



Series 1. Episode 7

Turning *Little Stones* show notes
Listen to a conversation with Penny from
Jabadao about
Full-bodied, Whole-hearted Movement

Episode 7

Full-bodied, Whole-
hearted Movement
PART 1
with Penny Greenland

In this podcast, Penny explains how she began this journey from Community dance projects to researching the movement needs of young children. She became intrigued by how young children move spontaneously and began to question, 'why they moved as they do' and so began her journey of exploration to answer...

Why do children move like this?

The ways young children move typically challenges adults. Penny found herself asking **WHY** do they wriggle, writhe, push, pull, hang, spin...

Over many years, she has researched a wealth of evidence. Discoveries that help shed light on what is going on inside little peoples' bodies. In *Turning Little Stones*, she shares some insights with our listeners that help us appreciate why our children as they do and show us how we might respond differently and so better support their physical development.

Penny explains that children move in response to signals within their own body in ways that benefit their motor *and* sensory development...

Behaviours that maybe described as 'naughty' or difficult to manage may simply need to be expressed somewhere different. Usually, the same challenging behaviour is something to be celebrated when it happens in a different space!

5 kinds of full bodied, wholehearted movement play?

Penny's research has led her to identify 5 different types of movement play. This is a useful tool for adults to help make sense of and VALUE their movement behaviours.

- Floor play
- Push/pull play
- Spin/tip/upside down/swing play
- Half-way-down play
- Upright Play

How children's movements impact them in the long term

Penny uses the image of a tower of bricks. The position of the lower bricks effects how secure or wobbly the structure is. In the same way, adults need to pay attention and value each little 'brick' of movement. The success of children's later motor movements is crucially dependent on them.

Our society tends to place the greater value on the development of motor *skills*. But if we understand that children's physical development is prompted by *sensory stimuli* which they experience inside their bodies, we begin to realise that children are practising their own motor movements as they respond to sensory prompts.

The feeling of ME!

For young children, the sensation of movement is all about how it *feels* for them. An infant needs time on their tummy. Why? Because there is a reflex in the part of the body



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connected with the floor (between the bottom rib and hip), which 'sucks' their small body to the surface below. In this position, babies are soothed, feel secure and regulate their sensations. They feel 'grounded'. This is foundational for life... they are developing **core connection** as well as core strength.

The Infant Expert

The term 'infant expert' helps explain how all babies and young children have a body brain that informs their need to move in certain ways which aids their development.

Unconsciously, they will find ways to move in the environment, so satisfying their movement needs.

In adulthood, we move less and less and lose our 'expert' status. Young children are hard wired to move more. They teach us how they need to move...

As adult carers, we will want to support the infant expert mover... more in part 2!

Movement Play Resources and courses can be found at

<https://www.jabadao.org/movement-play>

Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through

Turning Little Stones

Delving a little Deeper

See website for details.