

BABY DANCE CLASS LESSON PLAN FORMAT

Ages: 2 months to prewalking

Warming Up

Quick Warm-Up: Each caregiver waltzes with a baby while holding the baby in different positions. “Swing, sway, and turn forward and back, right and left, up and down. Pause in stillness. Relate to other couples.”

BrainDance: Caregiver moves baby through simple exercises, gently moving the baby’s arms then legs, right side then left side, and finally right arm then left leg and left arm then right leg. Recite nursery rhymes for accompaniment. Include circling, bending, twisting, and stretching. Exercises are done with the baby on its back, side, and front surfaces. If small therapy balls (about 12 in./30 cm in diameter) are available, each caregiver can sit the baby on the ball, grounding the pelvis, and bounce, circle, and gently tip the baby. The caregiver can place the baby prone (lying facedown) on the ball and roll the baby forward, backward, and around in a circular motion. Refer to *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (Gilbert, 2006) for rhymes to accompany movements.

Exploring the Concept

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Caregiver holds the baby and dances while exploring high and low movements, sharp and smooth movements, or fast and slow movements. Focus on a different dance concept each class.

Relating

Caregivers connect the baby’s body parts to another baby or sibling; mirror and shadow another baby-caregiver pair; dance together and dance away. Focus on the lesson’s dance concept.

Rhythm Instruments

Play one song focusing on similar sounds and pulse, such as all bells, then all sticks. Baby is lying on the

floor on front or back surfaces. Caregiver plays instruments in front of baby, above baby, and to the side to develop eye tracking and aural focus. Caregiver taps baby gently with instrument, keeping a steady beat with slow, medium, and fast tempo. Explore different meters: 3/4, 4/4, 2/4, 6/8. Play a second song with baby in caregiver’s lap while bouncing gently to 4/4 meter, sway and rock to 3/4 meter, bounce faster to 2/4 meter, and bounce in galloping fashion (uneven) to 6/8 meter.

Developing Skills

Adult BrainDance

Let babies play with instruments while you lead caregivers (sitting on the ground near babies) through a BrainDance (chapter 4).

Circle Dance

The class performs simple dances in a circle or opposing lines (contra dance). Caregivers move to the right and left, come together so babies can relate, go apart, and turn around. They try different movements such as marching, stomping, sliding, galloping, swaying, swinging, and bouncing. Instructions for circle dancers are in *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (Gilbert, 2006).

Creating

Sensory Activity

Caregivers play peekaboo with babies using big scarves; hammock babies in sheets or spandex material; pat, rub, tap babies gently in different ways; drag sheets or large scarves around the room with the baby lying on the fabric; roll balls to babies, bounce and roll babies on therapy balls; and practice crawling and creeping on the floor together.

Cooling Down

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