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## STUFF AND NEW STUFF

# Resources for teachers and must-share books for preschoolers with big questions

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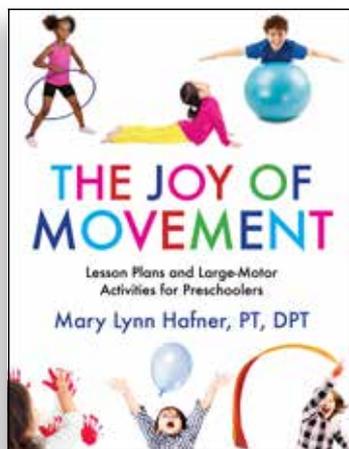
## The Joy of Movement: Lesson Plans and Large-Motor Activities for Preschoolers

Written by Mary Lynn Hafner, PT, DPT. Redleaf Press, 2019. (\$22.95)

This new book from Redleaf is a practical manual, filled with ready-to-use lesson plans that are both developmentally designed and respectful of the maxim that learning is fun.

Hafner has built her book from a therapeutic perspective. The games and activities, both traditional and new, help teachers support children's physical development with the same vigor as their focus on cognitive and social-emotional growth. The activities are built around developmental milestones and are flexible enough to engage children with differing skill levels.

Ten chapters (plus resource appendix) are divided into two parts. The first explores the foundations of



movement—why preschoolers need to move, motor milestones, and structuring a movement class. Part two, gets moving with chapters that are designed to fit curriculum philosophy, strengthen thematic structures, or simply focus on building movement skills.

Each lesson includes a list of supplies, introductory guidance, warm-up, and winding-down activities that complement movement activity.

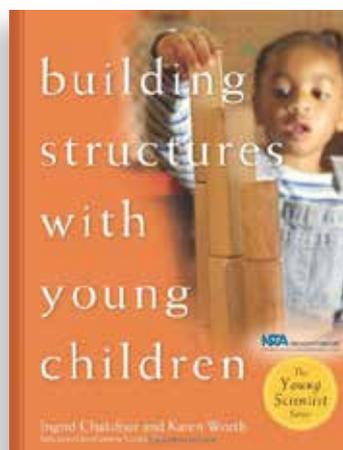
This gem of a book is surely useful in a preschool

classroom. It may also be just the tool for energizing and motivating teachers who are ready to discover the joy of movement for themselves.

## Building Structures With Young Children

Written by Ingrid Chalufour and Karen Worth. Redleaf Press, 2004. (\$25.95)

Part of the Young Scientist Series, this is a book designed to help educators who are eager to maximize the financial investment and the brain-



building possibilities of block play. Within the framework of science inquiry and discovery, Chalufour and Worth reinforce the power of teacher support in child-centered learning.

*Building Structures* guides teachers with concrete and practical tips in the transition from open exploration of blocks—size, shape, and balance—to purposeful and focused explorations that produce an authentic understanding of how structures work.

Most valuable, especially for teachers unfamiliar with the opportunities that block play offers, is a chapter devoted to getting ready—putting on a scientist mindset, building a teaching plan, and preparing the environment. Subsequent chapters are devoted to exploring tower structures and enclosures.

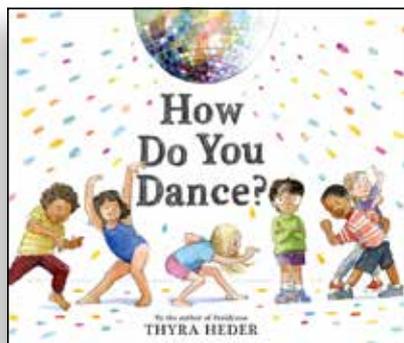
This is a book rich with teacher journal entries (a reminder that adults can be active explorers and

learners), solutions to common problems (children tend to stop knocking over structures when they know that you'll take a picture of their structures), and resources (with checklists, charts, sources of building materials, and supportive websites). This book has earned its place in your program's library and regular attention in teacher development workshops.

## How Do You Dance?

Written and illustrated by Thyra Heder. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2019. (\$16.99)

Author and illustrator Heder explores dance in all its creativity, humor, and boundless joy. Pen-and-ink illustrations follow the moves of children and adults who move "Like this!" A custodian



rocks with his bucket and mop while teens bop and glide. The holdout who declares "I don't" follows and learns—move the face, fingers, knees, and toes; move like you

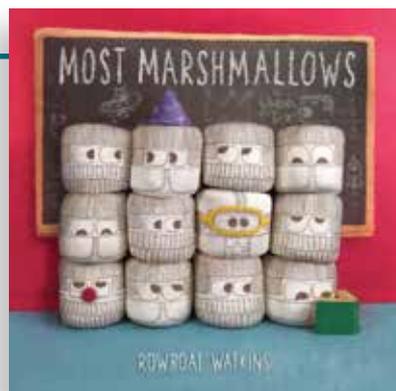
have no bones or you're made of metal. Dance after dinner, at the bus stop, at the market, or on a break on good days, rainy days, and even sad days, and even alone—until you feel better.

## Most Marshmallows

Written and illustrated by Rowboat Watkins. Chronicle Books, 2019. (\$16.99)

This sweet and silly story is a fun reminder that by being true to ourselves we can be extraordinary. The joy and brilliance of Watkins' work is in transposing the typical day-to-day of a child's life into that of a marshmallow: being born, having family, watching TV, going to school, celebrating birthdays, and falling asleep at night. The routine is broken with the subtle reminder that this is the pattern for **most**, but certainly not all. Some secretly know that all can do anything or be anything they care to imagine.

The illustrations are created with a mix of media

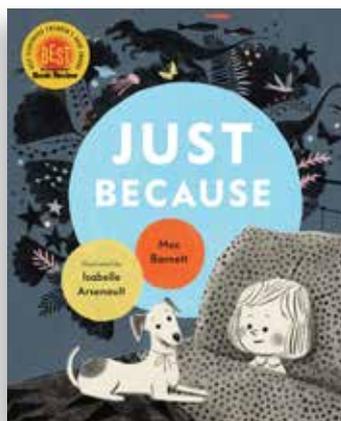


including cut and rumpled paper, pen and ink, and paint. Explore closely for ideas that might enrich your art center!

## Just Because

Written by Mac Barnett and illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. Candlewick Press, 2019. (\$17.99)

Award winning Mac Barnett answers questions from a curious child with whimsy, imagination, wit, and gentleness.



It's bedtime and adults can imagine the endless ways to postpone the inevitable. In this case, a dad stands in the doorway with ready responses (never "just because") that calm, soothe, and give the child so much to chew on that the questions cease.

Some of the best:

What is rain? The tears of flying fish.

Why do leaves change color? In autumn when the world gets colder, the trees keep warm by setting quiet little fires in their leaves. By winter, their branches have all burned up.

Why do we have to sleep? Because there are some things we can see only with our eyes closed.

Arsenault's illustrations are monochromatic. A dark shadowy bedroom on one spread contrasts with controlled color on the next—tongue-in-cheek, fanciful, and so tempting to believe. ■