

## SPEED AND BODY PARTS FOR TODDLERS

### Ages: Walking to 2 1/2 with caregiver

You may use this lesson format with any concept. Find simple activities in the concept chapters, and substitute them for the activities that follow. Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

### Length

30 to 60 minutes

### Warming Up

For more information, see Warming Up in chapter 4.

**Quick Warm-Up (optional for a 30-minute lesson):** Dancers hold a small scarf in each hand. Alternate dancing through general space while changing speed with dancing in self-space while moving isolated body parts. Cue changes in speed and body parts. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #18.

**BrainDance:** Perform the BrainDance seated with rhymes as accompaniment. Focus on changing tempo. Caregivers help toddlers with movements through voice and manipulation. *Suggested music:* BrainDance Music, #17-26, spoken rhymes, and simple songs or cues.

**Introducing the Concept:** *Speed—fast, medium, slow; Body parts—head, shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, hips, legs, knees, feet.* Direct caregivers to view the concepts posted on the wall, and remind them to say the words aloud to toddlers as they are dancing together.

### Exploring the Concept

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities. For a 60-minute lesson, choose two or three activities.

#### Exploring the Concept

Caregivers respond to the tempo of the music and encourage toddlers to follow their lead. Suggest various movements as the music plays—big, slow steps; little, fast steps; walking backward; crawling; walking sideways; stretching slowly; or wiggling quickly. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #1.

#### Shaping: Blanket Shapes

Caregiver and toddler make a shape together under a large piece of fabric (sheet or tablecloth). You pull off the sheet and the other caregiver–toddler pairs copy the special shape that was made under the sheet. Caregivers might be instructed to focus on a certain body part—arm shape, leg shape, back shape, and so on. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #10.

#### Waltzing

Caregiver waltzes with toddler, holding the toddler or holding hands with the toddler. Waltzing together is excellent for bonding and vestibular stimulation. Cue directions—waltzing side to side, forward and backward, and up and down. Vary speed of movement and vary ways of holding the toddler. Add stillness for fun. Add body parts—two couples come together and go apart (for socialization and eye tracking) so that toddlers touch body parts together—shoulders, feet, backs, hands, and so on. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #3.

#### Relaxation and Alignment

May be included in a 60-minute lesson. For more information, refer to Cooling Down in chapter 4. Caregiver and toddler rest together or caregivers rest while toddlers quietly socialize or sit with their teacher. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #17.

### Developing Skills

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities. For a 60-minute lesson, choose two or three activities.

#### Instruments

1. Place rhythm instruments in a pile in the center of the room. Caregivers, who are seated on the floor, play rhythm instruments, keeping a steady pulse. Toddlers explore instruments. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #2.
2. Place rhythm instruments in a pile in the center of the room. Caregivers play instruments while moving through general space. When music pauses, they freeze. Cue changes in speed and locomotor movements. Toddlers may move with caregivers or continue to explore instruments while sitting. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #4.

(continued)

### **Developing Skills**

Caregivers and toddlers perform a simple circle dance. Encourage everyone to hold hands, placing toddlers between caregivers. Caregivers may hold toddlers in their arms if necessary. “Come slowly together during very slow music and connect hands, then feet, and so on until the 4/4-meter music begins. Then walk 16 counts away from center, walk 16 counts to the left, walk 16 counts to the right, clap hands 8 times for 16 counts, turn around 16 counts, and hold a shape 16 counts.” Pairs repeat the dance beginning with the slow section. Instructions for many circle dances are in *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (Gilbert, 2006). *Suggested music: MCD Vol. 4, #6.*

### **Obstacle Course**

Create a circular obstacle course with objects on hand such as cones (or milk cartons), spots, hoops, benches, and tunnels. Toddlers move clockwise and counterclockwise around the course with the assistance of caregivers. *Suggested music: MCD Vol. 4, #9.*

## **Creating**

### **Improvisation**

Caregivers pull toddlers carefully on big pieces of fabric (old sheets or tablecloths) responding to the tempo of the music. You may assist caregivers in swinging toddlers in the fabric like a hammock. *Suggested music: MCD Vol. 4, #1.*

*Option:* Toddlers sit on a parachute as caregivers turn it around and shake it. Caregivers lift up the chute as toddlers move under it. Caregivers and toddlers lift the chute and get under it and sit down together like inside a tent.

### **Cooling Down**

For more information, refer to Cooling Down in chapter 4.

Toddlers receive nontoxic ink stamps on hands and feet.