

The Elephant Itch

Movement and Music activities

This story / song The Elephant Itch can also be a very effective way for children to learn and reinforce fundamental movement skills which include, stamping, jumping and a variety of ways to experience balance.

ACTIONS ACCOMPANYING THE SONG

- Place a sock on the child's hand and pull it up the child's arm to represent an elephant's trunk. (Using simple props like this can effectively enhance visualizations, imagination, dramatic play and learning).
- Play the song '*The Elephant Itch*' or simply instruct the children through the actions of the story. See below.

[Download "The Elephant Itch" song \(written by Robyn Crowe and Kate Hanratty\)](#)

1. While walking around the room, the children sway their arm from side to side pretending it is the elephant's trunk.

Learning That Occurs

Walking in a space around other children enhances spatial awareness.

Swinging the arm from side to side crosses the body's midline which enhances an awareness of both sides of the body and stimulates brain development.

See the [BLOG section](#) for more on the importance of crossing the midline.

2. On the words "*So he stamped it hard upon the ground*" the children then alternately stamp their feet on the ground as if marching on the spot. Encourage the children to use a bent arm action where they move the opposite arm to the leg that is stamping during the marching action.

Learning That Occurs

The cross-patterning action integrates the right and left sides of the brain and enhances the brain body connection.

See the [BLOG section](#) for more on the importance of cross patterning (marching action)

3. On the words "Ohhhh no... It's still there", the children stop, raise their arms out to the side, shrug their shoulders and wear a concerned, sad expression on their face.

Learning That Occurs

Using the body and face to express emotion.

4. Repeat swaying the trunk while walking around the room, and then follow the actions throughout the story/ song with the swinging of the leg, the jumping and scratching actions. The song gives instructions as to the movement to use.

Learning That Occurs

Jumping enhances lower body strength and flexibility. Encourage bent knees on landing to reduce jarring on the spine.

Swaying the leg from side to side requires the child to be able to balance while part of the body is in motion.

During practice of these actions, always encourage the children to repeat using the other leg as well so they gain an awareness and balance on both sides of their body.

Balance is also experienced during the scratching action, particularly if the children lift their foot from the ground to scratch. Repeat using the other foot during practice for laterality experience.

Lots of repetition in the words to anchor the learning in the muscle memory and the brain.

GAMES USING SOCKS

1. THROWING AND CATCHING

- Roll the sock into a ball and use it to enhance throwing and catching skills.
- Throw into the air and catch.
- Throw into the air, clap hands together then catch.
- Repeat the above action and add to the number of claps e.g. 2-3-4-5-6 before catching the sock ball.
- Throw the sock ball into the air. The child then spins around on the spot, then stops to catch the sock ball.
- Throw one sock ball to a partner who throws it back. (Only one sock ball required)
- Each partner has a sock ball and exchange them in the air by throwing to their partner at the same time.

Learning That Occurs

Hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness, eye tracking, body control, timing, coordination.

laterality, body awareness.

2. BALANCE

- Balance the sock ball on various parts of the body e.g. knee shoulder, elbow, head, foot, back, stomach.
- Use the [CREATIVE CAPERS - BEAN BAG BALANCE CARDS](#) found in the [RESOURCES](#) section as a visual cue for the children to perform a variety of different balances while placing the sock ball on their body.

3. SPRING AND LANDING

Stretch the sock along the floor, mat or carpeted area.

- Jump over it (take off and land with two feet). Turn and jump forward again. Repeat.
- Jump forwards and backwards over the sock.
- Place the socks in a spaced line so the children can jump over a sequence of socks.
- The children place the sock between their knees and jump 5 times on the spot without dropping the sock. Extend the activity by repeating the 5 jumps then on the word, *STAR*, the children make a star shape and the sock drops from between their knees as their feet jump to land apart. Arms and legs go out to the side to land in a star shape.

Learning That Occurs

Spatial awareness, spring and landing skills, leg strength, leg flexibility, co-ordination, body control and awareness, stimulation of the vestibular system through the motion of moving forwards and backwards, balance in motion.

OTHER ELEPHANT SONGS by Robyn Crowe and Kate Hanratty ([download here](#))

[“Lots of Little Elephants”- MP3 song](#)