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Promoting French on a Daily Basis

The 4 Rs in Action – Physical Activity

e Research has shown that children learn by playing and assimilate best when learning is active. By combining play with physical activity, we take advantage of young children's natural desire to explore the world while enriching their development. That's why this article, the third in a series of four about the integration of the 4 Rs into everyday life, suggests that you get moving with your child to really anchor and enrich their French.

The 4 Rs approach promotes French according to four key words: routine, rejoicing, repetition, and rewarding. Let's see what this produces in relation to physical activity.

The GRANDIR resource ("Guide, tell, learn, nourish, discover, imagine, and laugh") offers many cards that combine physical activity and language development according to age. You can get them for free online by visiting www.fpcfbc.bc.ca > Petite enfance > GRANDIR CB.

The series of ten cards called **Bouger** offers physical development activities for children from birth to the age of three years old. The following three cards are particularly easy to incorporate into everyday life; all of them also give advice on developing language.

- **"Tout un monde"** card (from birth to 12 months) -- Develop your baby's core muscle strength and balance, while having the child learn words about his/her surrounding world.

- **"Danse avec moi"** card (from birth to three years old) -- Show your child how to move to music. If the child is only a few months old, hold him/her in your arms and really support their neck. Hum your child the songs, and in this way they will be more likely to pay attention to the language.

- **"C'est vide, c'est plein"** card (from one to three years old) – With just two boxes or baskets and some soft objects, you're not only teaching your child to grasp objects, to lift them in their arms and move around with them while talking, but you're also practicing vocabulary!

The series of ten activity cards called **PEP (pistes d'épanouissement pour les petits)** is mainly aimed at children from three to five years old. Here are two that are really easy to do at home.

- **"Touche la cible"** card – Develop your child's throwing motor skills and hand-eye coordination. With simple materials found in your home, your child also learns many concepts: from above, from below, far, near.

- **"Les mouvements d'équilibre"** card – Develop body awareness, balance, and vocabulary. Show your child different ways to keep your balance (on one leg, on the tip of the toes) and ask your child to imitate you. Play a game where, in turns, you tell the other how to balance (on your rear and with both your elbows, etc.).

These are just suggestions; please don't hesitate to explore all the cards. The next article will address the 4 Rs and healthy eating. ■



The 4 Rs and Physical Activity

ROUTINE > Integrate physical activity with the Francophone parent into everyday life. Dance, play hide-and-peek, walk, stretch. Take advantage of domestic activities, for example, by asking the child to throw articles to be recycled into the blue box.

REJOICING > Do unusual activities that entertain the child. For example, measure distances between several places in the house by counting steps (giant steps, little mouse steps, slow steps, quick steps). Go around a table or chair hopping like a rabbit, hopping on one leg, walking on all fours, walking like a crab, or shifting your weight like a bear.

REPETITION > Repeat the activities often, with small variations. For example, vary the distance (for throwing, walking, running, jumping), pace (fast, slow, following a musical tune). Constantly describe what you do, what you see and feel. Encourage the child to do the same.

REWARDING > Take into account the age and strength of the child. Congratulate the child if he/she reaches a target or wins a race if necessary, but above all, the important thing is to have fun moving, in French. "On s'amuse bien quand on... n'est-ce pas?", "Bravo! Tu m'as attrapé!".