

# Developing Language through Active Movement

An activity guide for under-fives



**SPORT  
NEW ZEALAND**

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[www.sportnz.org.nz](http://www.sportnz.org.nz)



## What is Active Movement/ Koringa Hihiko?



Active Movement is just as important for newborns as it is for older children. By helping your child to get active, you help their body to develop, you help them to learn and to feel safe, and you show them they are loved.

The Active Movement series of brochures helps you with ideas for fun activities.





## ? What is language development?

- 😊 The more a child is talked to (or with), the more their language is enhanced.
- 😊 This begins before birth and continues throughout childhood.
- 😊 There are crucial times for learning new skills and when the brain is most open to learning. For language, this time is as an infant and young child.

## ? How does Active Movement improve language?

- 😊 The more you talk about what she is doing, the more she will understand and connections will grow in her brain.
- 😊 When he is being active, talk about what is happening, what body parts he is using and what direction he is going in.

## ? What do I need to know before I start?

- 😊 All activities are for boys **and** girls.
- 😊 It is the **order** in which they gain body skills that is important, not **the age** that they gain them.
- 😊 Remember, when children are active, stay around them to **keep them safe**.

# Activities for Newborns and Infants

## He ngohe mā ngā Pēpi



These activities can also be done with toddlers and young children.



**I learn by hearing  
the words that  
describe the  
parts of my body.**



- ▶ When massaging or touching her, name the body parts you are touching as you go.



- ▶ Use names of body parts such as head, tummy, legs, arms and others that are not so commonly used (e.g. heel, ankle, thigh, spine, elbow).

- ▶ Roll a ball up and down the body, naming the parts as you go.

- ▶ When getting dressed, talk about the parts of the body that are being covered.



- ▶ Sing songs about the body and move the body parts as you sing them. As your child gets older, try singing songs where more than one body part is moved at a time.

# Activities for Toddlers

## He ngohe mā ngā Tamariki Nohinohi

- ☺ These activities can also be done with young children.
- ☺ All of the activities use equipment that is found in most homes. Be creative with what you already have!

**I learn by hearing words  
that describe what I feel  
on my body.**





- Collect a box of different textured things – some rough, smooth, soft, bumpy etc. Choose an item from the box and rub it on her hands or feet. Make sure you talk about how it feels.



- Go into the garden or to the park and collect twigs, dead leaves, stones, flowers and anything else that is interesting. Talk about what they look like and how they feel.

- When getting her out of the bath talk about being dry and wet. Look at and touch the floor. Is it wet or dry? Is the shower floor wet or dry?





## More activities to do with toddlers

▶ Make a bumpy/smooth collage. Collect things to go on the collage and talk about how they feel.

▶ Bake with her and talk about how the mixture feels. Take your baking on a picnic.



▶ Rub ice on his hands and feet. Talk about it feeling cold and slippery.

▶ Go for a walk at the beach in bare feet. Talk about how the sand feels. You could also do this activity on your lawn.





# Activities for Young Children

## He ngohe mā ngā Kōhungahunga



These activities can also be done with toddlers.



Even if your child is too young to be counting by herself, she will benefit from hearing you count things with her.

**I learn by hearing  
the words to  
describe where  
I am.**





- ▶ “How can ‘top’ be the top of my head but also on the top of my toe?” Plenty of active experiences with the language of doing will help young children understand how some words mean different things in different situations.



- ▶ When he is in the playground or moving about the furniture at home, tell him he is going under, through, around, between etc.

- ▶ Use a ball and ask her to put it under her foot, next to her knee, between her legs, behind her back etc.

- ▶ Draw a circle on the path. Ask him to walk around the outside, walk inside, put one foot inside and one foot outside etc.

- ▶ Put the socks on the floor in a line. Jump between the socks or over the socks or walk around the socks.

More activities you can do with your young child, next page ▶

## More activities to do with young children

I learn about counting by hearing people counting things I can see or feel.





▶ Put one or two bath towels on the carpet (or other non-slip flooring). Ask her to stand on top of the towel, between the towels, beside the towel, walk around the towel etc. Try folding the towels into a triangle or square.

▶ Count the number of puddles you jump in on a rainy day.



▶ Count the petals on the flowers in the garden.

▶ Spread out a trail of stones and count them.



More activities you can do with your young child, next page ▶



## More activities to do with young children

- ▶ Count toes and fingers.
- ▶ Count how many raisins are on a plate.
- ▶ Count the letter boxes in the street as you walk by.
- ▶ Count vegetables as you peel them.

- ▶ There are many finger plays that use counting. Finger plays are rhymes or songs that have finger actions. For example, 'Two Little Dickey Birds'.







# ? Where do I go for more information?

😊 This brochure is one of a series of 16 Active Movement resources:



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Further information can be found on the SPARC website or call 0800 ACTIVE (0800 22 84 83).

[www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)

