

5. Children need ample opportunities to move their bodies and use their voices.

What We Believe

We believe that children need ample opportunities to move their bodies and use their voices because active expression is essential to their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Movement and vocal expression help children explore the world, build coordination, communicate needs, and develop confidence. When children are free to move and speak, they learn to self-regulate, collaborate, and engage more deeply in their environment.

Why This is Important

Providing opportunities for children to move their bodies and use their voices is vital in early childhood settings because it supports whole-child development. Movement helps build motor skills, body awareness, and brain development, while vocal expression fosters language, communication, and self-confidence. These forms of expression are how young children explore, process emotions, and connect with others. Without space to move and speak freely, children may struggle to engage, regulate themselves, or feel heard—making this a core component of meaningful early learning environments.

✓ What it looks like when we get it right.	✗ What it feels like when we get it wrong.
Children learn through songs with gestures, dancing, building with large blocks, or acting out stories. The classroom includes space for both active and quiet play. Children are engaged, joyful, and able to focus better.	Children are expected to sit still for long periods, with minimal opportunities to move during the day. Children become restless, disengaged, or act out. They may feel frustrated or labeled as "disruptive" for having natural, age-appropriate energy and needs
Children are encouraged to share ideas, ask questions, sing, tell stories, and express emotions through words. Educators actively listen and respond with respect and understanding. Children feel heard, valued, and confident.	Children are frequently told to "be quiet" or "use an indoor voice," and are often discouraged from speaking unless spoken to. Children may feel silenced or unimportant. Over time, this can affect their confidence, language development, and willingness to participate.
Children have daily access to outdoor play areas, obstacle courses, nature walks, and climbing and running activities. Movement is seen as essential, not optional.	Outdoor time is canceled often or viewed as less important than academic instruction. Children may feel confined or anxious, missing opportunities for physical growth and stress relief.