

ENERGY FOR BABIES AND CAREGIVERS

Ages: 2 months to prewalking

Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

Length

45 to 60 minutes

Warming Up

For more information, refer to Warming Up in chapter 4.

Quick Warm-Up: “Waltz in self-space and general space holding the baby in different positions. Swing, sway, and turn with smooth energy, swingy energy, and gentle sharp energy (move and stop). At times, hold the baby in stillness for 8 to 16 counts.” *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #6.

BrainDance: Caregiver moves baby gently through simple exercises stretching, bending, and circling baby’s arms and legs unilaterally, bilaterally, and cross-laterally. Exercises are done with baby on its back, side, and abdomen. *Suggested music:* *BrainDance Music*, #17-26, or caregiver may recite nursery rhymes.

Exploring the Concept

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Caregiver–baby couples partner with another couple. One couple is leader 1 and the other is leader 2. Leader 1 moves through space responding to the energy in the music with sharp, smooth, swingy, or bouncy movements. Leader 2 follows (copies) leader 1’s movements with baby through space. When the music changes, leader 1 follows leader 2. On the third section of the music, the couples dance away to find a new couple. Couples decide who is leader 1 and who is leader 2, and the dance continues. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #21.

Instruments

1. Each caregiver places a baby on the floor prone or supine. Caregiver plays instruments in front of, above, and to the side of the baby and gently taps the baby. Have them keep a steady pulse, but change the tempo—slow, medium, and fast. Babies may hold instruments and mouth

instruments. Make sure you have baby-safe instruments (BPA-free plastic rhythm sticks, enclosed bells, and small, sturdy rattles or shakers). *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #2.

2. Babies sit on caregivers’ laps. Caregivers gently bounce them up and down, rock them side to side, or bounce them in an uneven gait as responses to variations in the music. Caregivers and babies continue to play or hold instruments. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #3.

Developing Skills

Adult BrainDance (Optional for a 45-Minute Class)

Caregivers perform the BrainDance (chapter 4) sitting on the floor next to babies. Babies continue to play with instruments and each other. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #13-19.

16 Counts

Caregivers hold babies while performing a simple circle dance with changes in energy. “Stomp 16 counts forward (coming together to meet in the middle), sway 16 counts smoothly in the middle, hold still during the *shhh* sound. Bounce 16 counts backward (away), wiggle-jiggle 16 counts, hold still during the *shhh* sound, turn with baby to the left 16 counts, turn to the right 16 counts, hold still during the *shhh* sound.” Repeat the sequence until the music ends. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #9.

Creating

Sensory Play

Caregivers pull babies *carefully* on big pieces of cloth (old sheets or tablecloths) responding to the music: smoothly, a little bit sharply but gently, and a little bit wiggly but not too roughly. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #20.

Cooling Down

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

Relaxation: Caregivers lie quietly with babies, breathing deeply and slowly while stroking or gently massaging them. Caregivers might also feed babies or socialize.