

Let's Get Grounded

Dancing Developmental Patterns

Artist/Author: West Liberty



Time Needed: 5-10 minutes

Arts Focus: Dance

Age Range: 3-8

Mini-Lesson Description:

In this mini-lesson, caregiver and child will use rhyming song and dance movements to dance through each developmental pattern of the BrainDance (created by Anne Green Gilbert). This will help the child focus on their breath and body sensations and activate every part of the brain!

Key Concepts:

Moving the Body; Singing Together; Noticing our Breath; Pattern; Sensations.

Materials Needed/Prep:

- About a yoga mat's worth of space (or more space if you have it!)

Step-by-Step:

1. Explain: Today we are going to use some images and songs to move our bodies in different ways, and focus on our breath and the way our bodies feel. Our bodies have a lot to tell us! You can share with the learner(s) that they need to listen to their body to get information about what they need, like if they are hungry or thirsty. This exercise is a fun way to practice feeling our bodies.
2. Use the following prompts to guide the learner(s) through the developmental patterns of the BrainDance:
 - **Breath:** use your fingers as birthday candles and blow the candles out! (open hands for candles, close your fists to blow them out.)
 - **Tactile:** Starting at the top of your head, tap your body with your hands all the way down to your feet and back up again (optional song: Itsy Bitsy Spider)
 - **Core-Distal:** Open your arms and legs out wide like a starfish, then close them up tight like a little ball.
 - **Head-Tail:** Wag your tail like a puppy dog! Then wiggle your head around like a snake!
 - **Upper-Lower:** Reach your hands up high and touch the sky! Now down low and touch the floor. Now switch! Reach your FEET up high and touch the sky, then FEET down low to touch the floor!
 - **Body Side:** Wiggle your right hand and right foot while balancing on your left foot! Now switch sides!
 - **Cross Lateral:** Touch your right hand to left your foot! Now touch your left hand to your right foot! Now try touching opposite shoulders. How about ears? (Optional Song: Hot Cross Buns)
 - **Vestibular:** Spin around in a circle! Don't get too dizzy!

Variations and Next Steps:

- Feel free to pick and choose from the patterns. You don't need to get all the way through each one. If your learner(s) loses interest that's okay. You can try a few more patterns tomorrow.
- Take out balancing for the Body Side step and try the whole thing sitting or lying down.
- You can modify the movements to make them simpler or you can assist the learner(s) in doing some of the movements. For example, you could hold out your hands for the Breath step and the learner(s) can blow on your hands.

Watch a video of this Creative Start Mini-Lesson and find more at: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/creative-start/>