

# Energy or Quality of Movement

Developed by Krissie Marty  
*A Dancing Day*

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## Objective/Goal:

This is a main experience that will link language development and movement in a creative way.

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## Educational Impact:

- ✓ Language/vocabulary development
  - ✓ Imagery
  - ✓ Opposites
  - ✓ Prosody
  - ✓ Math/science vocabulary
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## Suggestions for use with *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "Twinkle Twinkle (New Orleans)"
  - ✓ "Twinkle Twinkle (Blues)"
  - ✓ "Squishy Sound"
  - ✓ "Boing Boing Rhythm Sound"
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## Procedure and Process:

### What is Energy?

Energy is the quality of a movement, or how an action is performed. It is the dynamic of the movement, the force or characteristic of movement, the power and effort with which we move. Energy can include elements of weight (light or heavy), flow (free or bound), attack (forceful and sharp or soft and smooth), and muscular tension (tight or loose). Energy adds the color or feeling of the movement. It gives expression to the movement. For example, you can do a bouncy walk or a gliding walk. Your arm can lightly float or sharply reach.

The following are a few examples of *energy words*:

smooth	sharp	bounce
jerk	float	glide
vibrate	punch	suspend
press	heavy	light
explosive		

### **Movement Imagery**

In dance, images are often used to elicit movement. Descriptive language can create a context, meaning and motivation for movement. Imagery can help you communicate *how* you'd like to have the children move. It gives you freedom to use many different ideas and concepts to which the children can relate. It also creates an opportunity to build vocabulary. As you and your children experience the connection between movement and language, the children will become more aware of the many words that can be used as movement vocabulary.

Expressive action verbs, adjectives, and adverbs elicit different qualities of movement. Images using similes and metaphors or ideas of emotions, animals, and nature can provide a context for moving with various uses of energy. To coach dynamic creative movement with children, you can employ variation in your tone of voice in addition to using wacky nonsense words and sounds. The possibilities are endless.



Movement images can be created by using energy words:

***Colorful Action Verbs***

Wiggle	Squeeze	Pounce
Flip	Squirm	Drip
Flutter	Trudge	Punch
Melt	Glide	Slash
Shake	Dab	Explode
Sail	Press	Pop
Shake	Tug	Float
Plod	Drag	Wring
Shiver	Burst	Tumble
Hammer	Flick	Tromp
Curl	Twitch	Tremble
Suspend		

***Adjectives and Adverbs***

The following combinations are examples of contrasts. Keep making your own combinations!

Gentle, Strong	Tight, Loose
Soft, Hard	Slippery, Sticky
Smooth, Sharp	Jerky, Free-flowing
Bouncy, Calm	Prickly, Delicately
Light, Heavy	Tense, Limp

**Imagery**

Float like a feather	Shake like a leaf
Wiggle like a worm	Whirl like a tornado
Zoom like a car	Glide like an airplane
Waddle like a duck	Spin like a top
Soar like a bird	Pop like popcorn
Fall like snow	Flip like a pancake
Jump like a rabbit	Blow like a stormy wind
Sprout like a seed	Pound your feet like an elephant
Stretch like a rubber band	

**Emotions**

Sleepy	Tired	Scared
Angry	Happy	Sad

**Move as if you were...**

In peanut butter	In water
Gelatin	On ice
Glue	A storm
A space ship	In a jar of honey
In quicksand	On hot sand/sidewalk
In mud	

**Wacky Words**

Squishy	Bop
Ooey, gooey	Scramble
Whack	Slop
Fluffy	Gobble, gnaw
Gushy	Chomp, nibble
Noodle-y	Fling
Slimy	Wild
Rumpus	Bang
Slinky	Tinker
Bumpy	Skittle

**Animals and Elements of Nature**

These are great ways to have children move with different qualities (e.g. snake or puppy dog; soft drizzle or hard pouring rain)

**Sounds**

Zooooommmmm!	Zip-a-dee-do-da
Bing	Toot! Toot!
Wooooosshh...	Wham
De-De-De-De-De-De	Ha Ha
Pop Pop	Eeeeeekkkk...
Crunch crunch crunch	Ahhhhh...haaaa
Plop	Mmmmmmmmmmm...
Ka-boom	Wheeeeeeeee
Zing...Zang...Zip	Zip
Tra-la-la	Pitter, pat

Other ways to introduce energy concepts include using concepts that are already familiar to the children (like sticky/smooth); showing through demonstration; using props or objects (feather/rock).

## **Tips for Coaching Energy & Quality of Movement with Children**

### ***Use Tone of Voice***

The tone and pitch of your voice can give clear direction about energy and quality of movement. For example, say in a low, rhythmic way, "STAMP - YOUR - FEET, STAMP - YOUR - FEET." This will encourage the children to move with heaviness. Whispering in a high-pitched voice, "Tip-toe, tip-toe, tip-toe," will foster lightness in their movement.

### ***Look for Creative Choices***

When the children move as a group, keep an eye out for creative choices. The children that make creative choices can be used as a model for the whole group. Look for the children who may be doing something differently than the rest of the group. Sometimes, a child may interpret your direction in a way you did not imagine. Even if he isn't doing what you had envisioned, he may be a fine example of the concept you are exploring. This is often the child who has a hard time sitting still. Creative movement, and especially energy exploration, will give them a way to channel their wiggles. It can also be an opportunity for a child to be a leader for the group in a positive way.

### ***Use Sounds that Support Your Goal***

Music, instruments, and vocal sounds can offer great support to the concepts of energy. Music is a wonderful way to set the tone and mood for an energy dance. Choose lyrical, melodic music if you want to have the children move in smooth ways, and music with a strong accented rhythm for sharp movement. Playing a drum in different ways like "hard" and "soft" will motivate the children to respond physically in contrasting ways. Even tapping a chair or table in the classroom can provide percussive accompaniment for children's dancing. Using your voice to make different nonsense words can provide a soundscape for an energy dance. The long, drawn-out sound of "Zzzzooooommmmm zzzzooooommmmm" will elicit very different movement responses from the children than the short and accented sound of "Pop-pop-pop." Even articulating the sounds of letters can enhance the effect of words. Sounds of letters can also be used on their own to communicate quality or movement.

### ***Engage Their Imaginations***

If you are approaching the dance experience with a sense of adventure and play, this will be contagious in the classroom. Choose vivid concepts and images. Engaging the children's imagination, either with words and images or with dramatization and pretend, can be very fruitful when exploring energy and quality of movement.

## Creating a Moving Moment – Example

*Classroom moment:* a ritual or routine from the classroom, or an instance when you need to communicate with the children. For example, a verbal greeting at the beginning of the day paired with a sun salutation.

### **Goal:**

What is your purpose?

*My goal is to greet the group and begin the day in a creative way. I'd like to establish a ritual way to greet each other.*

### **Objective:**

How will you accomplish your goal?

*Introduce concepts of tight and loose in a concrete way.  
Practice vocabulary in motion.  
Apply vocabulary to our greeting.*

### **Outcome:**

What will the children accomplish?

*The group will demonstrate an understanding of "tight" and "loose."*

