



Dance Concept: Body Shape & Pathways

This week, we explored **Body Shape and Pathways**. We can make straight, bent & curvy body shapes with our bodies. We can travel in straight, curvy & zig zag pathways.

Why are these shapes and pathways important? It is because all letters in the alphabet are formed using these shapes and pathways. We are helping our children develop kinesthesia awareness of what these letters feel like by learning it with their bodies first. So when it is time to recognize, read and write letters, they will be able to learn it faster. This is because our brain uses the same neurons for thinking as it does doing, so if we learned something with our bodies first, we're better able to visualize it in our minds. Lastly, it helps the child develop impulse control by holding their bodies in shape!

Included in this handout is some information about W-sitting and why it is important to discourage W-sitting (scroll down to next page).

Enjoy!



What is “W” sitting?

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“W” sitting occurs when children sit on the floor with their legs bent in the shape of a “W”. Observe your students today and see how they sit on the floor at school and home. Do they sit in the “W” position?



Why do children “W” sit?

Children may develop a habit for “W” sitting as a way to establish increased stability in their bodies when they cannot assume and maintain the criss-cross (tailor) sitting position. Unfortunately, “W” sitting compromises knee and hip joint positioning, inhibits trunk stability needed for sitting, and may impact the development of proficient hand skills.

What should teachers and parents do when a child is a “W” sitter?

Teachers and parents should gently, but firmly discourage “W” sitting. I recommend allowing a variety of sitting positions especially if kiddos are struggling or have pain sitting in the criss-cross position. All of the following positions support healthy joint development and learning.

Recommended Sitting Positions:

1. Long Sit (legs straight out in front of torso) – French Fries
2. Side Sit (legs bent and tucked to one side) – Mermaid
3. Lying on Tummy (propped up on elbows)
4. Lying on Back (propped up on elbows)
5. Sitting on a small to medium-sized ball with feet connected firmly with the ground is a fun way to sit and gain coordination at the same time.



Long sitting



Side sitting



Lying on tummy



Lying on back



Criss-cross



Sitting on a ball

We should expect young children to move in and out of positions when sitting on the floor - that is natural and the way kids stay alert and learn to manage their bodies in space. Just as one size does NOT fit all, one sitting position will never accommodate the sitting needs of all children. Young children learn best when their bodies are safely and comfortably positioned. When you support a variety of appropriate sitting positions, you are setting all children up for success!

Please visit www.writeoutofthebox.com for more information about how to develop fine motor skills in young children.