

A vibrant illustration featuring a group of diverse children engaged in various activities. At the top left, a girl plays a tambourine while another sits in a chair clapping. A boy in the top right wears a sombrero and plays maracas. In the center, a boy is shown in a dynamic dance pose. At the bottom, a boy and girl dance together, a girl hula hoops, a boy plays a guitar, and a girl in a wheelchair reads a book. The background is a solid blue color with a large yellow banner and a pink starburst graphic.

Early Years

Creative

Dance Cards

"It is time we recognised that the brain does not learn by itself; the body learns too, and if we are to educate our children properly we must encourage developmental parity between the body and brain. Physical Education and Dance are as important as the teaching of literacy and numeracy in the early learning years."

Sally Goddard Blythe

Early Years Creative Dance Programme 2021/22

**Barking &
Dagenham**

dance
network
association



Introduction

A starting point to **support** leaders/ teachers/ support staff and any other significant adults to **inspire, observe, role model, question and identify** the children's movement in order to support their **progression, confidence and love of dance.**









These cards cover everything you need to know in order to plan and deliver creative dance experiences to the Early Years.

Each section is defined by a colour to make them more user friendly.

Some of the cards are made so that the students can use them too.

There are example sessions featured within this pack and also in the appendix.

Key:

-  Dance Framework
-  Warming Up
-  Using Poetry as a Stimulus
-  Using a Story as a Stimulus
-  Using Art as a Stimulus
-  Using Music as a Stimulus
-  Using Props in Dance
-  Practical Session Ideas
-  Calm Endings

Key Points to Consider

Always find ways to INCLUDE and never EXCLUDE

Find out what children 'can do' and work from there

Work on success and then progress

Never forget the integrity of each and every child

Apply any inclusion principles to a movement / dance session as you would to all other work / activities within your setting

Exercise tolerance will need to be clarified if any specific physical needs identified



Dance

Framework

Dance Framework

**To be used for exploration, planning,
observation and discussion of children's progress in dance**

Observing children leads us into future provision and planning

What are we seeing?

Where will we take them next?

What do we need to provide in order to:

**consolidate | improve | develop | challenge | accommodate
extend their movement**

Repetition is important

Ways Into Moving

STANDING IN THE SHOES OF THE CHILD

Divergent Thinking > Possibilities > Consider

How do they see it?

How do you see it?

AIM TO:

Create a climate of learning through experiences linked to both curiosity and enjoyment

Work with their curiosity

Unlock their creativity and movement potential

Initiate and guide through exploration

Create a safe environment for their own expressions to be demonstrated and valued

Wire up their brains to become a competent mover

PROVOCATIONS

Start / Motivate / Initiate / Stimulate / Opening the door

We can use a wide range of different provocations : Visual / Auditory / Sensory / Kinaesthetic / Natural and combinations of all

Whatever is chosen should encourage dialogue between participants and leaders. Careful selection is necessary to ensure that the provocation heightens the movement awareness and does not become restrictive and dominating

CONSIDER:

What do they already know?

What are they familiar with ?

Can we use some of these things as a basis for engagement, exploration and development?

Knowledge and Understanding of Movement

Movement is the medium of dance activity so we need to be aware of the basic elements which can be explored and developed throughout our sessions to create the best opportunities for our children to get to know and understand their own bodies.

The basic elements are split into What, Where, How and Who With.

Your programme of work should include:

The basic actions to be found in dance

The body + its parts

Responses and Imagination

Physical Skills

Proprioception

Introducing, re-visiting and building on movement patterns

Physical Development

Co-ordination

Breathing

Working on cross body movement and actions

Posture

Creative Development

Core Stability

What?

Body Parts



Head



Shoulders



Arms



Elbows



Wrists



Hands & Fingers



Body



Hips



Legs



Knees

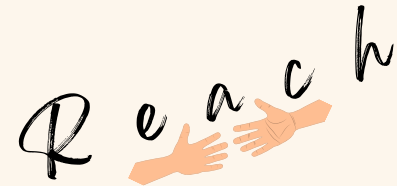
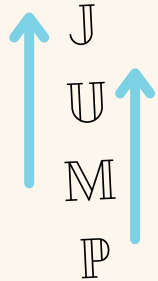
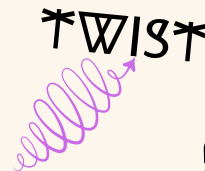


Feet



Toes

Actions



Where?



Space

Personal

General

Large

Small

Near

Far



Directions

Up

Down

Right

Left

Forward

Backward

Diagonally



Levels

Low

Medium

High



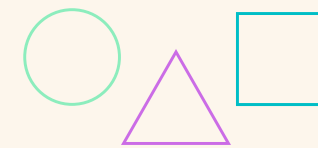
Pathways

Straight

Curved

Angular

Zigzag



Formations

Square

Arrow

Line

Circle

Semi-circle
Triangle

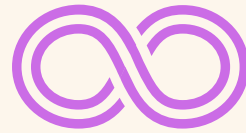
How?



Speed



Energy



Continuity



Plasticity



Stillness

Fast

Strong

Free

Straight

Pause

Slow

Light

Bound

Curved

Suspension

Acceleration

Tense

Controlled

Twisting

Hanging

Deceleration

Relaxed

Ongoing

Direct

Smooth

Firm

Successive

Flexible

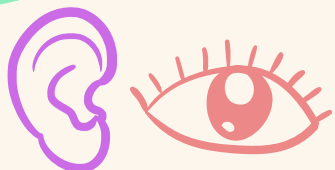
Sharp

Soft

Simultaneous

Timing

With Whom or What?



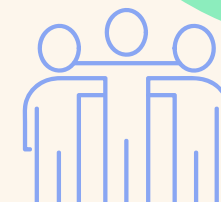
Stimuli



Individual to:



Partner



Group

Auditory

Self

Meeting

Complimentary

Unison

Visual

Body

Parting

Contrasting

Canon

Ideational

Teacher

Following

Simultaneous

Successive

Tactile

Partner

Question

Successive

Simultaneous

Kinaesthetic

Group

Answer

Supporting

Complimentary

Class

Matching

Balancing

Contrasting

Stimuli

Mirroring

Unison/Canon



Warming

Up

Warming Up

How we begin our sessions is very important as it can significantly influence the outcome of the rest of the session

Select activities which get them ready for what is to follow. Remember to 'wake up' the whole body as well as individual body parts!

Importantly this is the beginning of a great time together!

Is the space ready for us? Preparing a safe and supportive environment

Considerations: Do we know what is expected of us?

Using voice, space, bodies, sound, music, percussion

Exploring what and how our bodies can do?

Travelling / Turning / Jumping / Stopping / Holding shapes / Using the floor / Changing direction

Finding different paces to work at – speed changes

Finding our muscles / exploring our muscles
Where are they? What do they feel like? Can we find imaginative and creative ways to do this?

Inviting the children to join in or have a go – this creates a collaborative and positive approach with respect created for decision making, problem solving and meeting the needs of a wide range of children

Copy / Volunteer a move or sound watchjoin in
– who wants a go?

Warming Up

LANGUAGE

Use Open Questions:

Shall we ?

Could we ?

Would you like to...?

See if you can try...?

Would you like to try and...?

To Encourage Open Responses:

How did that feel?

What did you notice?

Did you move ...?

What body parts can you feel?

What parts of your body did you
use?

Warm Up Idea 1

Make a circle using spots to mark the spaces for dancers to stand on

Establish a starting activity using : rhymes / patterns / social activities

What can we do on our spot? Can we march on the spot? Can we shake on the spot? Can we nod?
Circle different joints: ankles, hips, shoulders etc. then what other kind of circles can we make? Can we go around in a circle? Run around the spot in a circle?

Thematic idea supported by music and language - music provides some rhythm / language / pattern / quality / mood / feeling to support the contrasting images and actions

Colours: the colours of the spots can dictate our movements eg: Blue for the ocean / Yellow for the sun / White for clouds

Blue = Sea / swimming actions ...use of space / changing levels / directions and speeds

Yellow = Sunshine / describing circles with different body parts / large circles or small circles or both / rising and sinking / rotational actions to include rolling and turning

White = Clouds / moving around the space lightly changing levels and directions

Other Warm Up Ideas

Move around the space using the spots to move over, around and on and off in response to different types of music

Find a spot to stand on and work on:

Lead introduces six different actions to the children - for example

1. Wave
2. Touch the floor
3. Turn around
4. Wide shape
5. Jump up and down
6. Point to someone

Learn the actions and try to remember and repeat them to some music.

Choose to face different ways when performing the actions.

Other Warm Up Ideas

Dance by chance

Allocate an action to each number

Roll the die 6 times to change the order of the movements

You can link these movements to an idea or theme the children want to explore.

For example: Animals

- 1: Slither
- 2: Leap
- 3: Swing
- 4: Gallop
- 5: Hands and Feet
- 6: Climbing

Development of the activity:

Using the same idea ask the children to create 4 of their own moves, the challenge is to work with the criteria given:

1 move must be HIGH 2 must be LOW 3 should be a GESTURE 4 must be a move in the MIDDLE of the room

Using Poetry

as a

Stimulus

Using Poetry as a Stimulus

Using and exploring poetry with the Early Years can be beneficial in several interlinked ways:

It creates building blocks for literacy skills and language development

It helps with the development of numeracy and music skills

It encourages a love of language

It helps nurture imagination and creativity

It improves memory

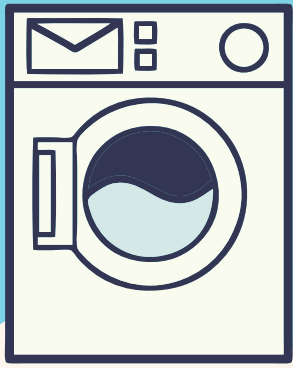
It helps with the development of emotional intelligence

It expands their vocabulary

It improves concentration and listening skills

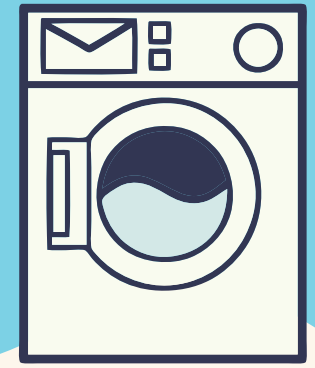
It helps with the development of social skills

by First Discoverers



Washing Machine

By Phoebe Coghlan, 2020



Cross legged, I sit on the old kitchen floor,

And I gawp at our washing machine,

I follow the whirl and the swirl of our clothes,

And the glug of the rhythmical clean,

My jumpers, like gymnasts, jump over
themselves,

As the towels roll-poly and spin.

I spy a green sock - it is there, then it's gone,
Eyes peeled I search for its twin,

The machine chugs and churns;

Bright colours whiz by,

As the tumbling picks up in pace,

T-shirts chase trousers chase boxers and
pants,

And I wonder who'll win at this race!

I stare at our gurgling, thrilling device,

Till each cycle complete with a 'ding!'

I could sit here for hours; all day and all night,

Oh it's just the most marvellous thing!

Washing Machine

By Phoebe Coghlan, 2020

Looking at the poem select some key images / words / ideas from the poem itself

This poem presents several images that lend themselves to dance.
Racing, turning, whirling and clunking and banging.

IDEA 1

Looking at the machine in action 'watching' the laundry

Explore different 'positions' 'shapes' to be in - choose 2/3/4 -
think about different levels to use with the shapes and
different facings

Can you remember them ?

Find a way to move in between the shapes that have been
chosen

Suggestions: Twist / turn / roll / rise / sink / travel /stepping
/ gliding

Practice, remember and be able to repeat

IDEA 2

Using some of the exciting language found within the poem:

GLUG
CHUG
CHURN

Find ways / explore ways to interpret /respond to those
words

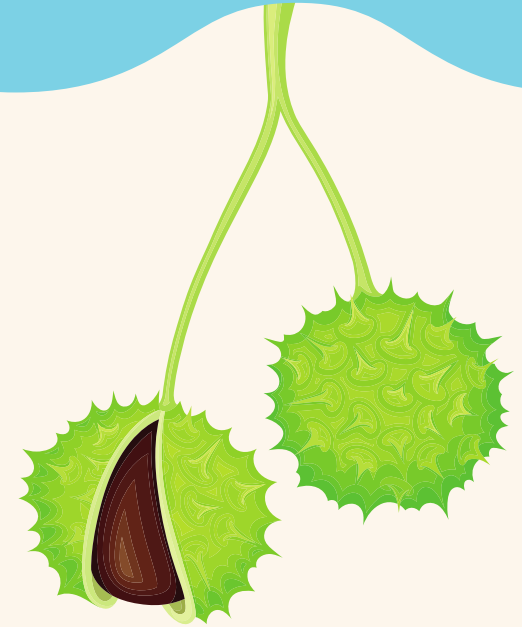
Percussion may help/supports the creative process and
create phrases for the children to develop good listening
skills, and phrasing > go and stop

Conker Tree

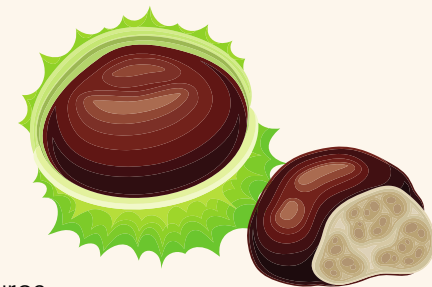
From Wriggle and Roar 'rhymes to join in with' by Julia Donaldson and Nick Sharatt



Small brown round and hard
A conker is lying underground.
Now a shoot begins to show
Now a shoot begins to grow
Tall, taller, tall as can be



The shoot is growing in to a tree
And branches grow and stretch and spread
With twigs and leaves above your head
And on a windy autumn day
The conker tree bends and branches sway
The leaves fly off and whirl around
And seeds go tumbling to the ground
Small brown round and hard



Conker Tree

From Wriggle and Roar 'rhymes to join in with' by Julia Donaldson and Nick Sharatt

Invite the children to touch, feel and discuss the conkers before working on the movement
Introduce the poem. Use the narrative of the poem to guide the actions and quality of movement.

Listen and respond

Select key ideas and explore

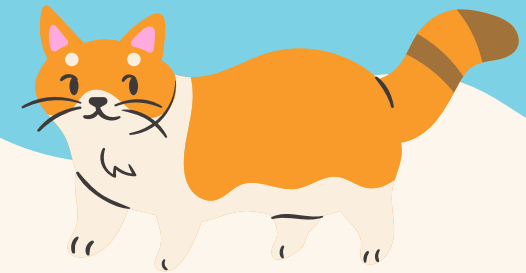
Choose words they like to respond to / improvise to

The children could create their own voice / body percussion sounds

They could select percussion to play along with or choose which instruments they think help with their movements

Can You Walk On Tiptoe

Nursery Rhyme



Can you walk on tiptoe
As softly as a cat?

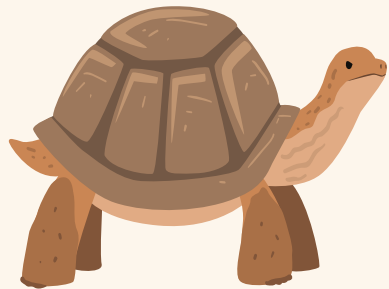
Can you stamp along the road - just like that!

Can you take some great big strides,

Just like a giant can?

Or walk along so slowly

Like a tortoise can?



Can you jump out of the pond
Just like a jumping frog?

Can you wag your busy tail

Just like a happy dog?

Can you slither like a snake

Moving on the ground?

Can you roll up very tight

Like a hedgehog small and round?





Using a Story

as a

Stimulus

Using a Story as a Stimulus

Things to remember:

- Ensure the stimulus engages the pupils in thought processes and offers a common language upon which to explore and develop movement material
- Structure the movement experiences so that they are suitable for the group and help them to achieve the appropriate learning
- Set tasks to explore, select, develop, practice and perform
- Link the outcomes and the aspects of learning - make, do, watch and feedback

Using a story as a stimulus will enable:

- Children to explore, select, create and develop their own work
- Identify and explore characters
- Use episodes, events to create a narrative structure
- Explore relationships within the story
- Springboard to explore other ideas / contrasting ideas
- Only use sections of a story

‘Man on the Moon’ by Simon Bartram.



Using the narrative structure of the story, the children will experience all of the activities that Bob takes part in.

You will also need to create a clock and some alien figures.

Movement examples using the story

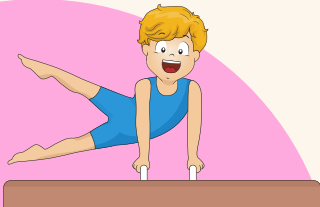
Bob blasts off to the moon everyday for work:



He is always on time (mirroring clock activity)



He does gymnastics on the moon (rolls jumps, turns, upside down)



He goes home for his bath and cocoa!! (ending and calming activities using low level and floor work)

Moon preparation warm up:



He has his breakfast before he goes (stirring the tea moves, spread butter moves, flip pancakes moves, sprinkle sugar moves)



He cleans the moon (vacuuming, wiping, gathering up the rubbish)

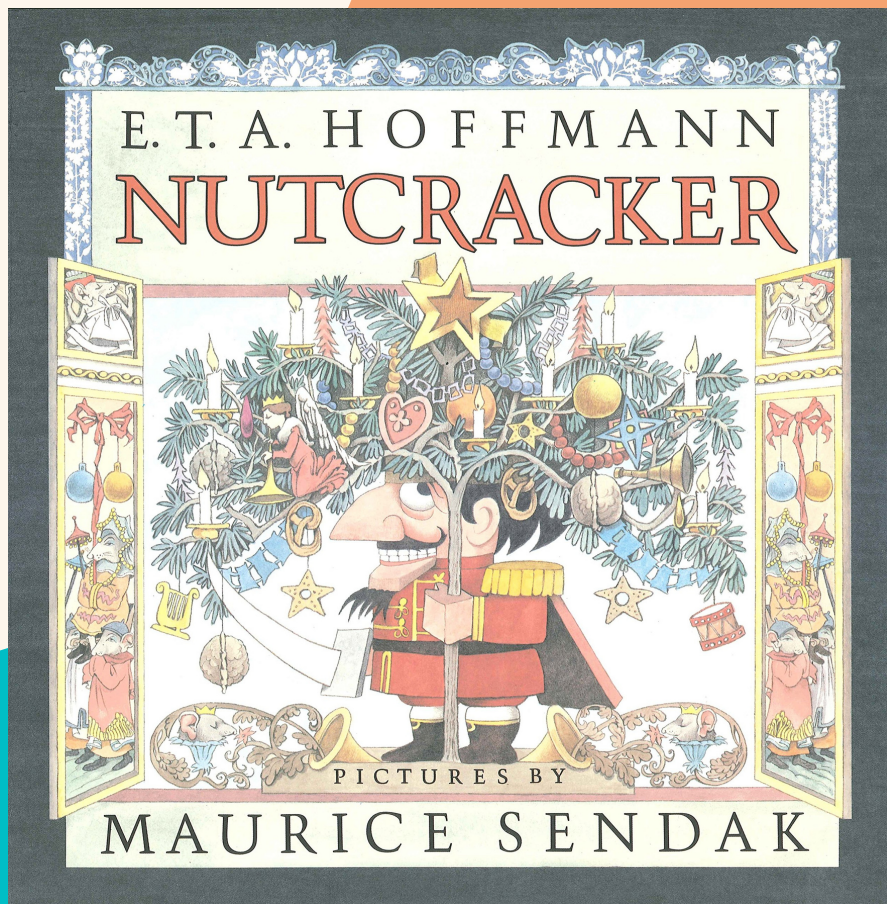


He doesn't spot any aliens on the moon (musical statues / musical hiding!!)



'The Nutcracker'

by E.T.A Hoffman



Use the story of
'The Nutcracker'
to initiate dance ideas

Movement examples using the story

Gestural work

Putting decorations on the tree
Turning and swirling - lights and tinsel

Nuts

Different shapes and sizes /the NUTCRACKER character

Specific Focus

Focus on one specific aspect eg: Lily pads and look at the flowers as a stimuli
Blooming, opening and closing, laying, floating, space work in small groups or whole class

Travelling

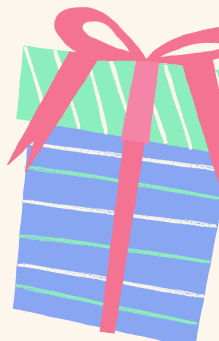
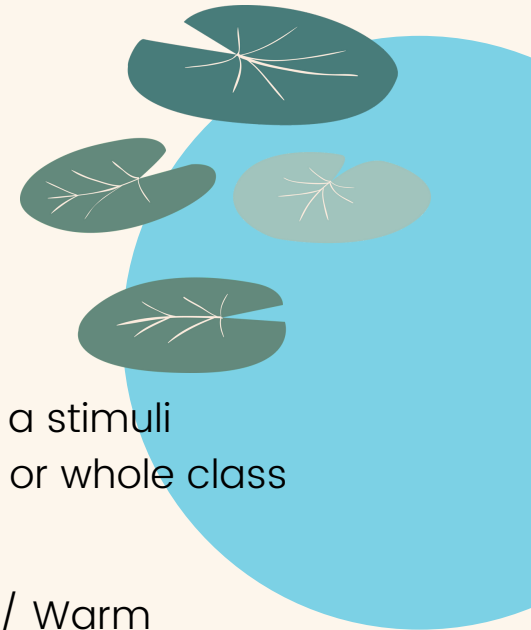
Travelling through different landscapes > Mountains / Forests/ Cold / Warm
Travelling actions / space work / dynamics

Style

Exploring music and dance styles from different genres and cultures

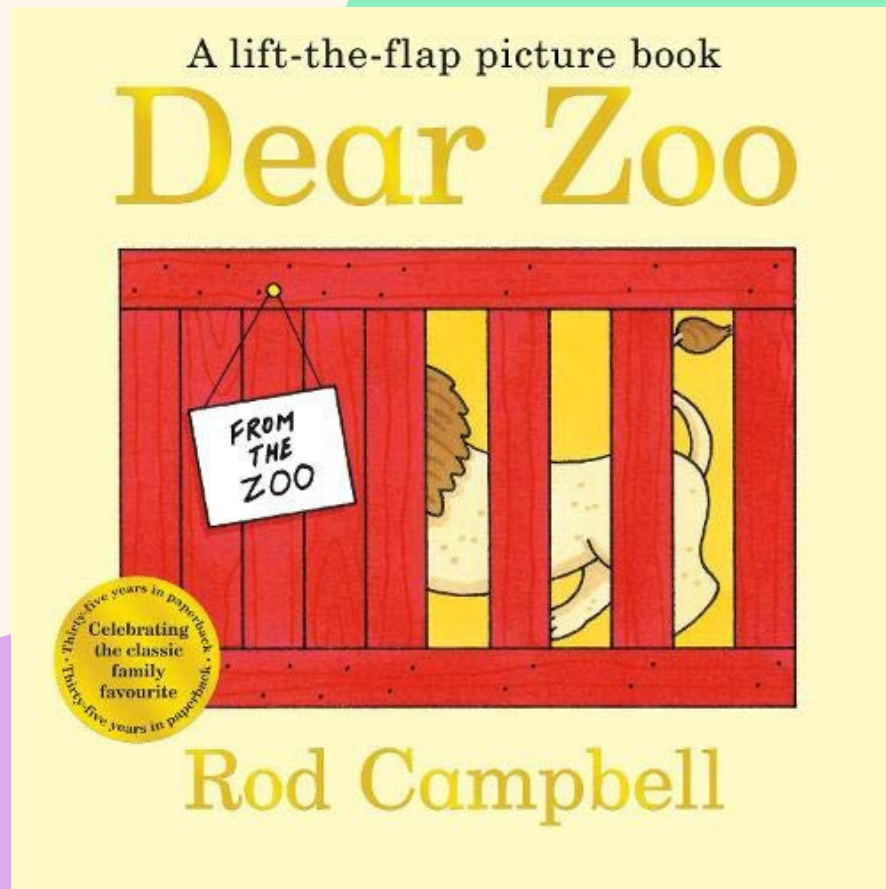
Christmas Routines

Link to gestural and whole body actions - MOOD and FEELING
Waking up / finding surprises / opening present / cooking / eating / celebrating / family



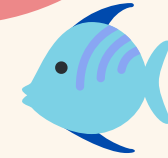
'Dear Zoo'

by Rod Campbell



Use the story of 'Dear Zoo' to initiate dance ideas

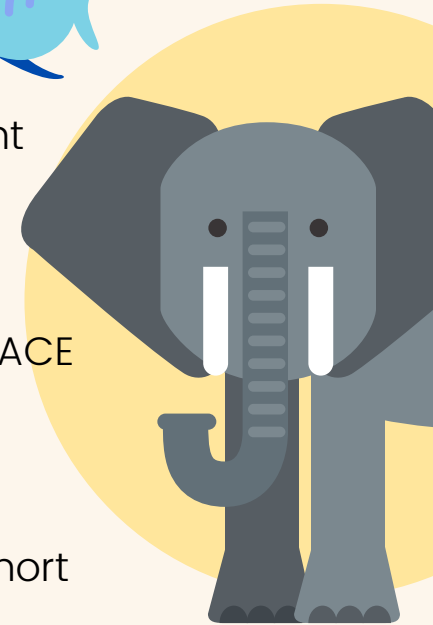
Movement examples using the story



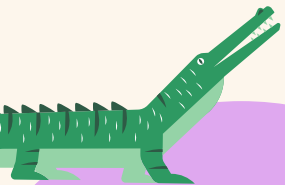
FIND different animals and talk about their CHARACTERISTICS and different ACTIONS related to them



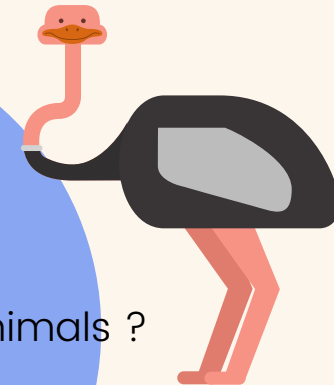
EXPLORE contrasting animal actions and DEVELOP them using DYNAMICS, SPACE and RELATIONSHIPS



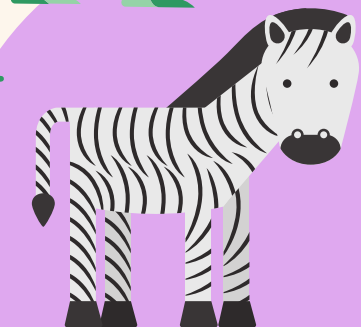
Choose two or three different actions and LINK them together to create a short PHRASE OF ACTIONS for each animal chosen



Can the children REMEMBER and REPEAT them?



Are the phrases CLEARLY showing the DIFFERENCES between the animals ?





Using Art

as a

Stimulus

Using Art as a Stimulus

Art promotes creativity.

"Creativity is the ability to think outside the proverbial box, to string two unrelated ideas together in a new way. Solutions to major problems and breakthroughs of all kinds are linked to creativity.

The ability to be creative is vital to the success of our children and the well-being of our world.

Art also helps children understand themselves and the world that they live in."

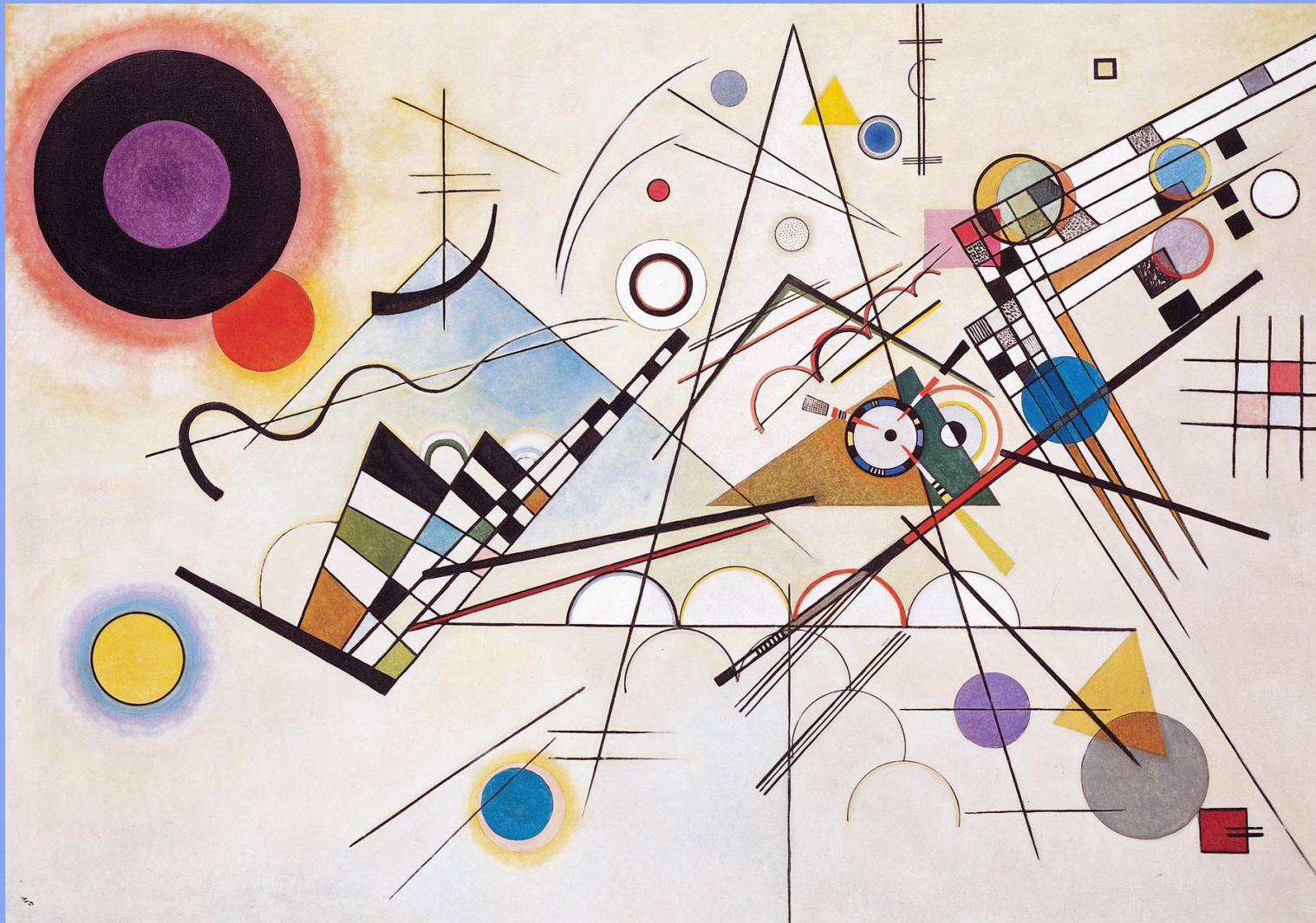
Jean Van't Hul

Simply select a painting / picture / sculpture and use the piece of work to stimulate ideas, images and language which can be explored in dance.

Reference 'dance language' as part of the mapping process : ACTIONS / SPACE / DYNAMICS
and RELATIONSHIPS

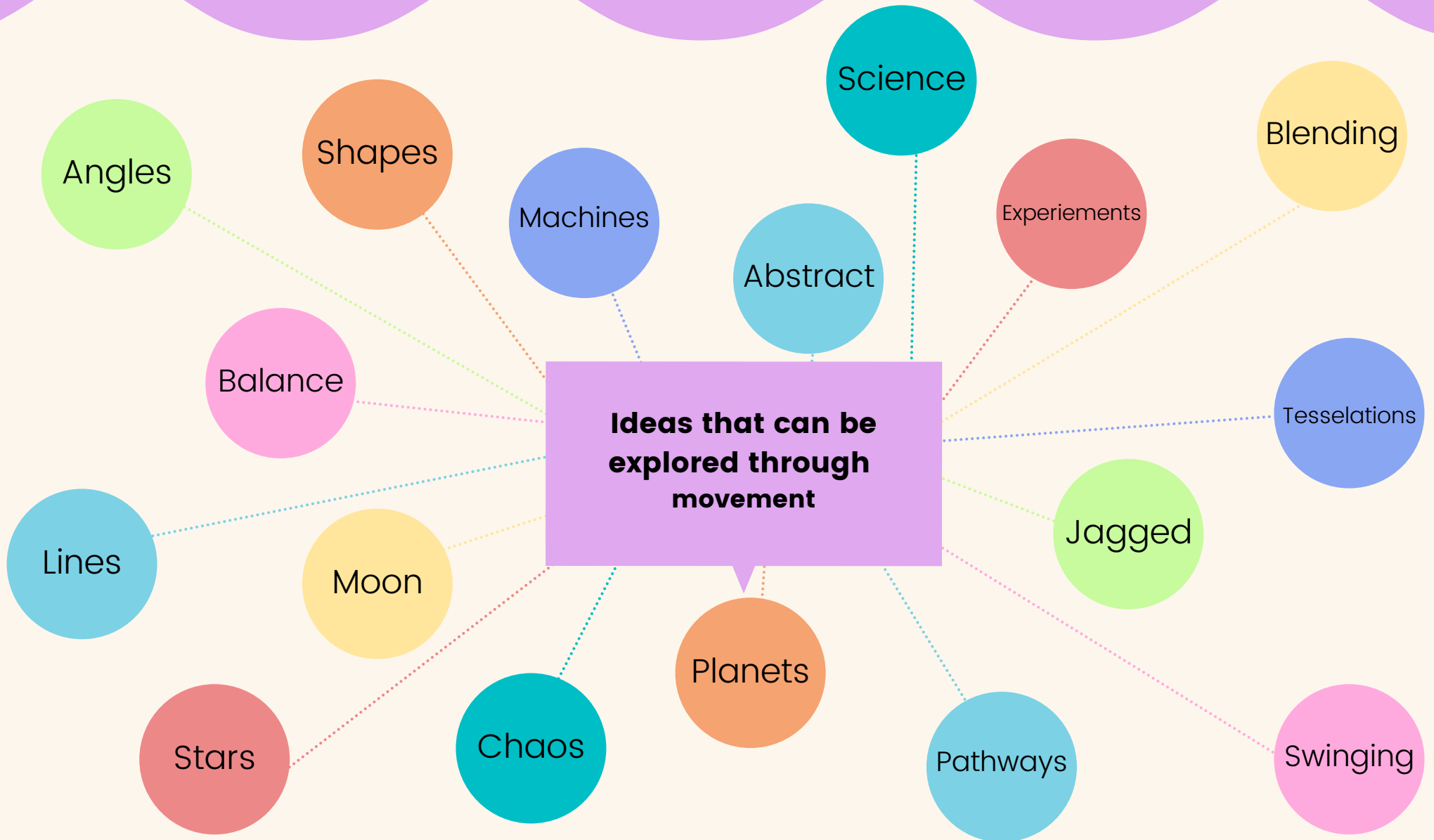
Composition VIII

by Wassily Kandinsky



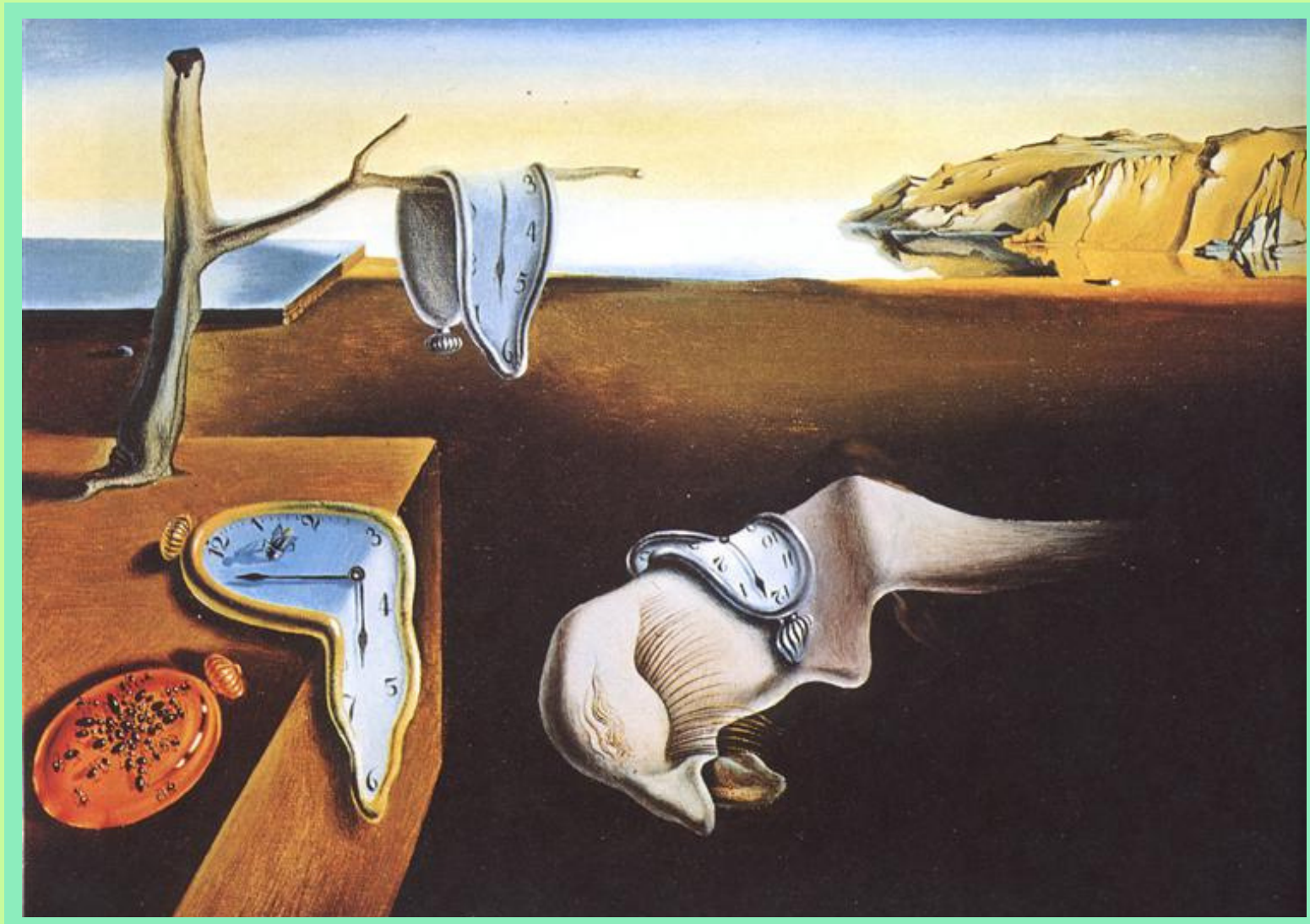
Composition VIII

by Wassily Kandinsky



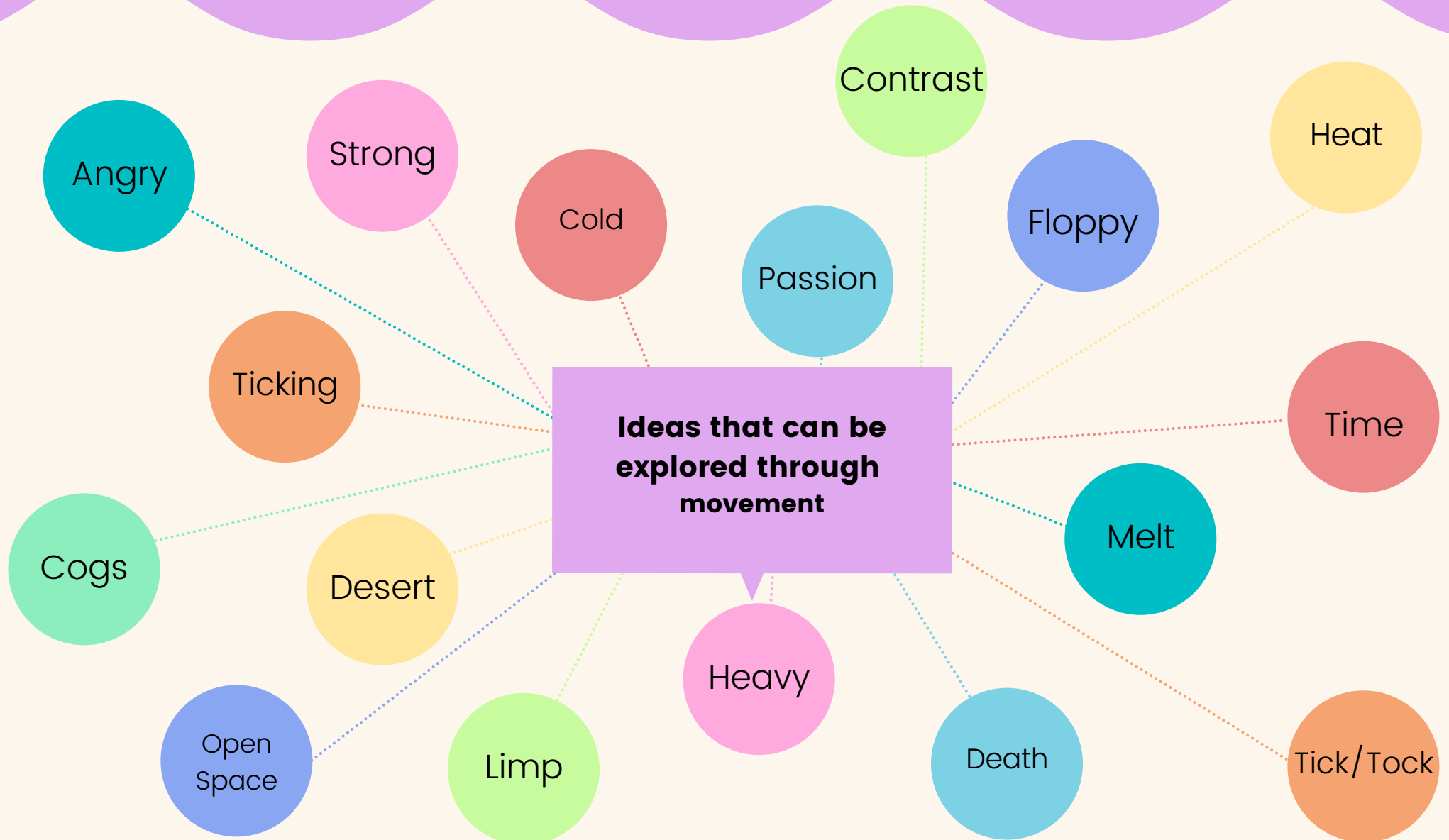
'The Persistence of Memory'

by Salvador Dali



'The Persistence of Memory'

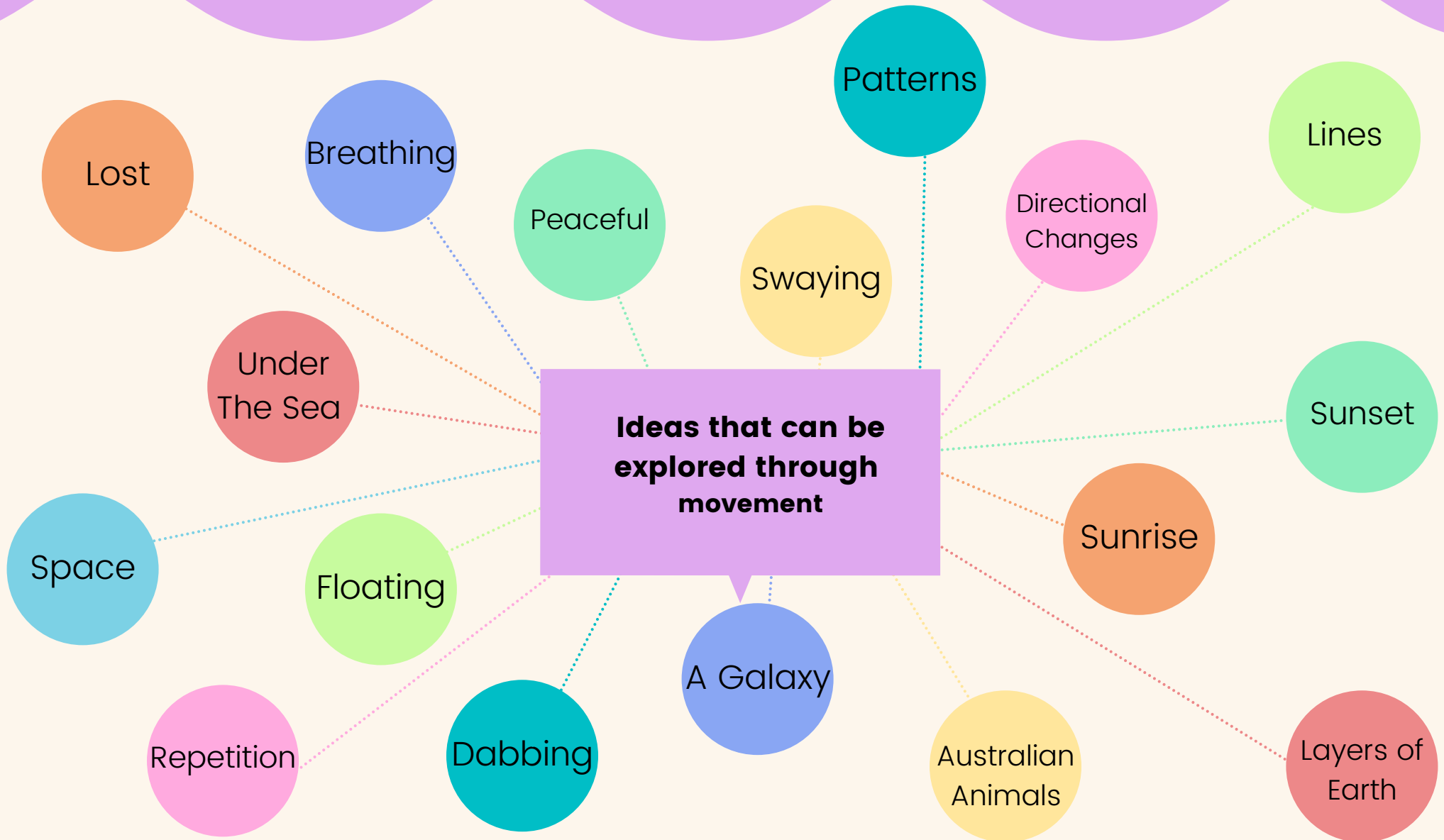
by Salvador Dali



Traditional Aboriginal Art



Traditional Aboriginal Art





Using Music

as a

Stimulus

The Use of Music in Dance

Music can accompany, create an atmosphere, initiate ideas and may be the initial provocation. It will support the development of rhythm and phrasing, expression and dynamics. It can offer some narrative, structure, style, cultural influence and a sense of time or place.



Styles / Genres / Cultural / Historical / Atmospheric / Film music /
Musical Theatre / Classical

A list of music suggestions can be found in the resource booklet

Ways to use percussion in dance

Listening to the different sounds each instrument makes

Can they describe them- are they long or short?
Are they loud or quiet?

They can be used for musical cues, signals and behaviour management



Responding to sound and rhythm

Go and Stop

Qualities of movement

Copying rhythms with different parts of their body / making sounds and rhythms on different parts of their body

Question and Answer - the instrument makes the sound and the dancer responds to that in their own way

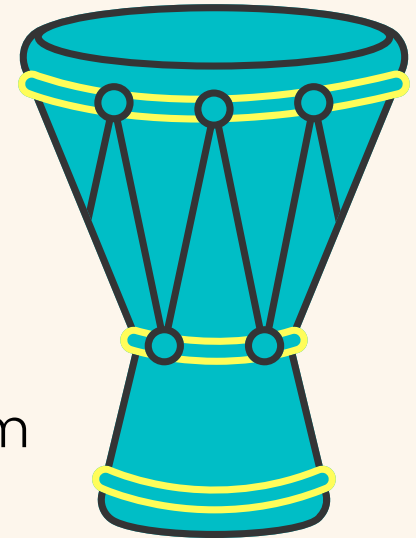
Ways to use percussion for dance



Children working with instruments

Exploring the different ways to make sound

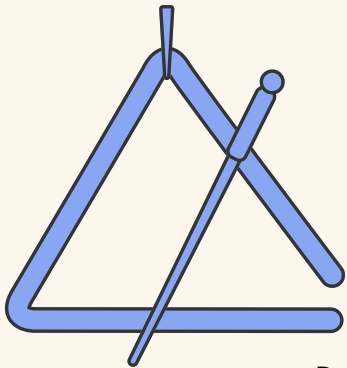
Making their own 'instruments' and dancing with them



Finding ways to move with the instruments and passing them to others to use

Placing instruments in an area for free play

Creating a sound corner





Using Props

in

Dance

Using Props in Dance

Using a wide range of props and resources within dance can:

Help to keep children's attention

Help with the development of emotional intelligence

Encourage creativity

Ignite children's imagination

Assist children to explore a wider range of movement

Help children to express themselves

Help increase their motor skills

Ribbons & Music Task

Ask for them to listen and respond to the music.

Silence - encourage them to be still...hold ribbon at one end allow it to be still...
observe the ribbon

Pick out particular moves, highlight to the others so they can try them.
Prompt moves not yet thought of for example, jump over, scrunch tight , swirl
high, low, around, snakes down on the ground, make lines on the
floor and in the air

Take the ribbon away... can we move the same way but without the ribbon?

Try different types of music and see how the movement changes

Other Ribbon Prompts

'How can the ribbon move?'
Actions: What does it do?
Space: Where does it do it?
Dynamics: How does it do it?

'Imagine taking the ribbon on a journey'

'Can you create your own painting?'

Imagine your ribbon can be dipped into different colours' Air Patterns and gestural work

'Can we use our voices to make our actions come to life?'

Quality actions responding to their own voice sounds

Mark making - large arm and shoulder actions - air patterns - Circles / lines / diagonals / crossing the mid line / one side to the other / name writing / level changing / size changing

Travel with the ribbon - making floor and air patterns

Mirroring / copying / unison and canon

Mark Making Task

Long rolls of wall lining paper + felt markers / pencils / crayons / paints

Let children make a marks on the paper - they may have specific themes / ideas / inspirations for their mark making

Observe and discuss the different shapes, patterns and doodles

Explore what they can see and what they want to talk about - eg: are there any contrasting shapes: angular shapes and flowing curves.

Then encourage the children to think about how these might be mirrored.

Would they use different dynamics to draw with their body parts?

Can they create those contrasting shapes with their bodies? Do they feel different?

Bubble Wrap Prompts

Wrap it around you
Pop it
Twist it
Sounds it can make
Scrunch it
Rip it and tear it
Walk or roll along it - how does it feel?

It could become ... a Superhero cape / a cover / an umbrella

What sounds can you hear?

Walk on it and what do you feel?
Sensory footwork - tiptoe / stamp / jump

Link to music - one example: [POPCORN by Hot Butter](#)

Theraband Ideas

Resistance ideas

Can you stretch it?

Can you squish it?

What shapes can you make and build with it?

What sounds can you make with it?

What does it look like / feel like / remind you of?

Personal Space exploration

Can you make the band change size / height / width

Use to work on muscles

Where are your muscles? Can you feel them when you move with the band? What do your muscles do?

Bean Bags Prompts

How many different ways can you carry the bean bag?

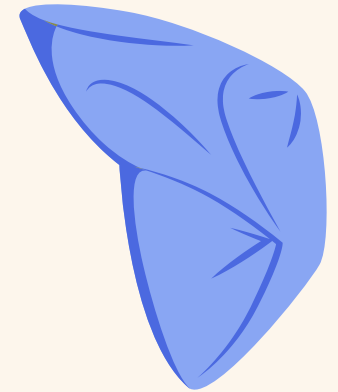
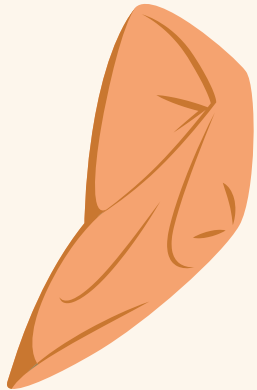
Can you hide it?

Can you balance it on your body?

How far can you throw it?

Can you catch it?

Can you arrange them into groups?

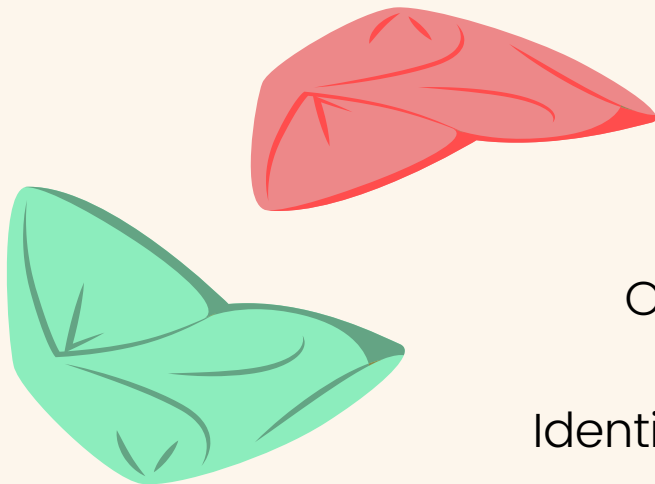


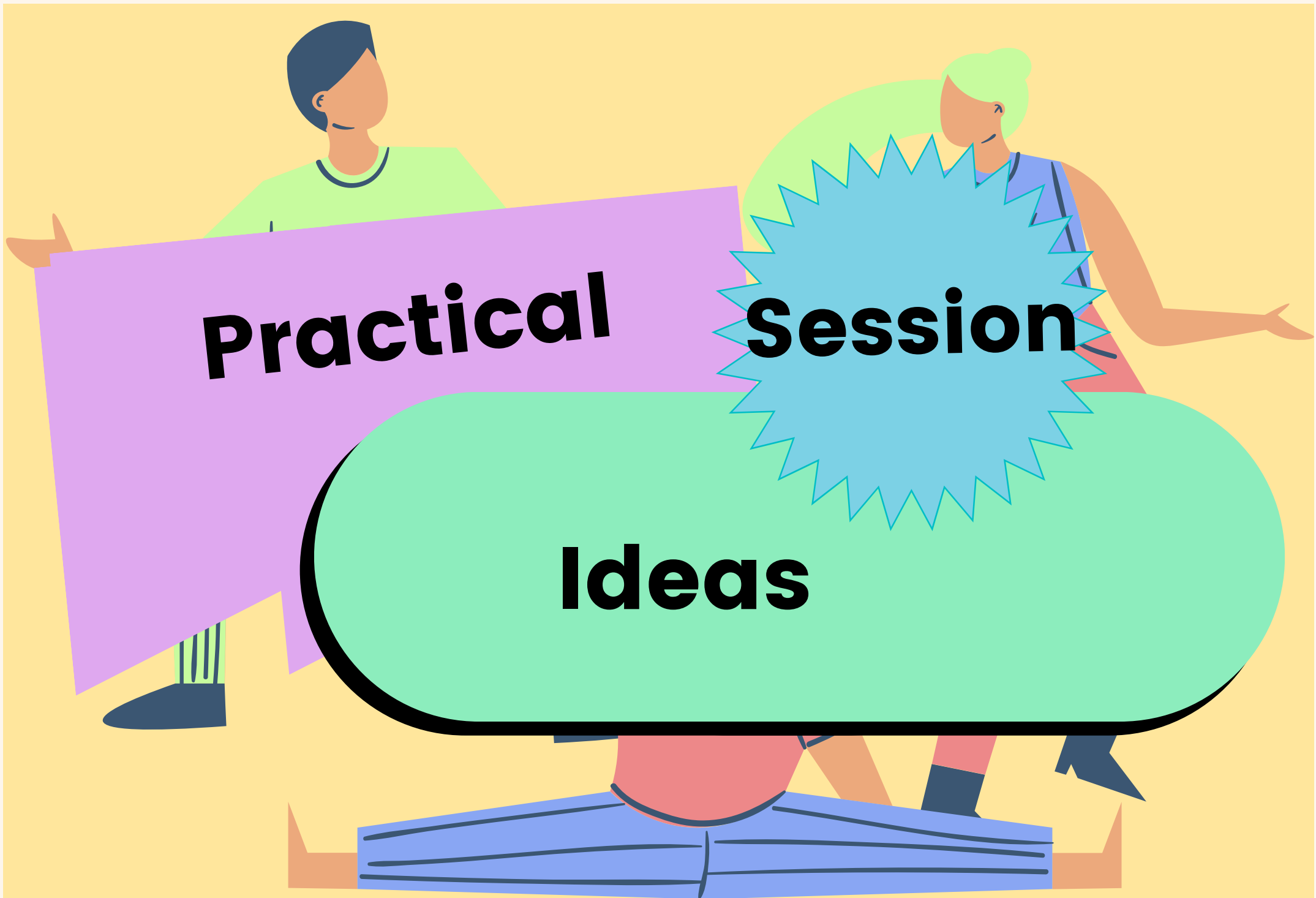
This helps with:

Balance work

Organisation and team work

Identification of different body parts





Remember...

Create an atmosphere of working together

There is no right or wrong way - there is only a response

The land of YES is a positive environment to create

Practical Session Idea 1

An Open Ended Task

Working with large pieces of LYCRA material

Make a shape that is high / low / in the middle

Can you hold on tight to your material and then let go?

How many different ways can you move with your material?

Can you make a large / tiny / wide / narrow / long / short shape with your material?

Play follow the leader - choose a child for everyone to copy their movement

Aim to incorporate the use of all directions / levels / speeds / actions / spaces / pathways

Practical Session Idea 2

All About Me

Using the letter of your name as a starting point

Create letters using body parts to 'write' or 'draw' their name (letters or any mark making)

These can be in the air, on the ground, big or small

Develop by adding:

A different body part

Different sized movements

A different body action

Changing direction

A range of dynamics

Travelling

LINK – REPEAT – JOIN – REMEMBER!

Practical Session Idea 3

Journeys

Find one place in the room to start and another place to finish your journey

Move from your start to your finish

Questions to ask:

'How did you get there?'

'Where were you going?'

'Why were you going there?'

Add in 'Traffic Lights'

Green = GO!

Amber = Get ready to move

Red = STOP!

Introduces floor patterns / ways of travelling / speed and direction of travelling / setting it in creative context

Practical Session Ideas 4

My Life Milestones

Choose a milestone from your life e.g. Birthday / Holiday / School / Major event

Explore how to represent those using :

Body shape

Body action

Body gestures

Choose three milestones and explore representing them in movement - describe these using the movements chosen

Place each milestone along the journey - on a floor pattern

All of these ideas begin to enable to children to not only explore their movement potential in a creative way but also to learn HOW to make dance by engaging in tasks which involve them in making choices and decisions

Collaborating - Responding - Choosing - Encourage good choices



Calm



Endings

Calm Endings

Calm endings enable the children to:

Learn to self-regulate.

Slow down before their next activity or the rest of the day

Improve their listening, problem-solving skills, deep breathing techniques and reflection skills

Boost their confidence and self-esteem

Quieten their mind and body

Learn to be comfortable in stillness and quietness, learning to focus on the now.

Learn that slowing down at some points throughout their day, helps them reduce anxiety.

Calm Endings

How you end your session is just as important as how you begin.

Here are some things to think about...

Focus and Calm

Thinking / Listening / Sharing

Music may be used to create a mood or be in the background

Ask open questions for children's own responses.

How does this make you feel ?

Can you move slowly to this music ?

Can you move into a small shape really quietly and smoothly?

Does the music help you to do that ?

Feedback Opportunities

Opportunities for 'child voice' – allow for personal preference if we are encouraging opinions and confidence to speak about how they feel

What did you enjoy?

Was there anything you did not enjoy or found more difficult ?

Easier / Harder / Like / Dislike / want to do again

Calm Endings

Other Ideas

Useful resources to support these ideas

Lead and follow activities

[Yoga Pretzels](#) [Yoga Cards](#)

Mirroring activities

[Children's Meditation Books](#)

Moving with smooth and slow qualities

Story Time

Breathing exercises

Relax and Breathe

Relaxation exercises and stories

Thank You to...

Our Early Years Team

Liz Clark

Commissioned Artist

Cherie Coleman

Commissioned Artist

Rachel Newby

Co-Creative Artist

Lucy Brown

Co-Creative Artist

Bobbie Gargrave

Facilitator

Thank You to...

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Dagenham Park School

Thank you for continuing to support
dna and the work that we do.

Expertise

Alison Carter,
Rachel Marie-Onder,
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and Karen Robinson
from the LBBB Early Years Team.

Your generosity and knowledge have
helped us to shape this resource in a
way that best supports Early Years
teachers.

Thank You to...

Funders

A huge thank you goes out to the LBBD team for continuing a long standing partnership with us and for enabling us to bring dance to so many young people in the Borough. Their generosity and support is appreciated by everyone at dna.

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**Barking &
Dagenham**

