

Introduction: movement in kindergarten life

From our earliest days in the womb right through our lives, physical activity, or movement, is critical to our wellbeing; such is the human make up. Before modern conveniences "eased" our survival load, the movement we needed for our wellbeing and our learning was a natural part of everyday life. Lifting, bending, hauling, digging, walking long distances, chasing, riding horses, chopping - all these were a given. Today, our bodies and minds are still driven by ancient needs and still follow ancient scripts; therefore, if we are to realize our potential - integrating body, heart, and mind - we must make a conscious effort to bring meaningful movement back into our lives.

For children this is even more important. We have all seen the child who does not get enough activity go stir crazy. We intuitively know that the whining or fighting or jumping off the furniture is a cry to get out for some real movement. But it is also far more than that. During childhood - the time when growth is at its peak - learning takes place first and foremost through activity. Beginning with the first aimless batting of the newborn, on a physiological level the child is building the actual structures of his brain through movement. As Maria Montessori describes it, "The child learns all he will ever know, *first* through his senses." Movement is the first of these senses; it is the ground of all learning.

Understanding movement to be our base, we turn our focus to structuring meaningful and productive movement into our days with the children. This *Learning Through Movement* collection is designed to help with just that. To begin with, it is important to identify what kinds of movement are most conducive to wellbeing and to learning. In the Enki approach we work with four types of movement to meet different goals: group forming; nourishing and engaging the physical body; sensory and neurological integration; and expression and instruction through movement.

We will explore these in some depth below but, before focusing on specifics, it is important to realize that if any particular approach is to be effective it must work well within the structure or fabric of our days. In schools this is relatively easy to accomplish because the entire structure of the day is built around the children. The children usually come in full of energy and eager to connect with one another. How the rest of the day's undertakings unfold will depend a lot on meeting these needs. Beginning the day with an active and musical morning circle can do just this and fits well into the flow of the day.

For families, however, the day is far longer and is structured differently. This structure must meet the many needs of keeping family life flowing, and the demands of very different ages. For some families, beginning the day with a movement circle - just as you would in a school - will help to bring the family together and ground everyone in the health of their physical bodies. For these families, a morning circle will be an important part of home life. **For others, beginning the day with a morning circle would add undue strain and irritation, driving the family members apart rather than bringing them together.** For them, circle would be an overlay which would set them off on a day of battles and unhappiness! For these families we look at ways to integrate the movement work into the normal flow of family life. This is explored at length in the *Enki Homeschool Teacher's Guides* and, briefly, in the following section.

Sample Activity Sheet

BUTTERFLY (P/NR)

Version 1 (prose)

	<i>Begin sitting with legs, arms and</i>
	<i>head all curled in.</i>
Waken sleeping butterfly	<i>Open and close arms and legs in</i>
Spread your wings so wide.	<i>the air through out verse.</i>
back and forth and in and out	
till fairy dew has dried.	
Then off you ride upon the wind.	<i>Flip onto belly with arms and legs</i>
Across the sky you glide.	<i>stretched out and up but not</i>
When sun begins the dance of dusk	<i>pumping.</i>
You curl your wings inside.	<i>Back to starting position.</i>

REPEAT 2 or 3 times

Version 2 (song).

Begin sitting but curled in and opening, balanced on tail with arms and legs opening and closing suspended from floor:



Wa - ken slee - ping but - ter - fly. Burst your ti - ny dark pri - son.



Spread your gol - den wings and fly, for the sun has ri - sen.