Healthy moves from A to Z

Use these simple prompts to inspire daily physical activity in young children. Challenge children to come up with additional moves related to the letters of the alphabet.

A Ask children to come up with different ways to make an **ARCH** with their body.

B Practice **BALANCE** skills with a balance beam or stepping stones.

C **CRAWL** through tunnels. Old sheets and moving boxes make great, portable tunnels.

D **DART** through a homemade obstacle course. Great fun for inside or outside play!

E **EXPLORE** the great outdoors. Look for wildlife. Chase after butterflies and fireflies.

F Feel the rush of the wind as you **FLAP** your arms like they are wings.

G Challenge children to **GALLOP** forwards and backwards, in different pathways and at different speeds.

H Read *Who Hops?* by Katie Davis, then let children **HOP** or move like the animals in the book.

I **INFANTS** need tummy time to strengthen muscles, improve balance and learn coordination.

J Place a series of "lily pad" hula hoops on the ground and encourage children to **JUMP** from one lily pad to the next.

K **KICK** balls of various sizes.

L Learn to be limber with a game of **LIMBO**!

M **MARCH** to the beat using homemade instruments or some John Phillips Sousa tunes.

N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Teach children **NUMBER** concepts through physical activity. Encourage children to count steps, make groups with a certain number of children or keep track of the amount of physical activity they get each day.

Always provide **OPTIONS**! Adapt games to meet the individual needs of children. And remember, kids are great at devising new ways to play with standard equipment.

Provide an environment in which children can **PRACTICE** skills independently. Avoid using competition as a motivator and promote success for all children by adjusting for individual skill levels.

After physical activity, be sure to provide two minutes of **QUIET TIME** and relaxation exercises. Emphasize slow breathing, relaxing muscles and releasing tension.

Use **RHYTHM STICKS** or **RIBBON WANDS** to promote children's expressive rhythmic movements.

Develop endless catching games using inexpensive **SCARVES**.

Encourage children to **THROW** balls or beanbags at targets placed on the wall. Use poster board, a cardboard box, or an old sheet to create unique targets.

Help children learn how to **USE** various body parts by focusing on movements with the UPPER BODY. Use the alphabet to develop movement challenges that relate to upper body parts such as the arms, elbows, shoulders, hands, and head.

Promote **VOLLEYING** skills by playing a game of "Keep It Up" with a balloon.

Have children act out various weather conditions by **WALKING** as if they were feeling each kind of weather such as wind, or walking in leaves or puddles.

X marks the spot! Use tape, carpet squares or poly spots to create a personal space for each child. Encourage children to put various body parts on their spot.

YOGA poses can help children develop coordination and balance.

Encourage children to create **ZIGZAG** patterns with their bodies.

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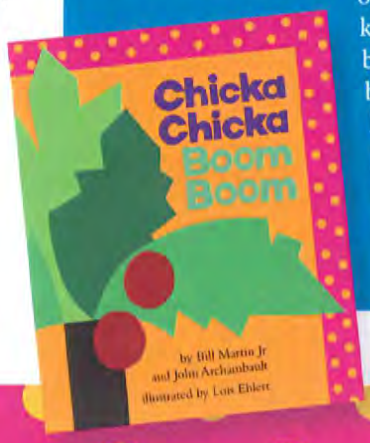
The Kansas Center for the Book at the State Library of Kansas again proudly promotes the importance of reading to the very young in our state. In our seventh year of sponsorship, this year's book is *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, written by one of Kansas's best known and most beloved children's book authors, the late Bill Martin, Jr., with John Archambault and illustrated by Lois Ehlert.