

DEVELOPING A LARGE MOVEMENT INTEREST AREA TO SUPPORT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

(Excerpted with permission from Roberta Newman, Arkansas School-Age Credential Modules,
Module 16: *Developing and Operating Indoor Interest Areas*)

Description

School-age children need opportunities to exercise and participate in physical activities on a regular basis. If your program does not have daily access to a multi-purpose room or gym, it is important to develop an area where children can exercise, play active games, and participate in movement and dance activities.

You may want to set up a *Large Movement Interest Area* even if you do have access to a multi-purpose room or gym. In addition to playing active indoor group games, the *Large Movement Interest Area* can provide a place for dancing, rehearsing and performing a play or talent show, holding clubs like gymnastics or aerobics, or gathering for an active sing-along.

Recommended Furniture and Equipment

- CD/cassette player (may be shared with *Music* or *Dramatic Play Interest Area*)
- Piano or keyboard if available (may be shared with *Music* or *Dramatic Play Interest Area*)
- Tumbling mats
- Fitness workout steps
- Carpeting
- Balance beam
- Racks or portable cases for CD and cassette storage (may be shared with *Music Interest Area*)

Recommended Materials and Supplies

- CDs/cassette tapes (ethnic, current pop, “oldies,” classical, country/western, folk, jazz, children’s music) – may be shared with *Music Interest Area*.
- Videos for kids (fitness, aerobics, variety of dance instruction videos)
- Hula hoops, scarves, streamers, and other items to enhance creative movement and dance
- Rhythm instruments for accompanying dancing and sing-a-longs (may be shared with *Music Interest Area*)
- Nerf balls and other equipment for playing indoor active games
- Bean bags and targets
- Games like Twister; ring toss; indoor bowling, golf, basketball
- Posters depicting different physical activities – fitness and dance posters, movement station posters with a series of step-by-step directions or challenges for learning specific physical skills (dribbling a ball, balancing on one foot, dribbling between the legs)

Operating Tips for Managing the Large Movement Interest Area

- When setting up the *Large Movement Interest Area*, be sure to place it in one corner of the room and away from other interest areas that could be disturbed by active play such as: *Arts and Crafts; Blocks and construction; Quiet Corner/Comfort Zone; Science, Math, and Nature; Library/Computer/Homework.*
- If space and supplies are limited, store some of the materials in other areas and bring them to the *Large Movement Interest Area* as needed (e.g. musical instruments could be hung on a home-made portable peg board or stored in a portable cabinet and brought to the area as needed).
- Because of the high activity level associated with this area, be sure to provide close oversight and supervision and work with children to develop rules, limits, and boundaries for active indoor play.
- Create a sign-up list for the area so that children who want to rehearse a play, practice a talent show, or have a dance contest can reserve the area for a specified period.
- Offer clubs that meet several times a week in the area (e.g. fitness, jazz dance, line dancing, other dance clubs, Karaoke, etc.)
- Invite local dancers, musicians, fitness experts, and parents with these interests to give a performance, lead activities or help organize clubs in the area.