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CREATIVE MOVEMENT AND THE
LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The need for individualized instruction is a continual challenge to educators today. This stems from recognition of each child as a unique human being with special needs and special talents. Concerned teachers are constantly seeking appropriate methods and materials to meet these needs and to insure that each child will develop to his full potential. This is especially true for the learning disabled child. Programs for children with learning disabilities must be concerned not only with the child's psycholinguistic and/or academic strengths and deficits, but also with the child's social and emotional development.

For the child who has experienced failure in the majority of his academic encounters, innovative approaches and methods must be utilized to develop both his psychological and academic growth. One such approach which shows promise for meeting the special needs of the learning disabled child is expression through creative movement.
Creative movement can be applied to several areas in the curriculum. First, it may be included to provide experiences which have a positive effect on the child's self-concept. For the learning disabled child, school is often a difficult experience with frustrations and failure. Creative movement requires only that the child be himself and express his personal ideas. Creative movement provides an activity at which he cannot fail.

Second, creative movement may be used to teach more efficiently and to develop concept formation in academic areas. Movement is a form of expression and can be of value to the teacher of the learning disabled child when working in such areas as language skills, verbal expression, or motor coordination.

Third, test results may indicate a disability in the area of manual expression. For such children, creative movement may be directed toward the development of this particular skill area.

The purpose of this paper was to answer the researcher's questions related to creative movement. These included:

1) Can creative movement be justified as a useful tool in the curriculum for children with learning disabilities?

2) What research has been done regarding the use of creative movement in the classroom?
3) How can creative movement be used to develop various curriculum areas?

4) What are some possible suggestions or creative movement activities that can be applied by the teacher of children with learning disabilities?

This purpose was achieved through reading books, portions of books, and research articles selected in accordance with the preceding questions. Research materials were reviewed and summarized, and the writer was able to draw resulting conclusions.

Limitations

Research was limited to material published since 1956. The literature reviewed dealt with children of elementary school age, some of whom were learning disabled.

Definition of Terms

Each of the following definitions were developed from a variety of sources and these terms were selected by the writer to convey the following meanings.

Imagination—An act of forming mental images of that which is not actually present to the senses. It is the ability to see the unseen.

Creative imagination—The ability to form unique and original mental images. Previous knowledge may be recalled and adapted or combined with other images to produce new images or ideas.
Creative movement--Any form of motor expression resulting from an idea formed through the individual's creative imagination. Emphasis is placed not so much on the end movements, but rather on the processes involved in creating these movements.

Summary

In this chapter the writer's purpose was stated. This included four questions developed for research related to creative movement and the learning disabled child. The writer's limitations and definitions of necessary terms were also given.
CHAPTER II

THE VALUES OF CREATIVE MOVEMENT

Motor and Perceptual Learning

The experiences a child encounters before entering school are culturally determined. Early learnings reflect the social patterns, customs, and cultural milieu of his society.

Godfrey and Kephart describe this preschool learning as a hierarchy of activities:

A certain body of activities is presented in a certain order. Rough age levels have been established within which it is felt the child is ready for a particular type of learning situation. We recognize that certain activities require previous learning of more basic skills.¹

This hierarchy is reflected in today’s educational toys, each noting the age level for which it is applicable as a learning tool.

Godfrey and Kephart state that school curriculum is likewise culturally determined and hierarchical. "The activities are rigidly structured, the order of presentation

is carefully planned."¹ This school curriculum is designed to favor the 'average' child. It assumes that the child has acquired a certain number of preschool skills and attitudes which are important as underlying skills, necessary for the activities presented in school. These are often termed readiness skills.

A large proportion of the learning involved in the development of readiness skills is motor learning. "An infant's first learnings are motor learnings. Later, more complex learnings, such as perception and concept formation, depend on and utilize these basic motor learnings."²

These motor learnings which contribute to the child's exploration of his environment are of the greatest significance for education. The child learns through movement through space and the manipulation of objects.

Godfrey and Kephart present a hierarchy of motor learnings acquired during the early childhood years. They explain four stages of development. During the first stage the child gains knowledge of his relationship to gravity through his maintenance of balance and posture. This is followed by the locomotion period in which the child learns to move his body through space. Activities include crawling, walking, running, jumping, etc. During the third

¹Ibid.
stage the child learns through contact and manipulation of objects. Activities are related to three phases of contact: reach, grasp, and release. The final period discussed by the authors was termed the stage of receipt and propulsion. Here, the child investigates the movement of objects in space. Knowledge is gained through participation in activities in which the child makes contact with a moving object or produces movement on an object.

Concomitant with motor learning is a parallel process of perceptual learning. Godfrey and Kephart explain, "Meaning is given to perceptual patterns through a comparison of their data with meaningful motor data which the child has already begun to build."¹ It is through such perceptual motor matching that the child learns to interpret perceptual information. Through such matching, the perceptual world and the motor world become one.

Not all children follow these stages of development at the normal pace. Some children enter school with an incomplete set of basic motor experiences. The authors attribute this to three possible etiologies: "the organism may not be intact anatomically, or physiologically, the organism may not be intact emotionally, the organism may be experientially incomplete."²

¹Ibid., p. 16.
²Ibid., p. 12.
Once in school such children may exhibit, in varying degrees, one or more of the following behaviors: "poor in reading skills, writes poorly, cannot differentiate the trivial from the important, poor study habits, limited attention span, considers himself an academic failure."\(^1\)

These children will require learning experiences designed specifically for them. Material will need to be presented in a form from which they can obtain information in spite of their particular difficulty.

**Social, Emotional and Spiritual Needs**

Before zeroing in on these more specific needs of the exceptional child and offering one possible solution toward meeting these needs, the research will review the more general social, emotional, and spiritual needs of all children as discussed by Siks.

"Every child needs the feeling that he belongs; that he is one of a group; that he is liked for being himself."\(^2\) There are times when the child needs to be the center of attention to help satisfy these needs. He needs to be frequently reassured that he has contributed or helped.

Emotionally, every child has feelings. He needs to know that all feelings are natural, but he needs to learn

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to channel his feelings in acceptable ways. He needs help in learning how to release and control his feelings. All children need to experience the feeling of success.

Siks describes each child as a unique human being with an individual identity: a quality of distinction. The child's spiritual needs can be met through the development of his creative spirit. He needs help in exercising and developing it. Often a child's spirit is hidden away; he will need help arousing and discovering it so it can grow.

Traditionally, children have been encouraged and have received rewards for learning that which has already been determined, remembering that which is already known, and conserving existing knowledge. Acquisition and retention of this basic knowledge is a necessary learning function. However, this is not the place to stop if intellectual potential is to be developed to the fullest. "Children should be encouraged and given the opportunity to explore the undetermined, revise that which is known, and create what might be." ¹

Stelig points to another area of educational needs. He states that:

Linguists have long pointed out the primacy of oral language, i.e., the importance of speech. As adults, we use whatever oral proficiency we have developed. In most school classrooms basic materials of language arts programs include handwriting, spelling, and English. They lack materials which specifically relate to the oral

arts—listening and speaking. While most children do get some experiences in oral language in the primary grades (e.g., show and tell) it is rather limited and are almost never a part of the on-going language arts program.¹

One possible solution directed toward meeting these needs is to include a creative movement program as part of the classroom curriculum. Creative movement allows an opportunity for creativity, self-discovery, and self-direction. It offers valuable experiences to enhance a child's personal and creative growth as well as contributing to his academic development. Through a creative movement program a child can do childish things in an atmosphere where he need not feel guilty of enjoying himself. Creative movement is an activity which capitalizes upon the natural imaginations of children.

Creative play is possibly the most common childhood activity. Whether it is Cowboys and Indians or playing house, children love to pretend and imagine. Creative movement cultivates this and offers interesting stimulation for children to exercise their creativity.

Siks lists several developmental values found in creative movement as most evident in contributing to the child's growth and personality development. The first value is the development of confidence and creative expression. Creative movement provides an opportunity to develop

confidence and to use creative powers. Individuality is constantly recognized and encouraged.

Secondly, creative movement experiences lead toward growth in social attitudes and relationships. Activities require teamwork and cooperation. It gives every child an opportunity to feel important.

Next, emotional stability is developed. Through creative movement experiences, children are guided to recognize and control their emotions, to stir and release their inner feelings.

Creative movement promotes independent thinking. Exercises encourage individuality and creative thinking. Children are continuously praised for their inventive ideas. The goals and purposes of creative movement do not involve products, or what is actually done by the children, but are concerned with the thought processes used to create the movements.

Finally, creative movement helps satisfy the physical needs of young children. The young child is active. He needs opportunities to bring his entire self into action. Creative movement experiences serve as a channel to release some of this physical energy. The young child also needs a frequent change of physical position. He needs active moments as well as quiet ones.

Needs of the Exceptional Child

Besides helping to meet the needs of the normal child, creative movement experiences can be applied toward meeting the special needs of the exceptional child.
Godfrey and Kephart define the exceptional child as "any child who deviates sufficiently from the accepted norm to require special provision in the educational system." The exceptional child often experiences failure, discouragement and frustration in his daily activities. He competes in a society which places strong emphasis upon academic performance and success, yet he must face these challenges, knowing he lacks many of the skills necessary for achievement.

Special classes and assistance have provided a positive learning environment. However, academic accomplishment is only one part of a total program in special education.

"The exceptional child needs to experience success in his physical surroundings. He frequently suffers from inadequate spatial awareness, lack of body image, and limited coordination." Throughout the day he is constantly confronted with these physical inadequacies and is unable to compete with his peers.

Many physical education programs have attempted to remedy the situation through specialized training,


particularly in the perceptual-motor area. The fields of movement exploration and problem-solving also offer the child a means of improving motor skills without competition or fear of failure. However, the element of creativity is missing.

Creative movement also offers the exceptional child an opportunity to explore space, improve body image, and gain coordination in a relaxed atmosphere. However, creative movement experiences stress movement as a form of self-expression. "Creative movement should be included in every special education program." \(^1\)

Another purpose of creative movement which is of special importance to the learning-disabled child is increasing the child's communication skills. Since many of these children have speech and language related disabilities, the creative movement experiences can be geared toward remediating these specific deficits. This approach is accommodating to the child because his body, not his language is the spokesman.

A final objective of creative movement especially significant for the learning disabled child is to free him of his fear of failure and to rekindle a positive self-image. Every child who designs movement on his own can experience success. There are no right or wrong answers. These successful experiences can instill a pride in oneself and

\(^1\)Ibid.
build up a sense of accomplishment. Within a successful, secure environment the exceptional child is able to free his imagination to become a part of nature, animate beings, or fantasy characters.

**Educational Purposes**

Besides developmental values, creative movement satisfies educational purposes.

Creative movement is not a frill, or a minor part of physical education, or music, or an extracurricular activity. Awareness of children's need for action, desire for expression, and urge to create necessitate thinking of creative movement as an integral part of the curriculum.1

Helping children to develop as creative individuals and helping them to live together cooperatively are main concerns of education. School programs which are meaningful to children place emphasis upon their development, rather than on just skills and subject matter.

One educational purpose of creative movement directed toward all children is to reinforce learning concepts. This is similar to 'learning by doing.'

When a student acts upon a theme it becomes personally significant to him. The information he gains from the experience is incorporated into his memory for future use. Recall is easier if a child has actually participated in an exercise. Holidays, historical events, famous people, changes in nature, etc., can become more meaningful.2

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2 Kokaska, *Creative Movement for Special Education*, p. 3.
Creative movement requires an integrated level of thinking. The child creates through experimenting, trial and error, and constructing. Creative movement exercises demand more than an objective response from the child. It is important to any school curriculum.

Of greatest importance to the teacher of learning disabled children are the educational values of creative movement in teaching the language arts. Children with learning disabilities commonly experience difficulty in the areas of reading, writing, and spelling. Besides enhancing the acquisition of these traditional language skills, creative movement develops skills related to oral language and body language. "Among the areas of language arts positively affected by creative movement sessions are paralanguage (the use of stress, pitch, and juncture), kinesics (body language), and spontaneous oral language."¹ These aspects of the language arts can be very important to the exceptional child since they frequently must rely on oral expression and body language.

A second educational principle especially important to a learning disabilities program is the development of motor skills. Godfrey and Kephart explain two specific values of a movement program. First, to develop understandings of voluntary movement and the ways individuals may organize their own movements. Attention can be given

¹Stewig, *Spontaneous Drama: A Language Art*, p. 31.
to gross motor development as well as to fine motor skills. Secondly, to enrich understanding of socially approved patterns of personal behavior.

Kokaska adds the development of perceptual skills as a result of creative movement activities. "Perceptual awareness is a natural consequence of movement as children interpret and express motion in a unique, personal manner."\(^1\)

Now that the developmental and educational values of creative movement have been presented, the researcher will break the term 'creative movement' into its two components and discuss the implications of each: creativity and movement.

**Creativity**

Over the past decade, educators and psychologists have expressed an increasing interest in the perceptive, imaginative, and creative abilities of children. Creativity is a dynamic element within all children making it possible for them to do things which they never dreamed they could do. It is necessary for imaginative and creative talent to be cultivated and rewarded if a child is to develop into a healthy, mentally alert, and productive adult.\(^2\)

Creative potential resides in every individual, in varying degrees. Children differ in their creative abilities. The ability to recognize the potential of the creative child is the key to unlocking his talent.\\

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\(^1\) Kokaska, *Creative Movement for Special Education*, p. 1.

potential, just as they differ in their rate of growth, experience, and intellectual capacity. This difference is evident as children are observed expressing themselves through such mediums as art, music, or writing.

Unless a child's creative abilities are developed they remain dormant and are of little use to him. Some children whose imaginations are noticeably strong find ways to use and develop them by themselves. However, the greatest number of children need constant encouragement to keep alive and develop their imaginative facilities. The student can be trained to use more productively the creative talent he innately possesses.

The extent to which it can be developed "depends on the experiences to which children are exposed, the opportunities they are given for expression, and the encouragement they receive in participating in activities." Creative growth begins in the early childhood years. Kneller described the stages of creative growth theorized by Jean Piaget.

Piaget called the first two years of life the sensorimotor period. During this time the child, lacking language, can perform only motor acts, which may display some features of intelligence but are not yet operational. The next two years are a time of preconceptual thought. The child reasons from one particular thing to another, but cannot

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generalize. Intuitive thought develops during the ages of four to seven. The child's thoughts are not yet freed from his perceptions and remain concrete. The next stage is termed the period of concrete operations and develops during the years of seven to eleven. Now the child's reasoning takes on a logical pattern, but he is not wholly freed from concrete data. The final period, ages eleven to fifteen years, is one of propositional or formal operations. The child attains the capacity for reasoning. He can draw implications and make predictions. A person's creative power grows parallel with his body, reaching its peak in the late teens.

Kneller points to several obstacles to creative growth.

The main obstacles to growth of creativity seem to be cultural rather than biological. During the preschool years the major brake on creativity is the tendency of our culture increasingly to shorten the period of play and imagination, so that by the time the child has developed intellectually to the stage at which he can engage in sound creative thinking, he has come too often to regard his imagination as an inferior facility.¹ The child does not abandon creativity but does so under pressure from adults who want him to think and act realistically.

In school one block to creativity may be the teacher's decision to maintain discipline at the expense of initiative

and spontaneity. However, according to Kneller, an even more powerful obstacle is the pressure of peers to stress the harmony of the group rather than the individual. The author added a further obstacle to be an overemphasis on sex roles. By encouraging boys and girls to keep their own roles their creative growth is inhibited.

The correlation between intelligence and creativity is high but not absolute. "Children with low or even average IQs tend toward low or average creativity. The opposite, however, is not necessarily true. A high IQ does not guarantee creativity."¹

The self is the focal point throughout the creative process. It is what the individual thinks, feels, sees, and expresses in his own way. Andrews describes the creative process:

The creative process starts with the individual, is directed by the experiences which he has had, and ends in a form of new expression. The creative process utilizes conscious effort. The child deals with both feelings and concepts which must be 'said' by him in a form of expression which is his very own.

The fundamental basis for creative expression is found in experiences. These consist of things a child does for the first time, in a way which is new to him. Experiences surround children. However, they need to be selected and

¹Ibid., p. 8.

arranged according to the specific needs and stages of development of individual children. Children need to interpret, modify, or reassemble the experience and then express it outwardly. This is an on-going process of growth and development.

The need for individualized help in developing his creative spirit is especially important for the child with learning disabilities. His poor self-concept will tend to suppress his creative spirit, allowing it to remain dormant and undeveloped. Learning disabled children need a variety of opportunities to provide for achievement and a chance to excel. They need to develop confidence and a feeling of self-worth. A series of successful experiences can give the child a good feeling about himself; improvement of self-concept may parallel creative growth.

If creative activity is suppressed or if parents and teachers compare a child's effort with previous products, or with those of other children, the spark may be lost forever. Children normally aspire for perfection, but lose interest quickly if discouraged or pressured. Teachers must help the child develop feelings of worth and accomplishment and avoid making harmful comparisons.

A feeling of inadequacy may cause resentment of adult authority, failure, lack of appreciation, and/or unruliness in school or at home. Andrews described behaviors which are commonly manifested as a result of a poor self-concept.
Troubled thoughts are often deep-seated and do not readily appear on the surface. Coughing, weeping, throwing and breaking things, withdrawing, sucking thumbs, biting nails, and pulling and twisting hair may be outward manifestations of tensions, worries, jealousies, and feelings of insecurity or rejection.  

Siks listed five ways creative growth helps improve one's daily life. First, imagination helps an individual transform his environment or improve his physical surroundings. For example, building a tree house, creating a puppet show, or painting a picture requires application of creativity in physical ways.

Second, creativity leads to resourcefulness in meeting unexpected situations. The child develops a perceptive attitude toward solving problems or meeting emergencies.

Next, the author stated that a creative individual is able to communicate his ideas and opinions to others. The child who is lacking in imagaination has few ideas to share and generally resorts to borrowing ideas and opinions from others.

A creative person enjoys being by himself from time to time. He uses the time to enrich himself. "The individual who exercises his imagination in childhood usually sustains his creativity and attitudes throughout life."  

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1Ibid., p. 14.

Finally, social relationships are strengthened. A creative person uses his imagination to find ways of brightening the lives of others. Friendships develop.

Movement

The second element involved in creative movement is movement itself. "Movement is the child's universal language, i.e., his most convincing form of communication and a way of learning."¹

Children crave activity. They love to move. As boys and girls vary in physical appearance, so do they vary in their rates of maturity, levels of achievement, and aptitudes for learning. All these can affect the way a child moves. As deep seated as their urge for activity is their desire for expression. Given a chance, children will move, write, talk, paint, and sing out their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. When given this chance to express themselves through creative movement experiences, children are fulfilling two fundamental and urgent needs of childhood—to move and to express.

Movement fundamentals are the same for all children. By understanding movement fundamentals, and helping children to develop the body as an instrument of expression, we are encouraging boys and girls to be creative, express concepts, and solve problems. We are also bringing about better body coordination by providing opportunities for children to express themselves through movement.²

¹Andrews, Creative Rhythmic Movement for Children, p. 25.

²Ibid., p. 37.
There is no one classification of movement or a particular sequence for presenting the fundamental movements. Nor can movement be developed in isolation without a recognition of the elements of space and rhythm. As movement is developed it is affected by experiences, thoughts, and feelings which the children continually have.

Andrews described three basic movement fundamentals.

The first, locomotor movements, are those which propel the body through space. They are large free movements to which the legs give impetus and move the child from one place to another. There are five fundamental locomotor movements: walking, leaping, hopping, jumping, and running. All other locomotor movements, which propel the body through space (skipping, sliding, dancing, etc.) are variations or combinations of these.

Secondly, body movements are the nonlocomotor movements of which the body is capable. These emanate from a fixed base of standing, sitting, or kneeling and are made while staying in one spot. For example, swinging, bending, stretching, twisting, pushing, pulling, shaking, or bouncing.

Finally, a combination of movements may be either a series of locomotor movements, a series of body movements, or a series of locomotor and body movements combined.

Acquisition of these fundamental skills and the awareness of them as tools to be used are basic to a program of creative movement. When children have had an opportunity to explore movement fundamentals and to use these
in combinations which feel good to them and which they understand, they have acquired tools (movement) for expression.

The way in which children execute movements characterizes the quality of their movements. For example, movements may be jerky, loose, stiff, smooth, light, or bumpy. Children look and feel differently when executing a loose walk than when they are doing a jerky walk. These movement qualities help children to express themselves more adequately.

There are several elements which may influence or affect movement. The first of these are elements in space. As children explore movement, they become aware of various elements in space which are related to the area movement covers and the direction it takes. Andrews lists the elements of space which relate to movement. These include: direction (forward, backward, sideward, and around); levels (high or low); range (small or large); focus (the attention of movements toward a specific point in space); and floor pattern (the picture, path, or design on the floor that is made while moving).

As children continue to explore movement they also become aware of various rhythmic elements. According to Andrews, these include: tempo (fast or slow); accent (different beats); rhythmic pattern (pattern of beats); intensity (loud or soft beats); and phrase (ending and beginning again).

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1 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
Additional elements or factors which affect movements grow out of the child's surroundings from things he can see, touch, or hear. Children may translate these perceptions into movement, the perceptions may provide the incentive for movement expression, or they may modify movement. Movement may be further modified by the child's feelings or emotions.

Children's thoughts and ideas greatly influence their movements. Their ever-changing thoughts and ideas may be consciously translated into movement, may influence movement, or may serve as the stimulus for movement expression.

When children have had a chance to explore movement, and have become conscious of and begin to use their bodies, they then need to be provided with innumerable experiences to help them express the many feelings, thoughts, and ideas which they have. 1

Finally, percussion, songs, music, pictures, stories, and a variety of other experiences adapted from everyday school happenings provide stimuli for movement. Creative movement may develop from classroom studies in language arts, arithmetic, or social studies. Experiences may also result from holidays, field trips, or everyday living in the city or the country. By seizing such opportunities for creative movement, exercises can be related to the total school program.

1Ibid., p. 40.
The special education teacher will find creative movement a helpful remedial tool. Godfrey and Kephart describe a movement therapy program for the exceptional child or the child with learning problems where movement pattern deficiencies have been identified and are related to school progress. The purpose of such a motor therapy program is the remediation of movement deficiencies with the end result of strengthening learning skills. The program is directed toward specific psychomotor or perceptual-motor needs.

"There are two major components of movement education: exploration and motor learning."¹ Movement exploration infers a developmental program in which teaching and learning methods include problem solving, exploration, and experimentation. Theoretically, motor exploration effects motor learning. Motor learning is learning directly or indirectly involving the muscular or neuromuscular systems of the body.

Motor therapy is important for meeting several educational purposes. First, it develops understandings of voluntary movement and the ways an individual may organize his movements to accomplish a purpose. It also helps to enrich a child's understanding of socially approved personal behavior patterns. Next a program can be designed to

emphasize fine motor as well as gross motor skills. Finally, Schurr states that, "Movement education can be used to free children of their fears of failure and rekindle the excitement of solving their own problems." Successful movement experiences can be an important motivational factor. "The child must develop a positive and realistic attitude toward his capabilities, limitations, and potentialities in physical activities."2

Summary

In this chapter the researcher presented the developmental and educational values of creative movement and its application toward meeting the special needs of the child with learning disabilities. Implications of the separate components—creativity and movement—were discussed.

2 Ibid., p. 24.
CHAPTER III

THE CREATIVE MOVEMENT PROGRAM

Requirements and Procedures

"Creative movement can be easily integrated into the classroom, no matter how restrictive that curriculum might seem."¹ There are several basic requirements and procedures for the regular or exceptional education teacher to follow when implementing a creative movement program in the classroom.

Creative movement is a group experience in which every child is guided to express himself as he participates with others in creating improvised movement. There is no formal audience. Siks listed four requirements for a creative movement activity: a group of children; a space big enough for the activity; a qualified leader; and, an idea from which to create.

For the regular classroom teacher, a manageable number of children could be a problem, because the most effective group size to work with is from seven to ten; however, many interesting activities can be conducted with

twenty-five or thirty children, and a class of children can work in several groups simultaneously.\(^1\)

The special educator will usually have a smaller number of children to work with. Other important factors to consider when determining group size are the group and individual needs of the students.

There needs to be a space large enough for freedom of movement. The children must be able to move around the area without interfering with the movement of other children. The area used should be open and uncluttered. Carter suggested that, when appropriate, working outdoors could prove effective.

Siks discussed several characteristics of a good creative leader. First of all, he needs a warm, friendly attitude toward children. The leader must strive to recognize each child's individuality, and must make an effort to determine the specific needs and interests of every child. A good leader uses imagination. He finds ways to awaken the creative spirit in others.

Resourcefulness is another important leadership quality. The creative movement leader must make the best possible use of space. He must be able to use a child's idea and expand it while leading the group. He must find ways to reach individual children and be able to meet unexpected situations.

In order to fire children's creative spirits, a leader must be enthusiastic. He is confident, energetic, and prepared. At the same time, he uses care in feeding children only enough ideas to spark their imaginations.

Another leadership quality listed by Siks was termed "greatness". This is the ability to arouse individual ideas and feelings; being alert to significant moments which may tap creativity. The leader of creative movement must realize that his influence on children is strong.

Finally, a good leader is able to evaluate an experience objectively and to use the knowledge gained from it to improve future creative movement experiences.

The fourth basic requirement for creative movement is an idea from which to create. This may come from a story, verse, or life experience. It may be from a picture or from the children themselves. No technical aids (scenery, costumes, make-up, etc.) are used. Occasionally a property or lighting effect may be used to motivate or to heighten a mood.

To begin discussing the procedures for establishing a creative movement program, it must be remembered that the main goal of creative movement is for enjoyable creative experiences that foster children's growth and development. Specific goals must be set--both long range and immediate. These must be determined according to the group and/or individual needs. Initially, the teacher should consider the group he will be working with: number of boys and girls; total number of children; ages, group temperament; and, the
situation in which meeting them (time of day, location). Analysis of individual needs should include: motor skills; social needs; attention span; previous creative movement experiences; and, individual interests.

The teacher must be prepared and organized. When planning a creative movement activity, determine the length of time to be used. Kokaska recommended that forty-five to sixty minutes be spent on a lesson. However, the teacher may choose to start with shorter lessons and gradually extend them. In her discussion of creative movement with the learning-disabled child, Carter suggested that for maximum benefits, lessons be thirty to forty-five minutes long.

"Generally, a lesson should consist of a prelude, exercise, and summation."¹ The introduction may be presented through a story, picture, film, record, etc. Its purpose is to recall information, stimulate imagination, and set the tone for activity. The exercise then incorporates one or more activities into action. Most exercises should be open-ended in that additions or changes can be made to suit the needs of the group. The experience should be free enough to allow for self-initiated variations. At the end of the activity the teacher closes the experience on a positive, happy note describing and praising actions that were used and discovered.

¹Kokaska, Creative Movement for Special Education, p. 8.
The teacher must set a creative climate that will gain attention and stimulate interest; one that will arouse thinking, feeling, and a desire for expression. Sik's suggested that the physical environment be planned to foster social and creative growth. The seating arrangement should allow the children to see each other's faces. A circle or U-shaped seating pattern could be used. Ravis recommended that the atmosphere be changed in some way, such as shutting off the lights, starting background music, or doing a short warm-up exercise.

To plan motivation, the teacher "uses the very ways children use to motivate themselves into high spirits of thinking and feeling." First of all, sensory stimulation could be used. A child becomes attentive to something that he sees, hears, tastes, touches, or smells. People can be a source of motivation. A guest may be brought in, or children can be given the opportunity to pantomime others. Recreational events, personal happenings, or immediate individual experiences are motivating. Ideas are stimulating. Initially, these may be in the form of a riddle, puzzle, or code. The leader uses enthusiasm to motivate. Also, he must be alert to children's moods. By recognizing a strong mood, he can channel it into active expression.

1 Sik's, Creative Dramatics: An Art for Children, p. 195.
The next step in the planning process is the selection of material. Carter stated, "In the beginning, the most important aspect of planning is that the activity be kept simple." The materials should be chosen with children's ages and levels of experience in mind. Simple things and ideas stimulate children's imaginations. It is important that the idea holds the interest of the group. Listen to children to help find ideas that interest them.

Another important principle in selecting material is focus. Material should be clearly focused toward specific goals—group goals, creative movement goals, and individual goals. Finally, material should be chosen that will assure success. The children need to feel good about themselves and confident in their ability to create.

The role of the teacher in creative movement activities follows several guidelines. The teacher's first responsibility is to get the children started. Build the mood quickly and present a plan of action. Once the children are involved in the activity the teacher must guide them through it. Focus the children's thinking on one idea; indirectly guide them to maintain the theme for continuity. When dialogue is called for, play along with the children, if necessary, to draw out appropriate remarks. A new creative purpose should be introduced whenever the leader feels a new

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motivation is needed to spur children to further expression. Young children tire quickly and need frequent changes of ideas and pace.

Children need discipline. When they get together for a creative movement exercise, there may be some children who find it difficult to adjust. They may interrupt, talk loudly, bother others, or be motivated by the freedom of space. It is the teacher's responsibility to channel children's energies, excitement, and ideas in ways that will be beneficial to themselves and to the group, and to prevent an atmosphere of confusion. Rules must be established and enforced. Kokaska suggested three standards for control. First, a signal for attention is needed. This may be a bell, drumbeat, etc., that, when sounded, means to stop, look, and listen. Next, children should move in their own space even if they "carry" it with them around the room. They may not disturb another child's space. Third, any child who interferes with the movement of others should be told to sit down for a certain period of time.

There may be some children in the group with special needs. A good leader is aware of these children. If a child is shy or does not want to get involved, do not insist or force him. "Some children just won't. The worst thing you can do is force them to join in."¹ Siksa

recommends encouraging the shy child to watch the others. A child need not participate immediately, but he should always be asked to join the group later on. Involving children in small groups or with a partner also encourages shy children to participate.

The child with aggressive behavior patterns must realize the need for taking turns and following rules. The teacher may need to help him control his behavior and discipline his thinking. He needs praise for appropriate responses; every child wants to hear that he has contributed something worthwhile.

The young child or exceptional child may imitate others during the first lessons of creative movement. They need reassurance from the teacher to "do it your own way." Experimentation by themselves should be encouraged. When necessary, the teacher should attempt to motivate their thinking with a suggestion or question.

It is important that the teacher praises and draws praise. He is in a position to focus attention toward the child who is creating movement appropriate to the idea. He should look for something specific in each participant that can be praised honestly. The teacher must be careful to avoid criticizing a child's movements as he may curb the child's creative expression. If a child is having difficulty with a certain form of movement, a suggestion should be made for an alternative method of action.
The final procedures or guidelines for a creative movement program are related to evaluation. The leader may choose to hold a group discussion following the activity. The leader guides the children to evaluate their use of space, conflicts, individual movements or ideas, and ways in which expression could be strengthened.

The teacher will also need a means of evaluating individual students in the creative movement program. Kokaska suggested consideration of the child in terms of: the time he devotes to the creative movement activity; the number of alternative suggestions he provides; the amount of imitation verse creativity he displays; the verbal reflections he provides, and the amount of independence he displays in a lesson. This information should be charted or recorded for an objective evaluation.

Forms of Creative Movement

When creative movement is considered an integral part of the school program, it can be used as an aid to learning, to develop interests, and to stimulate and express ideas. The wider and richer the school program, the greater are the possibilities for utilizing creative movement to provide meaningful experiences for children. Before introducing creative movement in the classroom, the teacher should familiarize himself with the four forms of creative movement. Siks describes these, as well as
presented a sequence of activities related to each form, including those involving the simplest movements to those requiring more complex skills.

When working with young children or children who lack experience in creative movement, Carter advised the teacher to begin by using only simple rhythmic movement activities. Rhythmic movement is an inclusive term which refers to spatial movement and body movement. Activities may involve the whole body or only parts of it; gross or fine motor movements may be required. According to Siks, a child

... expresses thoughts and feelings when he runs, jumps, leaps, hops, rolls, dances, and moves in many different rhythmic patterns. He may move upward, downward, or outward in space. He may move forward, backward or around. If he is angry, happy, fearful, or sad he may express with intense movement of his whole body. At other times and in different moods, he may express only with his head, his shoulders, his trunk, his arms, legs, feet, or fingers. Because rhythmic movement is a child's natural way of expression, it becomes a natural way to introduce children to creative movement.¹

A hierarchy of rhythmic movements would range from locomotor movements or body movements to combination movements. These were described in Chapter II. Movement to music requires still more refined skills.

It is important that a child's motor abilities are considered before planning rhythmic movement exercises; they should be geared to his level. This form of creative move-

ment can be of benefit to the teacher of children with learning disabilities. Activities can be planned to develop specific perceptual and motor skills at any level. Hopping like a bunny, rolling like jelly, or moving like the arms of a clock add an element of fun as well. Rhythmic activities should be kept simple; present only one idea at a time. Material should be chosen with ages and levels of experience in mind. For example, young children enjoy household activities such as shoveling snow, or planting a garden, or moving like familiar animals. Older children will respond better to movements of circus performers, robots, or dancers.

The second form of creative movement is pantomime. Pantomime is an extension of rhythmic movement in which thought and feeling are communicated entirely through action. Pantomime refers to both body and spatial movements, or it may include finer rhythmic movements expressed with the arms and fingers. Examples of simple pantomime activities include: eating at a picnic; a parade of animals; finger plays; or guessing games. Older or more experienced children will be able to highlight other classroom studies when presented with situations involving pantomime of spacemen, pioneers, or dinosaurs.

Characterization is a more advanced form of creative movement compared to rhythmic movement and pantomime. It
should not be introduced until a sound base of activities related to the preceding forms of creative movement have been established.

In this third form of creative movement children are motivated to assume the roles of various characters. Dialogue may or may not be used. Characterizations should be well defined and should appeal to the child. Age levels of the participants must be considered in order to choose characters that will hold their interest. It is usually better to choose roles far removed from the child in age and characteristics. For example, children of all ages enjoy being animals. They delight in pushing past boundaries of time and space and creating people who are older than they are. Or, children may show noticeable interest in fantasy characters of faraway lands. Give the children opportunities to become both good and evil characters.

The fourth form of creative movement is dramatic play. Definition of this form will overlap to some degree with the other three forms of creative movement. Siks described dramatic play as:

... a child's natural way of playing, of dramatizing and pretending. Dramatic play is a child's way of entering into experiences that interest him. ... It refers to creative playing centering around an idea, a situation, a person, place, or thing. It generally utilizes the
dramatic elements of characterizations, action, and dialogue. It seldom has a plot. It unfolds spontaneously.

Little children frequently play at pretending to be a doctor, fly an airplane, have a tea party, care for a baby, or sell groceries in a store. Older children often enjoy pretending to be cowboys, queens, beauty operators, teachers, or to dramatize exciting events such as a rodeo, boat race, or a battle scene.

Although costumes, scenery, or prepared dialogue are not used in creative movement, there are several items a teacher should have on hand to help capture attention, motivate, or set a mood. Books, pictures, displays, or records provide a wide assortment of ideas for both the teacher and students. Hats, jewelry, scraps of material, and rhythm instruments may be used to accompany movement. A mystery box, colored light bulb, or background music can change the classroom atmosphere to set a new mood.

The teacher of creative movement should have at his disposal a variety of ideas for activities which are appropriate to the age and ability levels of his students. The researcher recommends Sikis and Andrews as two sources. These authors presented activities for each of the four forms of creative movement within age groupings. The teacher of the exceptional child will find this same material

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1Ibid., p. 106.
adaptable toward meeting his program needs. However, all children must be given material which interests them as well as assures success.

**Summary**

In this chapter the researcher discussed the basic requirements for a creative movement activity and listed the necessary procedures for implementing a creative movement program in the classroom curriculum. The four forms of creative movement were described. These included: rhythmic movement; pantomime; characterization; and, dramatic play. Examples of the types of activities related to each were given.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


