



Exercise Your Creativity

by Rae Pica

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Children need to move! Not just for the sake of their physical selves, but also for social, emotional, and cognitive development. You can promote your child's fitness, self-confidence, learning, and much more—without specialized knowledge, fancy equipment, or money. All you have to do is dance!



Here are four great reasons why you and your child should spend time dancing together.

- 1. DANCING PROMOTES CREATIVITY.** Self-expression and divergent thinking (coming up with different possibilities) are major components of creativity, and dancing encourages both. Early childhood is the best period for the development of creativity, and creative problem solving will serve your child for life.
- 2. DANCING STRENGTHENS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** How children feel about other people and the way they express their feelings is a big part of social/emotional development. When your child experiences the joy of dancing, he learns about expressing himself and communicating with the world around him.
- 3. CHILDREN ARE ACTIVE LEARNERS.** When a child moves over, under, around, through, beside, and near objects and others, or takes on high, low, wide, and narrow body shapes, she'll have a greater understanding of these concepts. This is one way that literacy and numeracy are promoted in early childhood.
- 4. DANCING PROMOTES FITNESS.** Cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, and body composition—the five health-related fitness factors—are all developed when your child dances.



Ready to get started? Make a game out of it. Put on a piece of music, inviting "players" to move in whatever way they want until the music stops (you press the pause button). Everyone freezes into a statue until the music starts again. Every time you play, use a piece of music with a different "feel" to it!



RAE PICA is a children's physical activity specialist and the author of 18 books for teachers and parents. Hear her interviews with experts in the fields of education, child development, the neurosciences, and more online at BAM! Radio Network.

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