

**Pathway 2 Activities:**

*Before doing any Dance activities please ensure that yourself and your child are well hydrated, have not just eaten a meal, and that you do the “warm up” (below) to start every session.*

*It is important to note that during any Dance activities done at home, if you or your child at any point start to feel tired, dizzy, or unwell in any way that you stop the activity immediately and seek appropriate medical advice. Only push you bodies as far as you feel comfortable/safe, and be careful when handling/supporting your child physically throughout any of the activities.*

*Where possible, when taking part in dance activities yourself and your child should wear comfortable clothing (similar to what you would wear for sports activities), with no baggy clothes or jewellery that could cause yourself or your child to trip, get caught on or injured in any way. Dance can be done barefoot or in comfortable shoe wear such as trainers (sandals, flip-flops, heels or socks that could slip on the floor are not recommended).*

*All dance activities should be done in a clear, open space, free from anything that your child could trip over, or fall/bang into. You do not need a big room for your session, just enough space for yourself and your child to move on the spot or around in a small circle.*

Happy Dancing! 

**Warm up**

*Skills being developed: Physical preparation, awareness and control.*

Before starting any Dance activities it is important that you and your child to a warm up. This will warm up and wake up your body, ensuring that your muscles perform better and you are less likely to cause injury. This can be done to music or without.

Talk (and demonstrate) your child through the following:

1. To begin, stand still in a space and take a few controlled deep breaths.
2. Start by shaking your hands, then your arms, feet and legs.
3. Gently move different parts of the body one at a time:
* Head (side to side, up and down)
* Shoulders (shrug up and down, roll in circles)
* Arms (circular movements)
* Waist (rotate and twist)
* Hips (thrust, tilt and circle)
* Knees (bend and stretch)
* Feet (rotate at the ankles, up onto toes and down)
* Roll down the spine all the way down and up again slowly
1. 5 minutes of brisk movements including:
* Walking on the spot
* Star jumps
* Light jogging
* Lunges
1. 5 minutes of stretching including:
* Reaching arms upwards, outwards, in circles
* Bending knees up, forwards into a lunge and sideways
* Touching your toes

Don’t forget…

Help your child in whatever way they need, remind them it is ok to make mistakes, and reward their efforts with praise and positivity!

 

**Dance “\_\_\_\_ says”**

*Skills being developed: Attention, interpersonal, physical fitness and control.*

This game is similar to the traditional children’s game “Simon says”, but adapted to movement to music rather than simple actions.

The purpose is for your child to enjoy and explore dance and movement by following specific instructions (with demonstration) from yourself. Use whatever name your child uses for you, eg. “Mummy says/Daddy says/Grandma says” etc.

Choose a piece of music or song that your child will enjoy dancing to, but not distract them too much from the activity. Aim for a medium to fast paced song, although this can be done to slow music if you wish.

1. Tell your child that you will be playing a dance game. All they have to do is dance in the way that you call out, eg. if you say “swing your arms”, they must copy you and swing their arms to the music and keep doing it until a new instruction is called out. The aim is to keep moving, and dance how you tell them to.
2. Start the music and give them the first instruction by saying “Mummy says – bend your knees”, and start to bend your knees and straighten them over and over so that your child can see what you are asking of them.
3. Once your child has started to copy your movements and has done it a few times, give a new instruction “Mummy says – nod your head”, and start nodding your head to the music and encourage them to join in.
4. Continue on with the list of movement instructions until the song ends or until you feel as though your child has had enough. Start with the simpler movements, building up to more complicated ones.

Below are a list of suggested movement you can instruct your child to do:

Marching

Swaying

Hopping

Galloping

Skipping

Twisting

Shake your hands

Nod your head

Bend your knees

Roll your arms

Circle your arms

Clap your hands

On you tip toes

On your heels

Wriggle your arms

Point up and down

Shrug your shoulders

Like a boxer

Stuck in the mud

Jive hands

Like a robot

Ballet dancer

Kung fu

Macho man

Swimming

Skiing

Spinning

Balance

Hop scotch

Disco dance

Put your hat on

…any others you can think of!

Your child may need a lot of verbal support to begin with, and for some/all of the moves it might help them to hold their hand(s) to offer them physical support and to help them to stay focussed on the movements.

Variations – things to try:

* Once your child understands the game, why not swap roles and tell them to have a go at giving you the instructions. Encourage them to say their name eg. “Sam says…” at the start of each new movement.
* Try speeding up the game, changing quickly from one move to the next and see if they can keep up.
* Build their confidence by asking them for help. Eg. you could say “Mummy says – dance like a robot. Oh no, I don’t know how a robot moves, what do you think a robot would look like dancing?” and see if they can show you how it’s done.

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**Prop dances**

*Skills being developed: Physical fitness, creativity, musicality and communication.*

The purpose of this activity is to enjoy and explore dance and movement to music using props to aid your children in creating new shapes and movements. Props often also give children more confidence in dance as it gives them a point of focus and they can concentrate on making the prop move rather than their own bodies.

Prop list:

* Scarves/shawls
* Hula hoops
* Bells/rattles/shakers
* Tambourines
* Hats/caps
* Ribbons
* Dolls/teddy bears

Please ensure you use props that are appropriate for your individual child and that you can use safely.

1. Choose one type of prop from the list above. If possible, find TWO of each prop – one for yourself and one for your child, although the activity can still be done if you only have one of each item.
2. Choose a song/piece of music that your child enjoys and would be happy to dance to.
3. Give your child one of the props and explain that you are going to dance whilst holding onto and moving the object.
4. Start the music and begin to dance (any type of dance will do, and you DO NOT need to be a ‘good dancer’ – any form of movement will work.
5. As you dance, encourage your child to use the prop in their movements, demonstrating with your own prop if possible how this might be done. Eg “look at how I can spin with my scarf held out”, or “look how I shake my ribbon up and down to the music, why don’t you have a go”.

If needed, you can hold your hand(s) over your child’s hands to guide them in their movements and help them to use the prop as necessary.

Encourage your child to keep moving. Make your movements as free, creative, dynamic and confident as possible. Remember, this activity is about enjoyment and improvisation – it is not about being skilled in dance, and there is no right or wrong way to move.

Variations – things to try:

* If your child seems lost in the space, try moving in a circle to the music – using your prop as you go
* Stand across from one another, and ask your child to copy you as you dance.
* Ask your child to create movements using the prop that they will demonstrate and you will copy.
* Introduce some directional instructions to the activity, eg. ask your child to dance with their prop… down low / up high / in circles / forwards and back / side to side / up and down.
* Try creating a mini routine with the prop. Create a series of eg. 4 different movements that can be done with the prop and put them together in a sequence.

Eg. with a scarf:

Swing it in a circle 4 times, shake it over your toes for 4 counts, spin round in a circle holding it with your arm stretched out, and shake the scarf up and down holing it in both hands 4 times to finish.

Once the sequence has been created and practiced, try dancing it together a few times to the music.

Don’t forget…

Help your child in whatever way they need, remind them it is ok to make mistakes, and reward their efforts with praise and positivity!

**Musical freeze**

*Skills bring developed: Musicality, attention and listening, physical control, and improvisation.*

This game is all about listening to the music and responding to the concept of stop and start. It also teaches improvisation and invention with the whole body.

Choose a piece of music or song that your child will enjoy dancing to, but not distract them too much from the activity. Aim for a medium to fast paced song, although this can be done to slow music if you wish.

1. To begin, tell your child that you are playing a game about “freezing”. At first, there is only one rule - when the music is playing, your child must move/dance, whenever the music stops, they freeze (don’t move)
2. Demonstrate for them what it looks like to ‘freeze’. Explain that you go still like a statue, and don’t move at all like when you pause the tv. Practice ‘freezing’ with them.
3. Start the music and instruct your child to start dancing. Dance with them so they don’t feel self-conscious. After a short while, stop the music at the same time as saying “FREEZE!”, and encourage your child to freeze. You may have to physically assist them to stand still and not move their body as much as possible. Once they are still and calm, start the music again whilst saying “GO!”, and encourage them to start moving again along with you.
4. Repeat this a few times until the song has finished or your child has had enough.
5. Next, explain to your child that this time, when the music stops you are both going to “freeze in a pose”. This ‘pose’ can take any form. Depending on your child, it may be easier to simply let them improvise their own pose, or you might find it easier to give them a theme for their poses. This can help your child to create a pose more easily by directing their train of thought towards more specific ideas for poses.

Themes for poses could include:

* Silly face poses
* Model/catwalk/selfie poses
* Shapes (eg. create a square with your body)
* Familiar characters (eg. Spiderman, or a fireman)
* Animal poses
* Emotions (eg. a happy pose, and then a scared pose)
1. Practice a few poses together, and then start the music again and begin to dance. When the music stops, say “POSE” and freeze into a pose, encouraging your child to do the same.
2. Repeat this a few times until the song has finished or your child has had enough.

Don’t forget…

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**Dance routine**

*Skills being developed: Creativity, performance, physical confidence, attention and interpersonal.*

This exercise is about joining a series of movements together to create a sequence.

1. Choose a song that will motivate your child to take part.
2. Think of 4-8 dance moves that can be easily copied and done over and over, eg. step together side to side, bending and straightening your knees over and over with your feet apart in a bouce-like motion, circling your arms above your head, reaching your right arm up and then out to the side, then repeating on your left arm.
3. Explain to your child that you will be making up a dance routine.
4. Show them move no. 1 - step together side to side, and say “first we will do this 4 times”
5. Show them move no. 2 – bending and straightening your knees over and over with your feet apart in a bouce-like motion, and say “next, we will bounce 8 times”.
6. Next, say “let’s try them together”. Demonstrate for them step together side to side 4 times, and then bouncing your knees 8 times. Encourage them to join in and practice the 2 moves together a few times.
7. Show them move no. 3 – circling your arms above your head, and say “next we do this 4 times”.
8. Tell your child “let’s have a go adding that on”, and practice moves 1-3.
9. Show them move no. 4 –, reaching your right arm up and then out to the side, then repeating on your left, and say “last, we do this 4 times”
10. Finally, tell your child you will practice all 4 moves together, and do so.
11. Start the music and say “let’s do it to the music”, and dance the full routine moves 1-4.

You can repeat the routine as many times as you like to the music.

The level of support your child will need for this activity will vary. Ways to support them include:

* Using clear verbal instructions as you are dancing
* Holding one of both of their hands whilst you do the movements
* Your child may find it easier to stand side by side with you, or may prefer it if you stand directly across from them.
* Give recognisable names for the moves that you can call out as you dance eg. for move 4 you could say “point the ceiling then to the wall”

Variations – things to try:

* When creating the routine, try asking your child “what move should we do next?”, and see if they can come up with a move to go into the routine. This will build confidence and get them more involved as a choreographer.
* Add in more than 4 moves, making the routine longer and more of a challenge.
* Once your child has learnt the routine or is feeling confident with the activity, why not perform your routine to other members of the family in your household – remember to encourage lots of applause and cheering regardless of how it goes!

Your routine can be as creative and silly as you like, and include any movements that you think your child will enjoy and be able to master.

Don’t forget…

Help your child in whatever way they need, remind them it is ok to make mistakes, and reward their efforts with praise and positivity!