

Motor Development – The Sand Laboratory

Let him come and go freely ... let him touch real things and combine his impressions for himself.

– Anne Sullivan, teacher



What are children learning in The Sand Laboratory?

Children are naturally curious. They use their bodies to investigate their world. They also use motions to represent thoughts and feelings, and to express their responses to literature, music, and the visual arts. Children need regular physical activities to help them improve their motor skills – jumping, running, and balancing for large muscle (gross motor) development, and threading, cutting, and pouring for small muscle (fine motor) development.

Consider these links between learning and motor development:

- When children practice pouring sand into and out of containers, they gain strength in and control over their movements.
- By using tools, children experiment with cause and effect and learn that they have control over their environment.
- When children trace pictures in the sand, they refine fine motor skills which will later be used for writing.

What can I do to support my child's motor development?

- Allow your child to discover his or her own different ways to use the test tubes, measuring cups, spoons, and balances at the sand table.
- Ask your child to describe how the sand feels and how it moves when being poured and sifted.

More resources:

Stages of motor development from birth to age three: www.parentingme.com/motordev.htm

Simple sensory-motor and other activities you can do with your child:

www.preschoolexpress.com

Preschool Play and Learn: 150 Fun Games and Learning Activities for Preschoolers from Three to Six Years, by Penny Warner, Meadowbrook Press, 2000

The museum uses Safe Sand, a fine white sand that does not contain harmful dust found in most of the sand sold in stores. Safe Sand is available at Lakeshore School Supply or The Safe Sand Company at www.safesand.com



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