

## Physical Development Supports Student Health and Academic Growth in the Pre-K Program *submitted by Dr. Robin Hooper*

**By accepting the unity of mind and body, we come one step closer to genuine developmental appropriateness. After all, if we are to truly educate the whole child, we must first recognize children as thinking, feeling, moving human beings.**

- Rae Pica



Teachers intentionally plan activities for our preschool students that are designed to incorporate gross and fine motor skills needed for physical development and skills leading to the ability to read and write. The “Moving Minds” embedded professional development program featured in this month’s newsletter on P. 2 was developed by Ms. Bedenik-Carmel and Ms. Gerhardt, a physical and an occupational therapist. Through the Moving Minds program they provide in classroom support to Pre-K teachers focused on activities that can be implemented throughout the program day in the classroom, in the motor room or outside.

In addition to the overall health and physical development benefits gained through large and small motor activities our preschool students also develop the spatial orientation, muscle strength, coordination and dexterity needed to perform academic tasks such as reading and writing. Students begin learning concepts of left and right, skills required for learning to read, through movement exercises that emphasize these concepts. They develop the fine motor skills needed to learn how to hold a pencil in proper grasp with the appropriate coordination of visual skills, pressure and finger movement required to learn to write. Young children often struggle with concepts of directionality and visual motor skills. They frequently complain that their fingers hurt when they attempt writing tasks as they develop muscle strength needed for handwriting. The development of pre-reading and pre-writing skills supports academic success in Pre-K and in kindergarten.

Perhaps most importantly, providing our Pre-K students with opportunities for physical development also supports social emotional development as activities take place with adults and peers in the classroom. Students are provided with repeated opportunities to practice skills in different ways to support mastery and development of positive self-esteem. Physical development is recognized as an integral component of student learning in the New York State Foundation for the Prekindergarten Common Core Standards. All domains of development are recognized as contributing to overall student achievement for our Pre-K students. This month we are highlighting physical development.



CCLS—Domain 2: Physical Development 3, 4, 6

## Physical Development at Large Group Time *submitted by Teri Kenyon, #23*

← The High/Scope online class on physical development, inspired the addition of more movement to our daily routine. As we sang “Row, Row Your Boat” at Large Group Time, we added movement of two people sitting across from each other with folded legs. Two people join hands and move their bodies back and forth as if they were rowing a boat. It has, with student input and suggestions, grown into many students joining hands and figuring out how to move as a group. Some students work alone or with only one partner. Our students are ready for message time when this song is done.

# Physical Activity Inside and Outside the Preschool Classroom

submitted by Carol Bedenik-Carmel, PT and Andrea Gerhardt, OT



←The picture on the left is a shape path which allows children to move from 1-place to another by jumping or hopping after being told which shape path to take or using a deck of shape cards (child looks at the shape on the card and chooses that path).

In the picture on the right, shape markers are arranged in a hopscotch pattern. Children jump with feet apart (1-foot on each shape) and feet together (2-feet on the squares). They then can hopscotch the typical way, jumping 2-feet and hopping on 1-foot. →



*CCLS: Domain 2: Physical Development and Health.  
Physical Development: 2, 3, 4 and Physical Fitness: 6*

What a great way for children to exercise those muscles, scooting down the hallway!



Children love to climb and jump. Let's give them an opportunity to do it safely!



↑ By allowing children to sit in various positions on the floor, allows them to develop their body awareness and arm strength.  
← Attach one end of rope to a stable object so that the child sitting in the laundry basket and moves it by using 2-hands alternately pulling on the rope. This helps to develop strength and bilateral coordination.  
Place things higher so children climb up on a raised surface and then jump down (2-feet at the same time) to the "X" on the floor. →



Each child was given a color mat and told to assume crab position. While in this position, a beach ball was kicked back and forth between the children. The children counted the number of times the beach ball was kicked without going out of the circle. ↓



↑ Parachute activity in which the boys were told to go under the parachute, to move around, and to get out before the parachute collapses down on them. Then the girls took a turn.

## Daily Structured and Unstructured Physical Activity is Essential



↑ The children in **Rita Agostinelli's** class at **#01 School** used lots of muscle, as well as planning and cooperation to build a castle with the large bolsters in their outdoor play. *Common Core Learning Standards—Domain 2: Physical Development and Health: Physical Development 2, 3, 4; Physical Fitness 6; Health and Safety 9.*

A child in **Emily Hasler's** UPK class at **#30 School** uses her large muscles, coordination and spatial awareness to build a giant chair out of hollow blocks. She then balances while sitting and using her small muscles to write on a message board.

*Common Core Learning Standards—Domain 2: Physical Development and Health: Physical Development 2, 3, 4, 5 Physical Fitness 6*



↑ **Joie Markham** at **The Community Center of Greater Rochester** uses a Moving Minds activity, the "penguin pull." In this activity one child lays down a towel and holds one end of the tied jump rope. Another child then grabs hold of the other end of the jump rope, and pulls the child on the towel around the gym. They really enjoy this activity weekly in the gym.

*Common Core Learning Standards—Domain 2: Physical Development and Health:*

*Physical Development*

*2. Uses sensory information to plan and carry out movements.*

*3. Demonstrates coordination and control of large muscles.*

*Physical Fitness*

*6. Engages in a variety of physical fitness activities*

*Health and Safety*

*9. demonstrates awareness and understanding of safety rules*





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## Transition to Kindergarten—Save the Date!



Registration available for  
Kindergarten or Prekindergarten

Please bring:

- Birth certificate
- Picture ID
- Proof of Address
- Immunization record
- Guardianship and/or IEP (if applicable)

### Transition to Kindergarten Family Event

Saturday, May 4, 2013

10:00 a.m.— 2:00 p.m.

# 33 School and Ryan Center  
500 Webster Avenue

**The Rochester City School District Early Childhood Department** conducts this event to support families in getting their child(ren) ready for Kindergarten. All participating families of our current Prekindergarten students who will be attending Kindergarten this fall will receive:

- Hands-on learning activities
- Mini-workshops for parents
- Free learning materials (see picture to left for sample)
- School bus safety tips

*Plan to spend an hour or two engaging in fun activities!*