

If you found this booklet helpful we invite you to make a contribution towards our fund raising for an outside water feature! Many thanks.



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Many thanks.



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Movement is important for children to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. As adults we need to encourage and support children to develop an understanding of their bodies and then to move. A moving child is a learning child!

New babies don't have a sense of their own body and need to learn this in the context of what we call a body 'map.' They learn about their hands and feet by mouthing them and feeling sensations on them. If we keep their feet covered all the time we deprive them of this experience.



Many of our 'special' children have a poor 'body map' and benefit from feeling their bodies as often as possible.



Children have many opportunities to use their hands to paint and mark make .... next time why not let them use their feet? Make pictures, patterns.....



1/2 cup salt, 1/2 cup flour, 1/4 cup (give or take) water. Knead until dough forms. Make impression. Bake at 200 for 3 hours. Do every summer and make a stepping stone path :)  
What a cute idea!



Feet are our connection to the earth and where we meet gravity.

Research shows that children's ability to balance is far poorer in western countries maybe because so many surfaces they walk on are flat and man made. When children grow up climbing and walking on all sorts of terrain they connect with the earth but also with their bodies.



Whilst supportive footwear is essential for many ... Please remember that, at times we all need to be 'bare foot in the park!'

We can encourage this by removing shoes, boots, socks etc. and letting them have bare feet.

Songs such as 'this little piggy went to market' get children to accept touch and to try this out themselves.

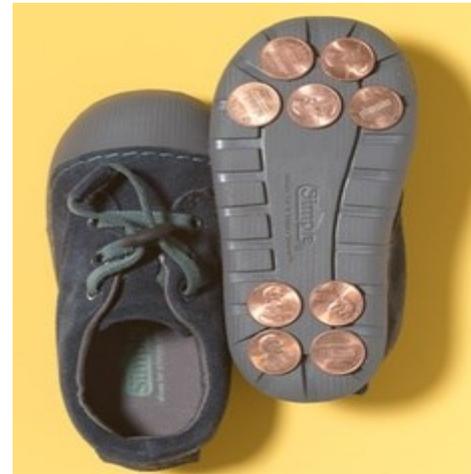


Baby oil, talc, creams rubbed into feet and massaged all help to develop this awareness of each part of the foot. As children develop— name each part e.g. heel, ankle, sole, toes, and so on.

In order to stand and walk, feet need to be very strong. Some children wear 'Piedro' boots to help to support their feet or ankles but it is important they are also bare foot at times to develop the muscles within the foot.



If the sole of a shoe or boot doesn't bend then it restricts us from walking naturally.. We develop many movements and balance in a way differently to if we walked with bare feet .



Make sounds with feet, stamp, step, tiptoe ... add pennies to soles of shoes ...



Little bells on ankles....

Encourage a range of movement by using sound!

'Bare footin' by Robert Parker, Nola records 1966

When we have bare feet the toes learn to grip and the feet have sensitive traction. This means that bare feet encourages children to navigate more carefully than wearing boots does. Boots can slip on some surfaces and can be unreliable on inclines or equipment.

When we walk with bare feet we develop a better posture as our hips are not tilted forward.



MBT (masi bare foot technology) and vibram five finger feet shoes have been developed due to the problems western society has with wearing shoes for so long.



Take those boots off and roll feet on foot rollers, a ball, a cold can from the fridge, a rolled up towel ...



Press feet onto different surfaces , stretch out those leg muscles.

Children enjoy all kinds of sensory exploration with bare feet as well as with hands ... Think about the textures .

Play games to point and flex feet ... Like a string was attached that you are pulling towards you when you sit down!



Activities to pick things up with bare feet help with balance, co-ordination and a child's concentration.

With no shoes children use their feet and leg muscles more, which encourages the blood flow. This means less aches and pains.

Children with bare feet stimulate the nerves on the bottom of their feet, which in turn stimulates the immune system. Studies have shown that there are reflexology benefits just from walking about with bare feet!

When you have bare feet you are able to explore a range of textures (which is very important for sensory integration and how we balance our nervous system).



By walking on different surfaces the skin on our feet gets harder and children learn to adapt to different surfaces. Think about sand, grass, gravel, soil, a doormat, a carpet, paving stones etc. all make us behave in different ways ....

