educational pressure children are already facing. Instead, just like education, the program operates on the notion that learning is a process and not a product. And thus, though it is my wish to see all children thrive and reach the goals, the focus should remain on the learning experiences of the children and on the validation of such. While the program's success surely relies on this, the children's success in the program should

not rely on whether or not they have reached all the goals at the end, but simply on the fact that they progressed.

Still, for reasons of validity and effectiveness, it is important to evaluate the outcomes of the program in order to ensure that the program does indeed teach what it claims and is successful in doing so.

Evaluation

In a first run, an outcome evaluation would probably be the most appropriate in order to determine if the program is actually successful in reaching the goals and effecting the changes it intends to (Flannery, 1998; Tutty, 2002).

Having teachers complete pre- and post-program ratings of their students' social emotional and problem behaviors would certainly be a first step to be considered to evaluate whether the program had a positive effect on children's behaviors (Cruz, 2004). However, if this were the only data being used to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum, issues of subjectivity would quickly arise. Thus, to increase the objectivity of the ratings and reported changes, parents could also be asked to complete pre- and post-observation forms. Comparing the evaluations of the teachers and parents could also further generate some information about whether or not children's behaviors changed across different settings. Additionally, another way to determine if the program is working is to see whether there exists a positive correlation between the length of the program or lessons taught and an increase in positive behaviors in students.

Still, even with this step, the curriculum evaluation would continue to face the challenge of causal attribution (Cruz & Koch, 2014). In other words, even if positive changes were observed, the curriculum is only one of the many factors that could have

influenced such outcome. The program is set in a multivariate environment and at a time where children develop rapidly and learn new skills everyday. Thus, to attribute observed changes to only the curriculum would be presumptuous.

One way of clarifying if the program did in fact play a role in observed positive outcomes would be through a randomized controlled trial where some students of the class will be assigned to partake in the curriculum whereas others do not (Cruz, 2004). However, since the focus of the curriculum is on furthering inclusion among all students of the classroom, such an experimental practice would contradict the essence of the program and is thus contraindicated.

Another, better setup would be to work with two classrooms at a time, with one classroom implementing the program and the other one serving as a control group (Cruz, 2004). Thus, at the end, findings of teacher and parent evaluations could be compared and contrasted, and the role of the curriculum clarified. Additionally, incident reports of the classroom that received the curriculum and those that did not could also be taken into account for evaluation at that point. Other resources that could be used for evaluation could include random classroom observations during the time the program is implemented and/or qualitative data from the children, such as artwork or interviews (Koshland, 2003).

In the end, using a multi-method evaluation approach including quantitative and qualitative data, as well as a control group, is one of the best ways to determine the effectiveness of the program (Cruz, 2004). Once the program's outcome has been evaluated and the program deemed effective, valid, and successful, a next step could eventually be a process or monitoring evaluation in order to assess the process of the

program and evaluate how the program works, why it works, and for whom it works best (Tutty, 2002).

Future Ideas

Once the program is successfully evaluated, possible future ideas include extending the program to encompass more lessons, adapting the program to other grades and ages, or translating it into different languages and cultural settings to make it more accessible internationally. If proven to be beneficial, and if there would be a demand for the program in places where no dance/movement therapists would be available to implement it, the program could eventually be adapted to be taught by classroom teachers as well. In that case, teacher trainings would definitely need to be developed.

Lastly and most importantly though, it is my hope that this program encourages educators and related professionals to incorporate more expressive movement-based practices when working with children of all ages and abilities. I hope that the body will be recognized for the incredible value that it has in learning and relating, and that it will no longer be seen as disconnected from the mind. Ultimately, I hope that this program helps children and adults alike to build new relationships with people that might seem different from them, and realize that we ultimately all share the basic needs and desires: to be understood, to connect, and to belong – to be unique, but united.

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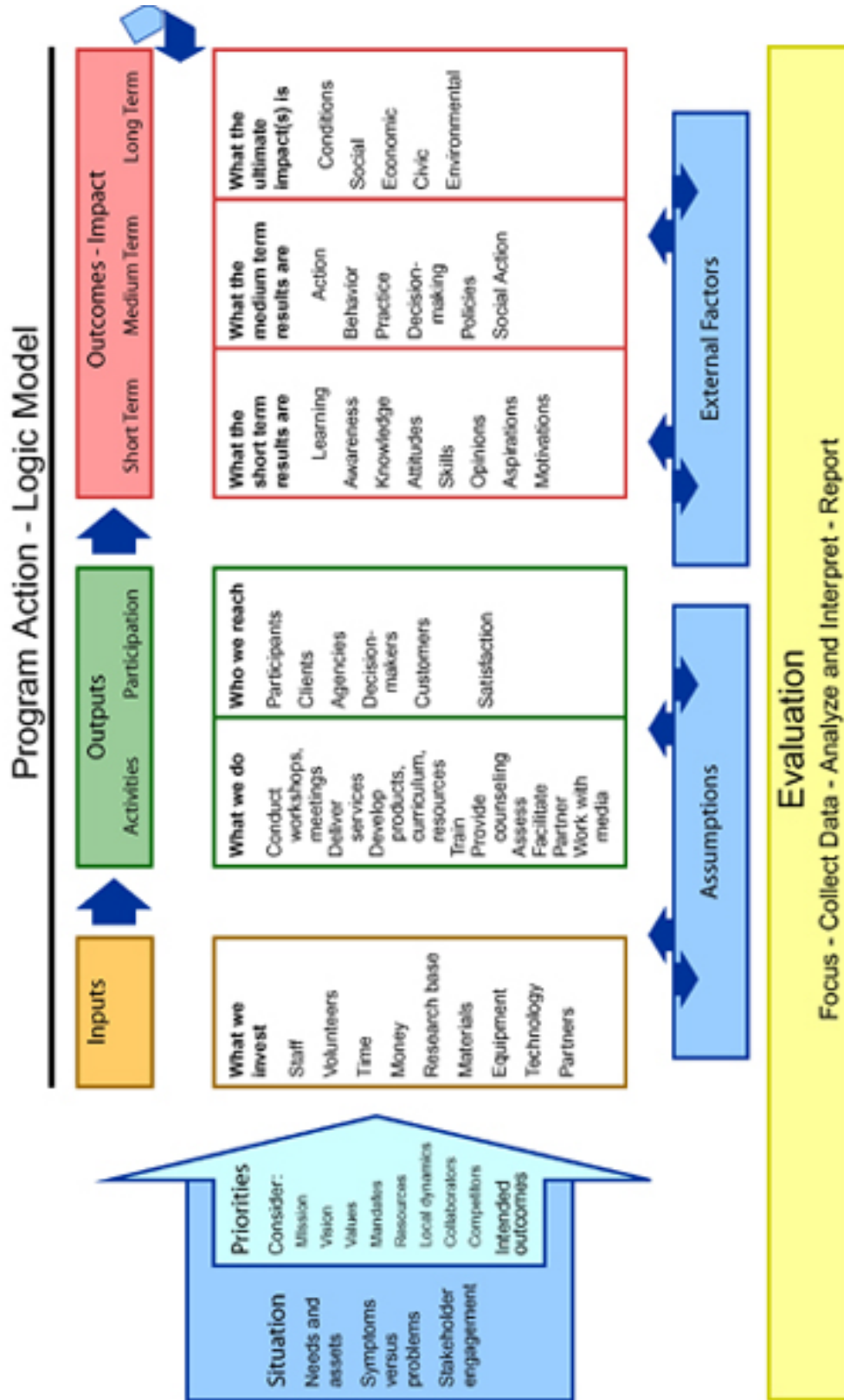
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Appendix A



Appendix B

Consultant Contract
Julie Schadeck
Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling
Columbia College Chicago

This contract agreement is entered into this _____ day of _____ 20 ____, by
and between:

_____ (Consultant) and
_____ (Developer) for the project
entitled _____
for the purpose of a master's thesis from Columbia College Chicago.

It is your role as a consultant to provide opinions for the purpose of a program development. You will be invited to meet with the developer a maximum of two times for a 20 to 30 minutes long interview which will be electronically recorded and transcribed. You will have no rights to the program itself.

It is my role as the developer to conduct and record semi-structured interviews. I will be the primary author of the program and will retain the sole rights to the program.

Confidentiality:

The author will not at any time divulge information to any third party and will protect such information as confidential.

Termination:

- Performance under this agreement may be terminated at any time.
- This contract may be terminated if circumstances are beyond its control.

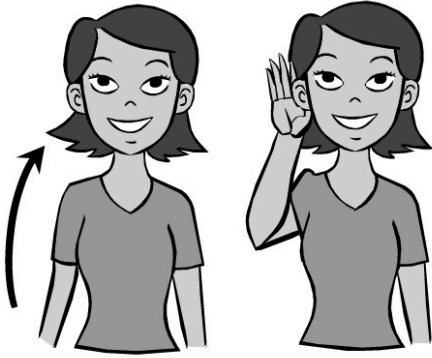
Signature of Consultant: _____

Date: _____

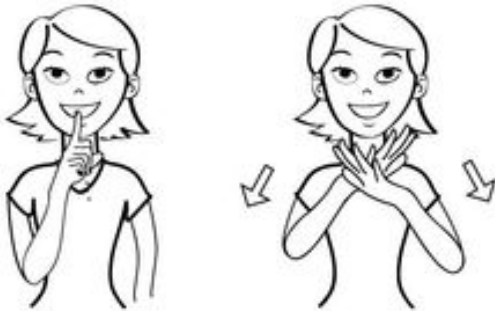
Signature of Developer: _____

Date: _____

Signs to communicate in class"



LISTEN



QUIET



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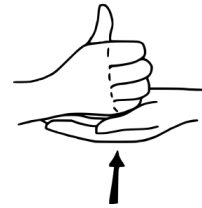
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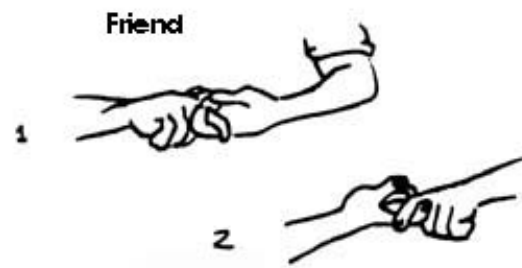
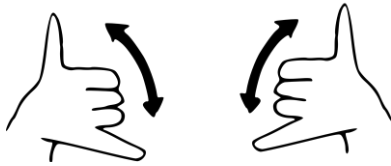
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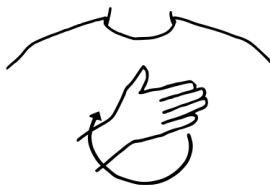
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play



please



thank you

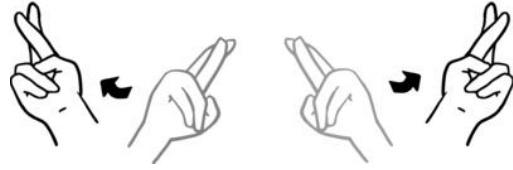


sorry

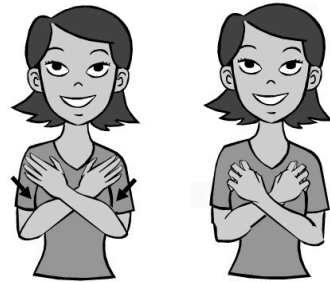
want



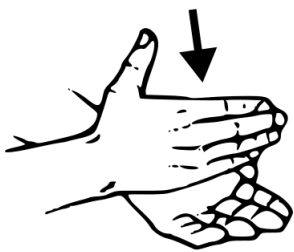
ready



again

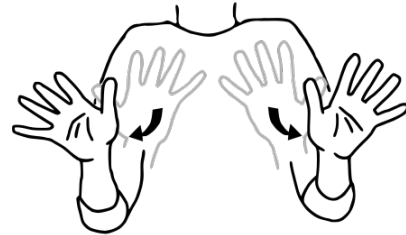


hug



stop

finished



FEELING SIGNS



HAPPY



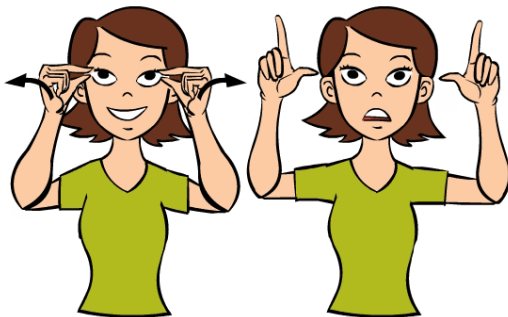
SAD



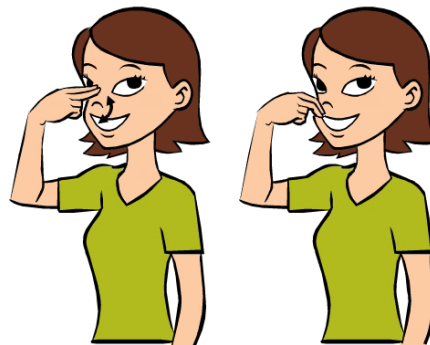
MAD



SCARED



SURPRISED



SILLY

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