

The Dance Concept of Space

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Creating Dance Experiences

Objective/Goal:

This is a main experience that will enable children to move through space in a group, and heighten body/spatial awareness.

Educational Impact:

- ✓ Self-regulation
- ✓ Following directions
- ✓ Body awareness

Procedure and Process:

Place

“Place” refers to the location in the room where the movements of the body occur. A person can do movements in *self space*, or they can do movements in *general space*.

Self space is the space the body takes up. Within self space, the child can do many exciting movements such as rising, twisting, turning, jumping, floating, and freezing. When children travel through the room, they each take their *self spaces* with them.

General space is all the space around one’s self space. Children travel through general space by taking their self spaces with them. They learn to share general space by gaining control of their bodies so that they do not bump into each other. The preschool child can do movements such as walking, slow running, jumping, and floating in general space.

Teaching children the concept of “place” (both self space and general space) is an important skill because it helps children become aware of their bodies in space and learn body control. With this awareness, the child can learn to move about the room more easily without bumping into other children.

Dance Experience for Self Space

While the children are sitting, ask them to try making their bodies twist. Ask them to bend their arms while still in self space, and then their torsos. Now let them stretch their arms up high above their

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heads. Tell them to stand slowly always staying in their self space, and then to turn in a circle still in self space. Now, all together, slowly sink to the floor and end sitting with your legs crossed. When introducing these movements to children, it is engaging to use objects for inspiration. For instance, a ball could inspire jumping; a feather, floating; and a top, turning.

When exploring these movements in self space, have the children stand on a physical self-space. A colored foam disc about eight inches in diameter works well to mark where the child stands.

Dance Experience for General Space

Start with the children standing on their foam disc self-space, and play some music. When the music starts, the children will pick up their self-space and float around the room, traveling in general space, carrying their self-space. When the music stops, the children place their foam discs on the floor and stand on them (freeze). Do this in small groups of about four or five children at a time, with one or two repetitions.

