

Movement Goals in Grade Two :

With an eye toward how and when movement work might fit into our days in a natural and supportive manner, we turn our attention to the actual forms of movement that will be most helpful:

1. *coming together as a wholesome community*
2. *nourishing and engaging the physical body*
3. *sensory/neurological integration*
4. *establishment of dominance*
5. *expression and instruction through movement*
6. *cultural immersion through music and movement*

At the second grade level these are all central, but the first three remain the critical building blocks for all the others.

- 1) **Coming together as a wholesome community** (class or family): In many classrooms and in some families this will naturally take place in a formal circle. In other families, other ways to gather as a community will work better: a “family breakfast” may be plenty; a shared story or song ritual before anyone has to head off to work outside the home; a morning walk; family chores; an adventure walk through the house (see Preparing and Leading Movement Activities). It does *not* matter how this is accomplished; it *does* matter that there be a gathering, a coming together as a family to start the day – with whoever can be there at the start of the day. Working with a ritual of song and activity will help establish this as the “coming together” time. Whether that activity is breakfast or singing a parent off to work, a morning walk, or a full circle or any of the other possibilities does not matter. What matters is that we anchor our day in a sense of the family as a unit.
- 2) **Nourishing and engaging the physical body:** The human body, heart, and mind are dependent on significant and regular physical engagement. Our bodies operate on a rhythmic flow - breath, heartbeat, digestion, and so on. Therefore, beginning the day with rhythmic activities that awaken and activate the breath, heartbeat, and muscles will support everyone’s health. Recent research has also shown that our minds are primed for learning by vigorous physical activity.¹

There are many ways to accomplish this, *with or without a circle*. However it is done, the first activities of this part of the day should focus strongly on rhythmic movement such as fast walking or skipping, rather than on specific skills. Because music and verse themselves are rhythmic, song and poetry further support this experience of rhythm. In this collection, the body engaging activities are listed under Opening Activities and Midlines. **In a family**

¹ see Enki Homeschool Guides; Foundations Book III/Warming Up for Learning

situation, this kind of circle may work well, but even in this case some adaptations to the activities may be called for. For example, when the directions

suggest skipping around a circle, it may better serve the movement goals and the mood to skip around the furniture or up and down the stairs - or through the neighborhood. It is an expansive and playful mood we are setting - not a cramped and dizzying one. Some specific suggestions are found in the section on circle structures. **Keeping the goal in mind, you can easily adapt the specific directions.**

Some families may find that non-circle activities work better to awaken and engage the breath and heart: a morning walk; regular playground time; farm chores; adventure walks, and so on. What is important is that the children - and the parents - awaken and engage their breath, heartbeat, and large muscles for 15 or 20 minutes every day. The earlier in the day this can happen, the more it can support all the learning and play that follow. The more routine it is, the less there will be resistance and the more deeply you will be planting long term habits that support healthy living.

- 3) **Sensory/neurological integration:** this is a primary task of early childhood, right up into Grade Three (and beyond if it is not well established by then); it is a process on which all learning and behavior depend.

In brief, we have three base senses through which all our experience is first taken in: the vestibular (balance or relation to gravity - processed through the inner ear); the proprioceptive (force and movement in space - processed through muscles and joints); and the tactile (sense of boundary and connection - processed through the entire skin surface).

Each of these must each work well on its own *and* in harmony with the others. If all three do not, then all the sensory information that flows constantly through our lives (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch and, so on) is experienced as an assault because we cannot integrate what is coming into us. Imagine trying to function in a subway station with smells of chocolate chip cookies and overcooked broccoli, hives all over, and a strobe light flashing - this is much how the *dis*-integrated child experiences every moment. For the child, this usually results in attention deficit, hyperactivity, or withdrawal - as it would for any of us experiencing this overload! Sensory Integration is what makes it possible to interpret the constant input of our world in a useful manner; it is an extensive topic which is described in detail in the Enki Teacher's Guides.

All of us fall somewhere on the human spectrum of competence in this area - from those at either end who are severely challenged and manifest this disintegration in autism, hyperactivity, attention deficit, withdrawal, and significant learning disabilities, to the wide range in the middle where we function effectively. Still, we all have some challenges in the integration of our senses, but as adults most of us in the middle of the spectrum have found ways to compensate for the resulting overload.

These **compensatory strategies may be more and less effective, but they always use more energy for a given result than would proper integration.** Children will fall into different places on the spectrum of difficulty and struggle. In the early years - right up to puberty - while the children's neurological systems are still very flexible and growing quickly - our goal in the movement work is to actually nourish and help integrate the systems so that other, less useful, strategies are not needed.

- 4) **Establishment of Dominance:** On the foundation of nourished and integrated base senses, we turn our attention to the next level of neurological development: crossing midlines. Simply put, the brain has several distinctly different areas that focus on different skills. To function optimally we must be able to move freely between these different areas, interrelating the information. This means moving freely through three planes: left and right (crossing the lateral midline); up and down (crossing the horizontal midline); and forward and back (crossing the sagittal midline). This happens first through our large muscle movement, laying the foundation for our fine motor and thinking to follow suit.

From their first days, and particularly from the time they begin trying to crawl, children are developing the ability cross midlines, and we include many midline crossing activities in the Kindergarten program. However, it is in Grades One and Two, once we feel the child(ren) have a solid foundation within and between their base senses, that we put particular attention on crossing the midlines.

At this juncture, the child also needs to establish or stabilize a strong dominance (sidedness) for learning to happen effectively; establishment of dominance depends on the ability to cross the midlines, particularly the lateral, or left right, midline. This happens first through large motor work with midline crossing but the second grader is also helped in this establishment of dominance through work with the Brain Gym eye tracking and lateral mid-line exercises described in the EduK section of this book.

The modern world has removed many of the natural opportunities for nourishing and integrating the base senses, so attention to these is necessary. In a formal circle, it is quite simple to include some of the base sense and midline activities found in this book. Even in a family setting where you are working with a morning walk or playground time, you can sing as you go, skipping and clapping along. Most importantly you can build in a ritual five minute base sense activity at the end of the 20 minute "warm up." **Our experience is that five minutes of focused integration work done regularly is more valuable than longer stretches less frequently, and is most effective when the breath, heart, and muscles are already awake and engaged.**

Many children struggle with - and thus are agitated by - activities that nourish and challenge their vestibular systems (balance). We have found that when such things as swinging, spinning or balancing on one leg are done with a light touch and for a short time, AND are followed immediately by a strong proprioceptive activity such as a frog hop

(squat hop) and/or a butterfly fold, the vestibular information is grounded and better processed and the children's progress is quite remarkable.

Parent in Colorado

We started doing a formal circle. Joseph participated maybe 50% of the time. He rarely did any of the vestibular movements. We changed our rhythm and started doing focused SI movement after we had walked, run, skipped a bit and now he will participate. He actually will ask to do the spinning one.

We encourage focused inclusion of base sense and midline activities on a regular basis. But it is also important to keep in mind that, in both the classroom and the homeschool, **there are many activities that integrate the senses that are already part of, or can easily become part of, the normal work-and-play life, day in and day out.** Undertakings such as moving desks, hauling wood, mopping, raking, jumping on the furniture, family yoga, horseback riding, playing in sand and mud, kneading dough, swinging, rough housing, and so on, all support these base sense systems and some midline development as well. This movement can happen in or out of a circle; it requires awareness, but not necessarily a circle.

- 5) **Expression and Instruction through Movement:** Movement is one of the central human tools for both learning and teaching, for taking in the new, experiencing others, communicating, expressing ourselves, connecting to the world, and creating. For young children it is a primary tool – initially, in infancy, it is the only tool they have! Therefore, we want to make use of this gift and strengthen and stabilize it in childhood - its natural time on center stage. This, too, can happen in or out of a formal circle, but including games and activities that lay a rhythmic foundation for later academic pursuits is supportive of later learning.

Skills needed for both academic and artistic pursuits also require significant fine motor coordination. Activities to support this development, particularly those needed for handwriting, are found in the Fingerplays and Academic Games section of this book. Although we hope the second grader has this quite well established, for some children it will be important to offer extra support. It can work well for these children to learn fingerplays to perform for or teach younger children.

Beginning in the first grade and going through all the grades, we also work with more specific academic work through movement. Whether teaching math processes through clapping and marching out sets, or how to break apart words to read them through syllabic clapping, when we provide kinesthetic experiences of academic material we offer the children a deep and non conceptual way to take in the academic concepts. This allows the child(ren) to develop a meaningful ground which we will later help them harvest as they discover meaning in the academics. In Enki, all academic concept is first introduced,

and then digested and well anchored in the body, before it becomes thought. These are included in the section on Academic Activities.

We also include an introduction to geometry through movement. At the end of each movement time we walk a form, in preparation for form drawing that will end our week. This helps the child strengthen her spatial and geometric understanding through movement (*this is a separate undertaking, mentioned here to show the scope of the Enki movement work, but described in detail in the Teaching Guides and Instruction Manuals*).

- 6) **Cultural Immersion:** For those working with the full Enki approach, the bulk of the music and dance will be from the culture in focus for that two block period. In the formal circle, we recommend using a cultural folk dance as the first or second opening activity, day in and day out. As well, closing with a cultural song for spiral walk helps maintain the mood. Most sage stories include a spin and fold verse (all these are found in the Grade Two Instruction Manual or in the Sage and Trickster books).

Throughout the circle or movement walk and games, cultural songs and activities can be brought in to enrich the experience brought by the rest of the Enki curriculum.

As we have said, **all the processes needed for later conceptual learning must happen first in the body**. The children's movement shows us the brain's activity as it is, and allows us to work with it. Therefore, the teacher – whether at home or in the classroom – needs to be sure that activities to develop all these processes are included in the day, and she must notice where difficulties lie.

At the same time, it is important that we not push the child through any of the activities. Resistance – whether expressed verbally or through negative or exhausted behavior – is giving us information that the activity chosen is challenging for the child. **It does not help her just to ignore and avoid the places that are hard, but it also does not help just to force her through.** It is for us to find a middle path – often this happens by simplifying the movement in the activity so that she can face her challenges one step at a time, or putting them into a less formal context, such as a walk or outdoor play.

The adult's job is to notice, to read the child's behavior. Then she can look for activities and adaptations that might introduce these skills more readily. **This will always mean going back to the last skill that was within the child's capacity and building from there.** For the young child this virtually always means work with the base senses, particularly proprioception/navel radiation, at a simple level. Suggestions are included with many of the activities; feel free to adapt widely to meet your child(ren).

The movement circle work develops the neurological functions of the brain and body that are required for more conceptual work like reading, writing, and mathematics later on; attention to building this foundation is important. However, the first thing we must strengthen in the child and nourish on a continual basis is the rhythmic base. Activities should have the quality of

rhythmic breathing. This is far more important than packing in the neurologically or skill-heavy activities – **if overall rhythmic integrity is not maintained the other skills will be lost anyway.**

Movement work that includes seasonal songs and verses gives us two more important academic elements: soaking in the textures and color of the season (science learning); and soaking in the rhythms and images of the spoken language (language arts). Add to that the specific academic activities and the cultural dances and you have a very full start to the day. Some might think we were playing and exercising, but after the first activity of the day we have already done major work in the central “subject areas” – P.E., Language Arts, Math, Humanities, and Science!

Focused movement activities, however we structure them into the day, will provide a base for healthy development on many levels. However, it is important to remember that this is a base with which the child must reconnect repeatedly throughout the day. Short movement activities can serve as transitions to spark connection, and this, too, is helpful. But we are working with children and **nothing replaces the free and open exploration of movement commonly known as PLAY.** Active indoor and outdoor playtime on a regular basis are critical to the full development of the human being.

Nurturing Engagement & Focus (Classroom Management): rhythm as an ally

Movement work offers us a particularly enriching opportunity to support the child(ren)'s engagement and focus, no matter where they may fall on the spectrum of human challenges and strengths. Rhythm is the key, and artistic use of it can support both engagement and effective "classroom" management - even at home.

In the course of typical child development - and learning throughout life - when we meet something new, we go through a fairly predictable process:

We initially feel an off-balance sensation. This is the unavoidable result of the expanding of the world we have known.

We respond by trying to reestablish our ground. Hopefully, we do this by adapting ourselves to the new experience or information - learning and growing - and not by shutting it out or adapting *the new* to what we already know. **When we do the adapting, we learn.**

This new experience becomes part of our new world and, once we have our footing, we begin a more active engagement with it by creating variations and expansions, thus expanding our world.

Finally, we explore implications and applications of what we have learned.

This is learning and, by definition, if we are opening to the new we must go through the process.

As adults we engage in this process with the children over and over from the first day we interact with them. In the course of this we help them (and ourselves) not only develop new skills and strengthen capacities, but also develop relationships. This is where engagement and focus, the heart of classroom management and positive behaviors, come in.

Because movement is the child's first language, we have been working with these principles in movement since the child's earliest days with us. When we introduce something new, first we establish a known rhythm or sequence, and then we vary it as part of play - or relationship. Think of playing Pat-a-Cake or This Little Piggy with a baby. First we rather pedantically go through the sequence of words and movements in a steady rhythm. Then, a little at a time as the child becomes familiar with that sequence and rhythm, we naturally shift the rhythm, stretching it a bit here, speeding a bit there. For example, in Pat-a-Cake we might "roll the cake" quickly this time and slowly next, or begin quickly and slow down. Maybe in This Little Piggy we hold back just a few extra seconds in the final "and this little piggy went" and then speed up for, "wee, wee, wee, all the way home." The result is delight in the child; we are playing together.

If we shift and change too early or often, the child never takes hold of the work. He may be entertained - and usually is hyped up - but that is different from sinking in and taking hold:

learning. On the other side of the spectrum, if we just did the exact same thing every time it would become dry and un-engaging; learning would stop once the new pattern was established, and so would relationship building. We are looking to foster the activity of learning, so we must find the best flow from establishing a stable base to engaged play.

It is through positive relationship that we build healthy behavior/classroom management for all children (neuro-typical or not). Movement activities offer us a powerful way to further relationship in a playful manner. To do this we begin as described in the preceding section, establishing a steady and dependable rhythm through imitation/imprinting. We let the activity be mastered until it is on or close to auto-pilot - what some would call "in the flow." Now it is the familiar ground for the child; we can begin to play. We begin shifting the rhythm just as we did with the infant playing Pat-a-Cake. For example, in Small Horses one might hold the reins on the black horse for an extra moment before taking off "galloping with courage around . . ." as fast as you can. Or maybe it is a matter of doing the whole thing in silence now and then.

Whether occasional or daily, **whatever shifts we make are kept within the basic rhythmic flow, and always remain the same in sequence and content.** So, in this example, we will not change the order of the horses; we will not change their color or what each does, we will only change the rhythmic pace - not the underlying rhythm. We also will not change the content - for example, birds will not suddenly trot along, nor will plants or toys or the like. The integrity of the imagery and its connection to the natural world around is part of the deep connection the child is using to build a stable ground.

So in this approach to playing with variation, we leave the child with the security of the known and simultaneously heighten the anticipation through change in rhythmic flow. We are playing. This play will naturally call the child to pay attention, to focus on us, and to relate.

This same principle also holds throughout the circle, not just in a given activity. Because we are engaged in play with the child, the changes call his attention. So - as demonstrated on the Movement DVD - we do not wait to begin until all are quiet and attentive. Rather, we let the rhythmic verse and movement call the children in. One minute all are in a laughing and tumbling pile on the floor as they complete the spinning leaves verse. In the middle of the chaos we squat down and begin the frog hopping and verse. Soon the activity is calling the children, and the room is a hopping mass. Here again, both focus and relationship are built in the context of play. If we made waiting or counting or stating consequences as the core behavior control, then we would be undermining relationship and exercising "power over" the child. Of course there may be times when behavior is out of hand and clear boundaries are needed to regain ground - and it will always be important that the children know what is expected of them. This, too, is part of relationship. But the opportunity at hand is to *use the actual movement work to develop focus, and thus relationship. These are the ground of positive behavior and classroom management. The effect is felt far beyond the movement work itself.*

The second grader has some unique gifts and requires us to enter into his play if we are to build positive relationships and behavior that spring from his sense of health. His unique gift is

his rather relentless exploration of relationships through mischief and trickery. Therefore, whether working with cultural activities, seasonal ones, academic, or neurological ones, the playful second grader needs to experience a lot of dynamic tension in the movement patterns in order to feel internal harmony (mirrored). Therefore, the vast majority of Grade Two movement activities work with people moving in opposite directions or moving across one another's path (oppositional patterns).

These oppositional movement patterns are a very simple way to call the second grader's attention. He is challenged in a playful way, and one which strengthens his midline crossings. He experiences himself as part of a group or community, but simultaneously plays with being an individual going his own way. He is exercising the skills he will need to move into the much more independent world of third grade and beyond, but he is doing it in a way that mirrors him exactly where he is -this is always the seat of nurturing engagement and positive behavior.

Sample Activities

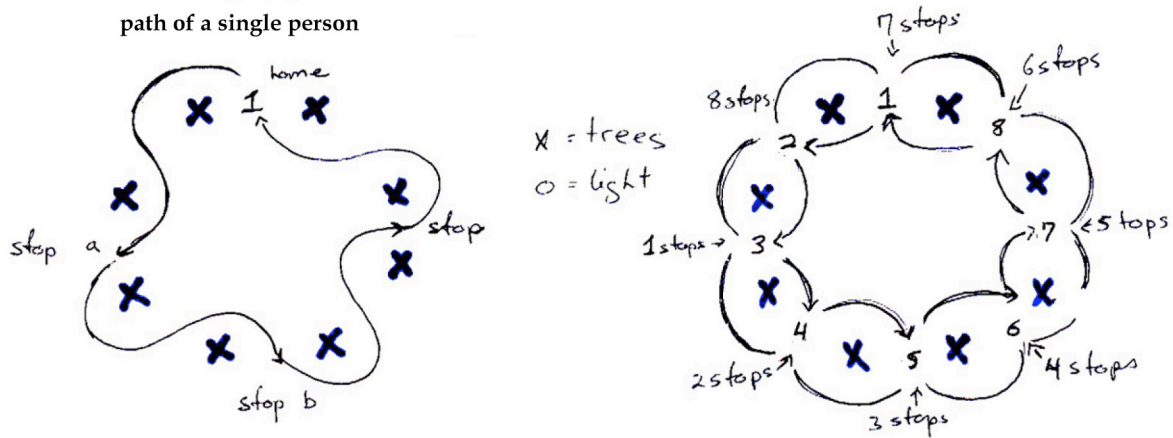
Summer's Leaving (r/l, fb)

This is a seasonal movement activity.

The children start in a circle counting off, 1, 2, 1, 2 etc. Have the 2's squat down for a moment, mostly to reaffirm who they are and be sure they know. They are the light. Have the others, the trees, raise their arms. Then the 2's stand with arms down.

All stand very still for the first two lines and then all the lights (#2's) run an open loop around two trees - behind one and in front of the other - to a new spot, (shown below). Do this with the same grouping a few times and then trade roles. For this game it helps to start off very slowly and speed up with each repeat. After they have it down, you can have them switch roles with each repetition (demonstrated on video).

In the homeschool this basic pattern can be run if you set up markers (X's on the floor, or obstacles such as chairs or pillows), to be the trees - still working with increasing and decreasing speed.



(SP)

THUNDERLORDS (V, P)

This is a sensory integration activity designed to help the children engage and integrate the base senses.

In the evening sky,
the thunder-lords roared.
The fire fairies flashed
And the wind it did roar.

Spin through the first verse as though in a storm

The rain pounded hard
From the clouds in the sky
And the droplets soon bounced
Splashing so high.

*Fall to the floor
Squat hop around*

Then slowly the thunderlords
Gave a last sigh
And Father Sun sparked,
With rainbows on high.

*Slow down the hopping
Lie on backs with legs and rear end in air (semi-
shoulder stand. Open and close legs to make
a rainbow arch.*

SILLI BILLI VERSE

This is an academic game that goes with the Silli Billi/Anastasia story. The goal of the activity is to get the children experiencing syllabication (the breaking of words into syllables) in action. ≈

When I was lost and all alone
I looked for help to get back home.
But all the people that I saw
Had just one question and no more.

*Begin standing still or walking aimlessly
and recite the verse.*

Each person asked my name, you see.
"Anastasia," I said, "that is me."
Each one cocked his head to say,
"That is not a name, I pray.
Tell me if you have an-oth-er
Like my sis-ter and my broth-er."

Add gesturing to show match words.

*Standing still, clap out the rhythm with one.
clap to a syllable.*

We can on-ly help you home
If we un-der-stand your tone.
So lis-ten close-ly to our words
And you will not sound so ab-surd.

Here in Sil-li Bil-li this is how we walk,
Here in Sil-li Bil-li, this is how we talk.
If you real-ly want to un-der-stand our way,
Lis-ten ve-ry care-ful-ly to what we have to say:

*Now add walking on each syllable while
clapping. It is not easy to walk one step
to each syllable but that is the job of this
activity.*

Each child says and claps out his first or whole name. At home, or as they get good at it, add in categories of words for them to call out and clap (fruit, animals, bugs, etc.) If someone goofs, the whole class goes back to:

Each one cocked his head to say,
"That is not a name, I pray.
Tell me if you have an-oth-er
Like my sis-ter and my broth-er."

Say this line normally.

Back to walking and clapping syllables

Then they try again with names or things, clapping syllables. After the last child, or turn all say:

Anastasia really was my name *Stand and say normally*

But now I understood their game

So I answered just their way:

“An-as-tas-ia is my name, I say. *Walk and clap to the syllables.*”

Can you help me get home to-day?

I want to know the short-est way.”

And then they answered, “Yes, we will,

The fast-est way is up the hill.

And next time that you’re all a-lone

You’ll un-der-stand how to get home.” *Bow to each other to close.*

When the children are good at this and comfortable with breaking many types of words into syllables with clapping and walking, add in the reading dimension. Simply put words they know how to clap out onto the board. Leave extra space between all letters.. Have the children look at the word and say it, clapping out the syllables they hear and feel. Then have volunteers go and place slashes where they clap. For example: el/e/p h a n t.

When they are good at this, put up words they have never worked with. Help them read as needed. Then let the children clap out the syllables on their own, and do the marking.

In third grade they can look for patterns in their syllabication and see if they see the rules.