

Heart Healthy, Happy Bodies, Boosted Brainpower

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It's so important to encourage an active lifestyle and foster an appreciation for fitness at an early age. Our preschool and primary grade physical education activities provide our young students with opportunities to develop a wide range of aerobic activities, specific skills for various athletic activities, increase endurance and oxygenate our brain cells. Therefore, our regular physical education program helps our students learn at their optimum level in all academic areas.

Imagine that you're four-years-old. You've had a busy day mixing primary colors in the science center, using valentine shaped cookie cutters with playdough, building in the block area, matching objects to numerals (10 -15) using tongs and listening to the book Franklin Is Bossy at the listening center. After lunch and a quiet rest, it's time to travel to the multipurpose room and greet Coach Underwood at PE.

What will you do today? You liked playing with the parachute and stacking those cups in January. Coach Underwood says, "Boys and girls, today we're going to be airplanes as we warm up. Let's think of all the ways an airplane moves. They take off. They zoom through the air with wings (arms) stretched out. They swoop up high. They turn toward the airport. They slow down and glide as they land on the runway."

On signal, everyone drops to the floor in a prone position and get ready for takeoff. You have to "start" your engines by doing a couple of push-up challenges while making the "vroom, vroom" engine sound. Now you're ready to take off and try all the locomotor movements as airplanes.

Now it's time to train to be astronauts. This is the fitness development component of the lesson. At 30-second intervals, you will work through a variety of activities, many of which are already familiar. The musical accompaniment begins and indicates that you will be doing an aerobic activity. When the music stops, it means that a 30-second flexibility or strength activity is about to begin.

"Let's walk and do arm circles in time to the music.

Now it's time to bend from the waist and touch your toes. Touch your right foot. Now touch the toes on your left foot.

Here's our music again. Skip forward now ... Skip backwards ... Skip sideways ...

The music has stopped. Freeze. Now unfreeze. Can you lie down and do five tummy crunches? Let's remember to come only part way off the floor. One, two, three, four, five!

The music has changed. Listen and watch me. Can you jump like a Pogo Stick in time to the new beat? Ready? Follow me!

Now it's time to walk on the moon. Take big steps forward. Remember, go slowly.

All right, astronauts, it time to walk around the room and get a drink.”

Lastly, you are involved with a partner as using balls in the skill section of the lesson. You roll the ball back and forth to each other and practice different deliveries, i.e. two-handed, right, and left. Now stand a few steps apart and practice passing skills. It's important to keep your eye on the ball, catch the ball with your fingertips and not the palm of your hand. Everyone gets the chance to practice bouncing the ball in preparation for dribbling.

It's also important to learn to take turns. During free exploration, each team member has the chance to lead one of the ball activities and the other follows. After a few more minutes of exploration, it's time to go back to the classroom. Are you ready to sit quietly and hear the story “The Very Special Valentine”? There will be an animated discussion about friendship afterward.

It's been a full day of learning. Our hearts are pumping strongly. Our bodies are flexible. Our brainpower has been stretched as we followed oral directions, worked with a teammate, and then reflected on the concept of friendship during group discussion. Just another typical day in the preschool.