

A turn to dance

Themes

- * Music/Sound
- * Ourselves/Bodies/Families
- * Times of Year/Celebrations

Skills

- * Movement/Dance
- * Acting/Mime
- * Listening
- * Confidence

Equipment/Resources

A clear space in which adults and children can talk, work and move together safely and comfortably in small groups; music player; songs: Your Shoes and Click Your Fingers (available to download from Brilliant Publications' website); CD player and CDs featuring popular children's songs or dance music; curtain or blanket, string and lamps

Activity

Invite children to form small groups of 3–6 who will create a dance together to show to everybody else. Allot a practitioner to each group or small number of groups, to supervise, advise and support. Give the children ideas of basic steps and moves by sharing songs such as Your Shoes and Click Your Fingers.

Ask the children to sit and listen while you play a short chosen song or piece of music through once. Allow them a little time to talk and discuss ideas, then play the music again and invite them to practise steps and movements together until all groups are ready.

Provide a stage area, using stage blocks or fabric or chalk lines on the floor. Rig a 'house tab' by hanging a curtain or blanket over a string tied across the room and/or turn on lamps and direct them towards the stage area. Invite the groups to perform to each other in turn. Remind them to bow at the end of their dances and to clap each other. Praise them all highly for effort, originality and teamwork, picking out different specific areas for extra praise for each group, such as the number or speed of moves, careful balancing, remembering a routine or helping each other. If the children are old enough, introduce the idea of constructive criticism by asking whether anybody can suggest how to make a routine even better. Comment on how different group dances look, even when they sound the same.

Extensions/Variations

Provide percussion instruments that children can shake or tap as they move around and invite them to include sounds within their dance routines. (Avoid those played in the mouth unless children will be seated while playing them, in case they trip or collide while dancing.)

Suggest that some children might play instruments while others dance to the sounds. This idea could be developed by individual groups, or groups could play for each other's dances. Support the children in preparing and practising music and dances for end of term events and special occasions. Invite parents and carers into the setting regularly to watch the performances.

Learning objectives/Early Learning Goals

- * Listen carefully and imitate and create movement in response to types of music (EAD–EUMM, BI)
- * Move rhythmically and show awareness of tempo and mood (EAD–EUMM)
- * Explore and learn how sounds can be changed (EAD–EUMM)
- * Memorize simple dances and confidently perform them to others, individually or within a group (EAD–EUMM; PSED–SCSA)
- * Thank an audience after a performance, through body language (EAD–BI)
- * Explore the different sounds of instruments and use them appropriately to enhance performances (EAD–EUMM)
- * Work, speak and listen appropriately as a member of a group, showing sensitivity to others' needs and feelings and responding with consideration (PSED–MR)