Meaningful Participation
Early Intervention Symposium

Picture This!
A Map to Motor Activities-
Addressing the Motor Needs
of Young Children In the Home
Setting and in Small Groups

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Financial: All presenters above are salaried staff members at The Children's Center for Communication and Development. Each provides direct services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities. Presenters' participation is within their scope of employment at The Children's Center for Communication and Development. No staff member receives additional payment for course presentation.
"For children, the body is the brain's first teacher. And the lesson plan is movement!" (Connell and McCarthy)
Children must move, and practice moving, to develop strength, balance and the stability needed to fully participate in the rigors of daily life.

Movement is basic to everything we do: walking, reaching, speaking, approaching.
Research has suggested for many years that movement helps children grow intellectually, emotionally, and physically and it has an impact on their future.

MOVEMENT HELPS CHILDREN’S BRAINS DEVELOP (PICCA, 1998)
• Each time a new activity is consciously experienced, new synapses are formed and the brain enlarges
• The one-hundred billion neurons that babies are born with and that are connected by practice become atrophied without experience
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Children are doing more than MOVEMENT:
1. Strengthen the way they feel about themselves
2. Develop social skills
3. Learning how to communicate
4. Develop joyful and purposeful play
5. Learning about rules and game play
6. Learning to follow directions
7. Learning to recognize and name objects, colors, shapes,
8. Learn about their bodies, the parts, and how they move
How do we address the need for movement with our children?
Play
Children learn through play.
Play is the main "occupation" of children!

The many benefits of play and the areas of development (language, symbolic thinking, social skills, and motor skills) that can be impacted by play in the typically developing child are numerous. According to Piaget (1962), play and cognitive development are inseperable.
Research shows that children with disabilities play differently than their non-disabled peers.

- more limited repertoires
- less frequent incidences of play
- more solitary play
- shorter duration
- more passive
- more limited materials
- over-emphasis on the motor action
- parental expectations (too low or too high)
Play at home of parents with children with disabilities often promotes deficits

- parents spend less time playing
- parents are more controlling of the play
- fewer cues indicated by the child
- interaction is initiated less by the child
- parents dominate the initiations
- playing time decreases with age (toddlers)
- role of play partner shifts to medical coordinator
- parents have more anxiety
- more demands on the parent
- let the professionals provide the needs of play and parent becomes the observer or "aide"
Medical and Therapeutic interventions often do not include play

- play is often absent when working on remediation or compensation of deficits
- focus is shifted to attaining specific skills

"The disability then leads to a mismatch between a child's innate drive to play and a child's ability to play" (Mistrett, Lane, and Goetz 2000)
• Studies have shown that babies and toddlers with Down Syndrome, autism, and those who were born preterm or are living in poverty or stressful family situations are at risk for poor motor development.

• Some children with these disabilities or challenges are less likely to learn skills that require leg strength and coordination (Lloyd, Burghardt, Ulrich, & Rosa, 2010).

This research supports the importance of observation and intervention, as soon after birth as possible, to promote motor development of children with disabilities.
Play = map to motor learning!!
Meaningful Participation

May we address the
important issues

Why is movement
important??

How do we do this?
Integrating play and motor development
Creating Play Environments

- almost any home environment can become a safe play environment
- most daily routines can be made more playful

We as professionals need to help families and other professionals in implementing strategies and specific items that promote participation and fun!
How do we do this?

One of the most important teaching practices in promoting motor development is the adaptation of play activities to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

- Supportive teacher interactions
- Modification of play materials and equipment
- Redisgn of play environments

(Doctoroff, 2001)
Examples of adapting play activities to meet the needs of our children
Supportive Interactions

This includes modeling, encouraging, posing challenges, and providing just the right amount of assistance in completing difficult tasks.
Examples of adapting play activities to meet the needs of our children
Modifying materials and equipment to meet individual motor play needs has been associated with a range of developmental benefits.

- adding playground equipment than can be used by more than one child
- using devices that support posture and movement
- varying size, weight and texture of play objects
Careful arrangement of the overall play environment

Teachers and caregivers should modify play spaces to ensure that all children have access to motor activities.
• Intervention focused on playfulness emphasizes the quality of a child's play and not just the performance of specific play activities. This approach allows the child to guide the play, initiate interactions, build on what is happening- sharing his/her joy!
to play, initiate interactions, call his/her name, see what's happening—sharing his/her joy!
Research suggests that the motor interventions that are most effective are those that are planned with each individual child's needs in mind!
Games and group play!
Meaningful Participation

How do we do this?

May we address the issue of participation in a meaningful way?

Why is it movement important?