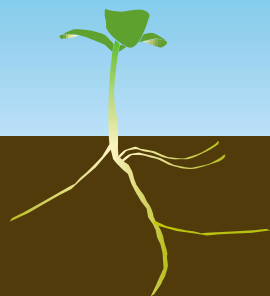


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Get moving together

Parent-child classes
promote fun, fitness
and family time

By Lockie Hunter
WNC Parent correspondent

As parents we know the many physical benefits of exercise for ourselves and our children, but there are quite a few intangible benefits.

"Movement is an essential development tool for children. It is the conduit through which their minds and bodies are synchronized; it is the experiential pathway through which they decode the music of their culture," note Music Together founder Kenneth Guilmartin and researcher Lili Levinowitz in spelling out the program's overall philosophy.

The Asheville area offers a wide array of parent-child classes to stimulate the mind and body and prompt a lifetime of movement, healthy habits and joy in fitness. These classes strengthen both adult (be it a parent, guardian, nanny or grandparent) and child, adding to increased physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Here is a sampling:

Asheville Area Music Together classes

Parents are sometimes surprised by the movement component of Music Together, says Kari Richmond, director of Asheville Area Music Together.

"As the teacher in this environment, I sometimes get skeptical looks from parents when I assure them that their child's insistence on crawling, jumping or somersaulting around the room is

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normal and appropriate," she says.

Music Together is just as much about movement as it is about singing.

"Every activity that we do in class incorporates some kind of movement, ranging from swaying and tapping knees to finger plays to choreographed circle dances and playing with rhythm instruments," says Richmond, adding that recent research and the traditions of many cultures have demonstrated a profound connection in the young child between movement and learning. "Because of the neural process involved in both movement and learning, children can more effectively assimilate new information about their environment when they are on the move."

The Little Gym of Asheville parent-child classes

Bonnie Rouse, owner of The Little Gym of Asheville, says she believes that fun motor skill development builds confidence and leads to a lifetime of success.



SPECIAL TO WNC PARENT
Ruby Jacobelly has a joyful moment at The Little Gym, where parent/child classes start as early as 4 months of age.

lesson in hand-eye coordination translates into catching a ball or swinging a

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Parent-child classes

Continued from Page 17

bat in years to come.”

A somersault teaches a child to fall safely and get up quickly, assets in sports and in life.

“Ultimately, we believe that children flourish in a nurturing, noncompetitive environment where trying your best is more important than being the best,” Rouse says.

Asheville Arts Center Mommy & Me ballet class

Designed as an introduction to the world of ballet, this ballet class is a place where daddies are welcome, too.

“Mommy & Me Ballet was the very first activity I shared with my daughter Aislin when she was 2 1/2, and at the time I had no idea the skills she would gain from this weekly 30-minute class,” says Eliza Harris of the Asheville Arts Center.



SPECIAL TO WNC PARENT
Oscar Rouse enjoys learning movement and music with his mom Molly Rouse and teacher Kari Richmond, right, at a Music Together class.

“I was just looking for something to help her nurture her creativity.”

She adds that “learning physical activities at a young age in a parent-child environment creates a safe, secure place for children to explore movement and feel confident in their body which sets the foundation for healthy habits later on.”

“Music & Movement” classes also have positive effects on learning, Harris

says. “They stimulate the entire brain which helps develop the neural pathways to make your child a better learner while fostering a lifelong appreciation of creativity and the arts.”

Parent-child YMCA swim classes

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