



TODDLER & PRESCHOOL SPRING DANCE AIMS

In Lucy Sparkles & Friends dance classes, the main progression takes place during the 'Stretching and Curling' and 'Traveling to Danceland' activities because the 'Warm-Up', 'Fine Motor Skills', 'Choreographed Dance', 'Action Song' and 'Working with Props' activities are used mostly to build on the same important skills each week.

Thus, the focus of this season is on skills that are practised during 'Stretching and Curling' and 'Traveling to Danceland'. These are: mobilising the spine, stretching the hamstrings, developing balance and control, strengthening the legs (during 'Stretching and Curling'), stopping and changing direction, hopping, step-hopping and skipping (during 'Traveling to Danceland').

The toddlers and pre-schoolers follow the same curriculum so they can build muscle memory and confidence through repetition. Of course, we expect the pre-schoolers to refine the focus skills (mentioned in the second paragraph) more than the toddlers. We appreciate the importance of introducing these skills to toddlers but we don't expect them to be mastered. The most important goal of the toddler classes is to encourage children to be active!

Every activity is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage national curriculum. See ['Lesson Plans and EYFS Links'](#) on the Sparkles Client Resources page of the website for full details.

Stretching and Curling: Elephants Spraying Water

The children pretend to be elephants sucking up and then spraying water. From a standing position, they bend at the waist to drop their arms and head towards the floor. They make a sucking noise (as though sucking up the water) and then roll the body up through the spine slowly. They rise onto their tippy toes as they stretch their arms (trunk) up to the sky and pretend to spray the water. This activity stretches the hamstrings (while bending down and touching the floor), mobilises the spine (as you roll up through the spine), develops balance and control (as you roll up through the spine) and strengthens the legs (engaging the achilles tendon and the calf and quad muscles as you raise up onto tippy toes).

Here are the main dance aims:

1. Balance & Control- to roll up through the spine slowly and to rise onto tippy toes and stretch arms up high
2. Creativity- to pretend to be elephants spraying water
3. Flexibility- to stretch hamstrings and to mobilise the spine
4. Motor Skills- to practice the gross motor skills of bending and stretching
5. Strength and Fitness- to develop leg strength through rising onto tippy toes

Travel to Danceland: Pegleg Pete

We encourage the children to hop by telling them to be "one legged pirates". Hopping develops coordination (of the bend and the push), leg strength (calf and foot muscles are used to jump and the hamstrings and gluteus maximus are used to land)



and balance. Hopping also stabilises the muscles around the knees and prepares for skipping (as skipping can be broken down into two elements: stepping and hopping).

Here are the main dance aims:

1. Balance & Control- to hop on one foot
2. Coordination- to prepare for skipping
3. Motor Skills- to practice the locomotor skill of hopping
4. Musicality- to hop in time with the pulse
5. Spatial Awareness- to negotiate the space while hopping around the room by adjusting speed and direction to avoid obstacles (including other children)
6. Strength and Fitness- to develop leg strength

Travel to Danceland: You've Got a Friend in Me

In this activity we encourage children to step-hop over imaginary holes in the floor. Make sure to step-hop in half time so the children can clearly see the two separate movements (the step and then the hop). This activity develops balance and prepares for skipping, which is a faster version of step-hopping.

Here are the main dance aims:

1. Balance- to stand momentarily on one foot and to hop
2. Balance & Control- to move slowly and with control
3. Coordination- to perform a slow step-hop exercise to prepare for skipping
4. Motor Skills- to practice the locomotor skill of hopping
5. Musicality- to move in time with the music
6. Spatial Awareness- to negotiate the space while hopping around the room by adjusting speed and direction to avoid obstacles (including other children)

Travel to Danceland: Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo

In this activity we show the children how to speed up step-hopping so that it becomes skipping. After two weeks of skipping to Danceland like fairies, we become "magic fairies" who stop when you call "freeze" and then change direction as they wave their wands and say "abracadabra".

Here are the main dance aims:

1. Control and Coordination- to transform step-hopping into skipping
2. Motor Skills- to practice the locomotor skill of skipping
3. Musicality- to skip in time with the music
4. Spatial Awareness- to negotiate the space while skipping around the room by adjusting speed and direction to avoid obstacles (including other children)
5. Strength and Fitness- to develop leg strength and cardio fitness through skipping