

Preschool songs and movement activities

Use welcoming songs and movement activities to alert students when it is time to gather or start outdoor learning. Minimize yelling. A sing-song voice generates just as much attention.

“Come on over (“It’s time to...”, “and gather round,” “sit right down,” etc.) - Dodge Nature Preschool

- Use a hand gesture (that shows come over or this way) while singing song

Hello, Everybody by Music Together

“Hello everybody, so glad to see you! Hello everybody, we’re so glad to see you too!”

- When in a big group, use this song to say class name.

“Hello to (Simon), so glad to see you! Hello to (Haruko) so glad to see you too!”

- This is a good song to learn names of individuals in group.

“Clap, clap, clap your hands, clap your hands together, clap, clap, clap your hands, clap your hands together” - Music Together

More actions: Rub your tummy, Pat your knees, Beep your nose, Stomp your feet, Tap your fingers (tap pointer fingers together)

- This is a great test of children’s fine motor skills.

“Nature’s Exercise” (yoga movements) CD: Lots to Learn, Vol. 1 Nature (Hennepin County Library)

“Stretch like a tree, Bend like a rainbow, Blow like the wind, Buzz like a bee, Jump like a raindrop, Dance off a puddle, Clap like thunder, Wave like the sea, Sunset...Sunrise, Spin around like clouds, Sunset...Sunrise, That’s nature’s exercise!”

- Use yoga-like movements (ex. Stretch up with tree branches, arch like a rainbow, make buzz sound with mouth, march for nature’s exercise)
- Use the CD to learn inside or sing your way outside
- Songs can always just be said instead of using singing voice
- Optional: repeat the first section, “Stretch like a tree” to “Wave like the sea.” Then end with “Sunset...Sunrise”

Songs and games for transitioning between locations

“All Aboard the Nature Train!” created by Jennifer Elsen, Dodge Nature Preschool

- Teacher says, “All Aboard the Nature Train!” when it is time to move to the next spot.
- Teacher says, “I’m the conductor and run the engine! Children are the train cars...line up!” Pretend to put on a conductor’s hat, and lead students to the next location.

- Teacher asks, "What part of the train do you want to be? A people car? Toy storage car? Circus car full of clowns?"
- If a student wants to be the engine, assign them as the coal car, travelling right behind the teacher.
- Several students may want to be the caboose. If your trail is wide enough, they could link up their arms or hold hands.
- Mimic pulling the horn and say, "toot toot!"
- Once children are in line, move arms like rotating wheels on a train.
- Teacher could make tracks turn or curve for students to follow the path.
- If a student falls out of line, say "Oh no, you've been derailed!"
- Once you've reached your destination, say, "We've arrived at the Stumpy Place!" (or other named location)
- When giving a time warning, say "Two minutes to board the train!"
- When ready, put on the conductor hat, toot the horn using arm movement, and say, "All aboard the nature train! Next stop is the Gathering Tree!" (or other named place).
- Remind the students to get their train cars on the tracks (instead of get in line).
- Let the students toot the horn, too! Make it interactive!

Teacher Sandwich! - Dodge Nature Preschool

- To make a Teacher Sandwich, one teacher is the top bun and the second teacher is the bottom bun.
- Or allow a student line leader or the last student out the door who clicks off the lights to be the top and bottom buns.
- Ask, "What ingredient do you want to be to go inside the sandwich?" Let them get creative!
- This is a good opportunity for the teacher and other students to learn student food preferences or family foods.
- If a student tries to pass the top bun teacher or falls behind the bottom bun teacher, say "Don't fall out of the sandwich!" or "Oh no, you fell off the plate!" Make getting back in between the teachers fun.
- Allow time so all the students can say out loud what they are going to be.
- When you want to transition to another spot, call out, "Sandwich-making time!" Then gather the students together to create the Teacher Sandwich.

Red Light, Green Light!

- Tell the students we will play the Red Light, Green Light game.
- Explain green light is run/go and red light is stop/freeze in place.
- Let students run ahead, then call "Red Light" when you need them to freeze in place.
- Couple the calls with visual cues. Raise your arm for Green Light. Level arm flat light a stop sign for Red Light.
- If you need students farther behind to catch up with faster students say, "Everybody is frozen except..." (name student who needs to get closer to teacher).

- Use this game when students have trouble staying together as they walk/hike to your destination outside. Or when they need to burn off physical energy before they can pay attention and put on “listening ears.”

Move Like an Animal – Dodge Nature Center

- Use this game to add energy, excitement, and creativity to moving as students hike to an outdoor learning destination. This game is also useful when students in your group are trying to pass the leader or lag too far behind.
- Use this game to observe students’ large motor abilities, such as walking on tip toes, hopping on one foot, or jumping with feet together.
- Let students model action for their peers.
- Examples of animal movements are: jump like a kangaroo, stand like a flamingo, walk like a turtle, run like a cheetah, fly like an eagle, etc.

“Oh, a hiking we will go!” - Dodge Nature Preschool

- Use this song when it is time to move to the next spot.
- Adjust the lyrics to fit your situation: “Oh, a hiking we will go, a hiking we will go, on to the Schoolyard Door, a hiking we will go!”
 - Try to give students a time warning prior to using this song.