



DANCE CONCEPT: WEIGHT

This week, we played with **WEIGHT**- heavy and light:

- We are bearing weight when we're doing heavy work like tummy time, pushing, pulling, crawling, dinosaur walk, marching, stomping
- When we're floating and flying, waltzing and turning, and swinging, we're light like a feather, not bearing weight in our limbs

Alternating contraction with release has a relaxing effect on the nervous system. It centers and calms the mind and creates an optimal state for learning!

Doing heavy work will also help develop our proprioception sense, which is our body position sense. It is knowing where our body is in space due to an inner awareness of our joints, muscles and tendons, so you don't have to look to know where our body parts are. It also helps us know how much pressure to use when doing certain things like holding a paper cup filled with water.

Another benefit to alternating contraction with release is helping our children develop self-regulation. When your child can learn to intentionally change their muscle tension, they can use this capacity to change their state from upset to calm because our physiology affects our emotions.

Interested in learning more about your child's ***Emotional Milestones in the First 3 Years***, check out the pages to follow!



Emotional Milestones in the First Three Years

By Christine Roberts

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3 months – 6 months: The Season of Love

Babies are able to hold parents gaze and start to take a very active role in social play. They seek out connection with smiles and babbling and find imitation riveting because it makes them feel felt by you. At this stage they can distinguish between positive and negative emotions and they prefer congruent emotions – the face matching the feelings. They are learning to imitate the emotional states of their parents. They fall in love with their parents as the parents read their cues and respond sensitively to their state of arousal. The roots of empathy and self-regulation are growing at this tender age helping them to feel secure and loved.

6- 8 months: The Age of Exploration

A big leap in development comes at this stage because now they can hold the parent in mind while they look at another object. This allows them to request the parent to play with them as they look at the parent with smiles and play with a ball. Again imitating their emotional responses to the world around them makes them feel felt and understood – the foundation for compassion that will be developed during the late Toddler, early pre-school years. At this stage a new range of emotions also shows up. They can express joy, sadness, disgust, anger, and surprise as well as fear.

9 – 12 months: Time of Social Referencing

At this point the baby understands that emotions can be shared between two people. They learn whether or not to approach an object, event or person by referencing the parents' face and vocalizations. This guides their explorations of the world. They know the parent exists even when the parent is not there and have become attuned to the parents' emotional states; what the parent feels the baby feels. This new security blanket of keeping you in mind gives them the freedom to explore their world at greater distances and engage in problem solving with objects. Stranger anxiety shows up with mobility because it triggers their fear of abandonment.



1 – 3 Years: Age of Autonomy

At this point they have been feeling the parents feelings, now they are going to feel their own feelings and assert them in the process. This is healthy and should be a welcomed aspect of development. Conflict is an opportunity to learn and to teach and should be embraced for growth to occur. At this stage children realize not everyone reacts the way they do paving the way for their social skills. Becoming self-assertive and non-compliant; “No”, “Mine”, “Me Do” are common refrains at this stage. At two years they acquire their first emotional words to describe how they feel, and not until three do they use emotion words to describe how others feel. They cope with a lot of frustration and anger at this stage because while they are taking interest in other children their rules of ownership: “If it’s yours and I want it, it’s mine”; “If I see it, it’s mine”; “If it’s mine, its mine forever”; get in the way of social interaction. These rules of ownership all come from their evolving sense of self. They do not understand that others may feel differently than they do. They resent situations that make them feel powerless or controlled. Giving them simple choices preserves their dignity and also serves to develop their reasoning powers. This is the season to offer choices all day long – “Do you want your jacket or a sweater?” They are very sensitive to having some measure of control over their environment – just like teenagers.

“By building on your toddler’s interests, pleasures and delight in certain postures or movements, you help her become assertive and guide her behavior (and, later on, her thoughts) with her own desires or emotions. Connecting wishes and emotions to behavior and thoughts is a key to creative and logical thinking”.

Stanley Greenspan, M.D.