

Creative Movement for Older Babies and Toddlers: SPEED

Here are some fun and easy ideas to incorporate the concept of speed into everyday play! Kids learn in different ways, so why not give 'em the chance to explore new ways of grabbing onto ideas?

- Visual/Spatial: CRAFTY! Nontoxic finger-paints are a fun way to explore moving slowly, quickly and in between. For even more fun, try doing this in the tub before bath time! No finger paints? How 'bout some strained peas or pudding? Might sound silly, but you can really get a lot of use out of anything slimy! Well, maybe not anything...
- Kinesthetic: SONG! Sing this song once at regular speed, then once fast and once slowly:
(Make a crown with your hands)
The Noble Duke of York
He had ten thousand men (*hands on hips*)
He marched them up to the top of the hill (*marching up*)
And marched them down again (*marching down*)
And when you're up, you're up (*reaching tall*)
And when you're down you're down (*squatting, hands down*)
And when you're only half way up (*crouching*)
You're neither up (*reach up*) nor down (*squat*)!

(Repeat at different speeds)
- Linguistic/aural: CRAFTY! Copycat drawing. Using non-toxic markers or crayons, ask your child to make "slow lines" or "fast dots" or "medium waves" together. Or maybe you can make "slow snakes", "fast bugs" and "medium flowers". Color at the same time as your child, using the same speed s/he uses. Say out loud what you're doing.
- Logical/math: Make a rhythm "pizza" by cutting circles out of cardboard (or most bakeries or pizzerias will give you these). Cut the circles into quarters, eighths, and halves. Play with how these fit together. You're using your eyes, hands and body to explore the exciting world of fractions! You can further this activity by laying out the shapes and clapping the resulting rhythms. Help your child to sense the rhythmic values as you clap: whole, half, quarter and eighth notes.
- Spiritual/nature: On your walk, can you look for things in nature that move slowly or quickly?
- Musical: SONG! Here's a silly song that's great for wiggling your hips! Sing it lots of times, playing with getting faster or slower:
Little Red Caboose, chug, chug, chug
Little Red Caboose, chug, chug, chug
Little Red Caboose behind the train, train, train
Smokestack on my back, back, back
Coming down the track, track, track
Little Red Caboose behind the train
All aboard! Toot toot!
- Practical Life COOKING! Simple recipes can be fun for children to participate in. They may enjoy stirring, putting things in bowls, pouring -- they're not the tidiest little sous chefs, but they sure do love helping! Here are a few ideas for finding activities for the littlest kids in the kitchen:
Whipping homemade butter: put whipping cream in a shatterproof jar, seal it and take turns shaking it quickly until you have delicious fresh butter!
Place bananas or apple slices in a baggie with graham cracker crumbs and let your child shake it until they're coated
Some little kids enjoy tearing lettuce leaves, slicing soft cheese with a dull knife or smearing jam...It's messy, but fun!