

## Young Children's Community Homeschooling, Volume 3

### *Gross Motor Activities*

Why is my child having a difficult time taking naps or going to bed at night? With your children home every day they may not be exerting as much energy as they would if they were at school. Young children enjoy carrying, pushing, pulling, and moving almost anything heavy. They are in a developmental stage (what Montessori called a “sensitive period”) for gross motor development. Young children need to exert maximum effort! Their inner drive to move is very powerful; they are working hard to develop all their muscles. Children’s bodies develop quickly during their first three years of life, and most of that time is spent exerting a great amount of energy. Our classrooms provide constant opportunities to move and to carry large or heavy objects, designed just for them.

Here, we have compiled some activities that are a good way to keep your child active and help them reach maximum effort. This “heavy work” should be challenging and compelling for your children. They enjoy work with a purpose, where they feel they are helping you and the family. Remember that cleaning up their toys around the room or yard is a great way for balance and strengthening. Walking, squatting, and bending to pick up objects helps your children to learn how to regain their balance when they are on the move. Just remember that they do need your help with this activity!

These fun activities use gross motor skills to help burn off some of that energy and keep the afternoon nap and evening bedtimes in place!

#### **Heavy Work Activities (lifting, pulling, carrying)**

##### *Inside*

- Lifting water jugs, pulling a wagon, or carrying a loaded backpack.
- Helping carry and put away groceries, pushing or pulling a loaded laundry basket, loading books or winter clothing into a cardboard box.
- Obstacle Course
  - Use furniture, pillows, stuffed animals, blocks, and a tunnel to create a course for the children to crawl, walk, hop, climb through. Keep the lights low and give them a flashlight - so fun!
- Build a block tower with shipping boxes.
  - The bigger the boxes the better!
- Balance beam
  - Walking on a beam of wood on the ground, 2x4 or 4x4 size, is a real challenge for your young child, and they love it!

- Jumping trampoline
  - Bring in your outside cushions and place them together on the floor. Let your children jump and jump and jump!
- Chase Bubbles
  - Don't forget you can use bubbles inside also!
- Have a Dance Party
  - Slow, fast, jazzy, different tempos, to jump, twirl, march, and swing. Have fun being together.
- Yoga
  - As a family, enjoy simple moves and breaths.

### *Outside*

- Balls
  - Our class enjoys kicking and throwing different types, sizes, and shapes. Playing catch with their hands together just brings them so much joy.
- Stepping stones
  - If you do not have them in your yard, you can draw them on your sidewalk or driveway. The children like to practice balancing and moving from stone to stone.
- Wagon
  - Filling and emptying a wagon with whatever needs to be cleaned up in the yard and moving to another location is great fun!
- Bucket
  - Scoop sand, dirt, water and carry it around the yard.