

The In-Sync Homeschooler

By Joye Newman, M.A., and Carol Kranowitz, M.A.

No matter what their ages, children learn best when they move. Pediatricians, teachers and other specialists now recognize that motor skills are vital to a child's physical, emotional, academic and overall success. Yet, some educators and parents believe that sitting still is the best way to absorb information. We know that just the opposite is true.

Integrating physical movement with academic concepts can enhance both motor coordination and lesson comprehension. Movement helps grow an "In Sync" child, one whose sensory, perceptual and visual motor skills are working optimally. Every learning situation can benefit when movement is included! In fact, it may be exactly what your child—typically developing or otherwise—needs.

Think outside the box; in fact, just think OUTSIDE! Are flash cards and workbooks part of your child's routine? You can modify almost any written, academic chore into an enjoyable outdoor activity. Indeed, adding a movement component will enrich the learning experience. For example, if Luke is learning letters, have him try to form the letters with his whole body or jump on the shape of the humongous letter you have drawn with chalk on the sidewalk. If Emma enjoys pre-writing workbook activities, adapt the task from the page to your yard. Then, rather than moving her pencil to connect the dots, let her move her whole body by marching or rolling from spot to spot.

Our joint publications—*Growing an In-Sync Child: Simple, Fun Activities to Help Every Child Develop, Learn, and Grow* (Perigee, 2010) and the just-published *In-Sync Activity Cards: 50 Simple, New Activities to Help Children Develop, Learn, and Grow* (Sensory World, 2012)—offer more than 100 activities that can be easily incorporated into the homeschool environment.

Here is an example of an activity from our book, *Growing an In-Sync Child*, pp. 184-185.

WRITE THROUGH ME



Write Through Me involves writing on your child's back and having him perceive what you have drawn. The challenge is for your child to draw a reproduction of your drawing without having seen it.

Write Through Me helps your child develop and enhance:

- Tactile processing (for tying shoes and keyboarding)
- Directionality (for awareness of concepts such as up/down and left/right)
- Spatial awareness (for neat school work)
- Visual processing (for drawing and writing accurately)

What You Will Need Chalkboard and chalk, or paper, pencil or crayon

What to Do:

1. Ask Michael to sit on a chair with his back facing you.
2. Say, “I’m going to draw a design on your back. I want you to draw the same design on the chalkboard (or piece of paper).”
3. With your finger, draw a straight line (in any direction) on Michael’s back. Have him chalk a line on the board moving in the same direction as your line on his back.
4. Draw a line going in a different direction on Michael’s back and have him reproduce it on the board.

Ways to Make It More Challenging:

- Begin your shapes in different places on Michael’s back.
- Draw more complex designs and shapes for Michael to reproduce.

What to Look For:

- Michael accurately reproduces the line, moving the chalk in the same direction as you moved your finger.
- He tolerates your drawing on his back.

For more detailed discussion the why and how this and all our activities work see Part One of our book.

Here is a chart from our *In-Sync Activity Cards* set. Use this as a reference for designing your own movement activity during instruction time or whenever! Choose one word from each of the first four columns, e.g., “Walk forward, way up high, in a straight line.” Change just one word in any of these columns to make a different activity, e.g., “Jump forward, way up high, in a straight line.” Now, have fun by changing one or more words, and by integrating words from as many columns as you want. Feel free to add your own words to make every activity different and fun.

MOVEMENT	DIRECTION	LEVEL	PATHWAY	TEMPO	DYNAMIC	ENHANCEMENT
Walk	Forward	High	Straight	Fast	Loud	Balance beanbag
Run	Backward	Medium	Curved	Slow	Soft	Roll ball
Jump	Toward target	Low	Zig-zag	Medium		Bounce ball
Hop	Diagonally		Spiral			
Roll						
Leap						
Gallop						
Slide						
Creep						
Wiggle						

Remember, it takes only a few minutes each day to give your child moving experiences that will last a lifetime!

Joye Newman, a perceptual-motor therapist, is the founder and director of Kids Moving Company. Carol Kranowitz, an early education teacher, wrote *The Out-of-Sync Child*, *The Out-of-Sync Child Has Fun*, *The Goodenoughs Get In Sync*, and other books about Sensory Processing Disorder. Together, they wrote *Growing an In-Sync Child* and the new *In-Sync Activity Cards*. www.in-sync-child.com