

The Three Types Of Movement

There are three kinds of movement the child can feel and bring attention to:

- Physical movement,
- Emotional movement,
- Movement of thoughts.

Physical Movement: Physical movement is *any* movement of your child's body whether it is done by your child or you are the one moving him. And any such movement is an opportunity for attentioning—that is, for having the child's brain connect with that movement and organize it better. Your child's attentioning to *any* movement that he is doing or that you are doing for him will elevate the quality with which your child's brain functions and organizes that movement and all other movements (see Chapter 3 for details in **Kids Beyond Limits**, by Anat Baniel).

Emotions As Movement: Emotions are also movement, and as such, bringing your child's attentioning to the movement of his emotions opens up remarkable possibilities for transformational changes in both brain and behavior.

Thinking As Movement: Perhaps the most elusive form of movement is thinking. Thinking, the creation of ideas and beliefs, recognition of relationships between things, and the process of understanding—*making sense* of ourselves and the world that surrounds us—are all manifestations of movement within our brains. We can feel the outcomes of thinking even though we can't see, touch, or smell, or taste it. Even if in the beginning it may feel elusive to you, you can learn to help your child bring his attentioning to his thinking (see the next section). In my practice I have seen some of the most dramatic transformations when helping a child

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bring attentioning to his own thinking.

All three aspects of movement are subject to differentiation and integration through the use of the 9 Essentials. Remember that at the heart of your child's successful development is the process by which his brain becomes better and better at organizing movement, whether that movement is reaching out to grasp a toy, talking, walking, expressing an emotion, or solving a math problem. It is an ongoing process of getting better and better at perceiving differences, and movement with attention to the feeling of self can powerfully awaken the brain to notice and perceive differences which is at the heart of developing those abilities.

How To Help Facilitate Movement With Attention For Your Child?

a. Your Own Attentioning:

To yourself

The key for helping your child is your own attentioning. By this I mean having nonjudgmental, accepting, open-ended, and deep interest in your child's actions, experiences, and behavior. Think of your brain as being connected with your child's brain through an imaginary cord. Your child's brain can read your brain through that cord. When you are attentioning at a high level, your child's brain, which needs help organizing itself to function better, can take a ride on your own higher quality of organization. As I so often tell parents, the attentional skills that you bring to your interactions with your child serve as the model for his brain to begin *doing attention*, or what we call *attentioning*. **I like to emphasize how important it is to think of attention as an action**, something the brain does and needs to learn to do more and more, better and better. For that reason I suggest that you add the words *attentioning* and *to attention* to your vocabulary, though using these words this way might seem a little strange at first.

b. Naming

c. In Movement of the Body: During your daily activities with your child, attention the movement of the body. For example, as you begin bending down to pick up your young

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child, pause. Don't complete the action yet. Instead, notice whether he is anticipating being picked up: Is he attentioning to what you are doing? Is he in his own way joining with you in that action? In what ways is he engaged and participating? Perhaps he reaches out with his hands. Maybe he smiles up at you. Is he bending his knees as if to jump up or coming up on his toes? Or maybe all he can do is tighten his muscles and move the upper back just a touch forward. Once you've observed any such attentioning and participation on your child's behalf, slowly complete the action of picking him up. Know that in this moment your child has just practiced his Movement with Attention skills.

- d. **In Thinking:** by asking him questions. For example, if he can speak but he is difficult to understand because his speech is unclear in diction or meaning—**even if you can guess** what he is trying to say, **do not understand him too quickly. Don't fill in the blanks for him.** Also, don't ask him to speak more clearly. (Remember, if he could he would.) Instead, in a friendly voice say, "I don't understand what you just said to me. Is there something you want?" or just repeat it the way he said it. Don't try to extract an answer from him. If he does neither, simply move onto the next thing.

This way he can begin differentiating between being understood and not and begin realizing that this has something to do with the way he forms sounds. He will experience and begin bringing more of his attention to how some sounds get him what he wants and some don't. When he begins to hear what he is saying, his brain will gradually be able to differentiate his diction and his language so he can be more precise, making speech work better for him. This increased differentiation not only improves his language skills but goes hand in hand with improving the quality and clarity of his thinking.

The Power of Your Touch: Touch calls on our attention. Your touch has the power to awaken and increase your child's attentioning ability. It is a powerful mechanism for communicating with the child's brain. When you touch your child he feels himself and this helps him learn where he starts and where he ends.

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Six Ways of Touching

Gentle touch: Always use the least force necessary.

Attentive touch: Feel and be present in your touch.

Safe touch: Touch and hold your child with full support.

Connected touch: Move your child as if your body and his were one—like ballroom dancers.

Loving touch: Be attentive to your child's response to your touch, and be responsive to his response.

Seeing touch: Touch as if you had eyes in your fingers and the palms of your hands, seeing your child not trying to change or manipulate him.

By attentioning this way you will waken your child's own attentioning to himself and turn these daily mundane moments into golden opportunities for growth for your child.

Seeing Hands: to touch to awaken your child's attentioning abilities, you can imagine that you have eyes in your fingers and the palms of your hands. **You touch your child in order to feel them, see them, connect to them.** another opportunity for you to shift from autopilot to *attentioning touch*. And not only help them feel and connect to themselves and map their brain, you also will infuse your child with the feeling and knowledge that they are cared for and loved just as they are. **Loving is as transformative and powerful for the one loving as for the one being loved.**

Go with the System: Think of *going with the system* in this way: Instead of trying to change a movement or behavior your child is doing, actually support and even exaggerate those movements or actions as they presently are. This helps your child bring his attentioning to what he is doing, thus gaining greater choice and freedom.

Be an Actor, Dancer, and Mime: Have you ever gone to a theater performance specifically for young children? When you do, you will see the children get so immersed and involved they forget they are in a theater. What they see and hear happening on the stage is just as real to them as anything else in their lives. They will call out a warning to the hero when danger

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approaches; they will jump up and down with excitement. They might even run up to the stage to help out when the suspense gets intense. Creating differences that your child can perceive and waking up the brain

Most parents, even shy ones, become actors and singers and performers with their kids. Without even thinking about it, they awaken their child's attentioning in this way.

Think of your child's attentioning like the air that surrounds us all. The opportunity for it is there all the time and you move in and out of it with ease.

It's Easier Than You Think

The transformative powers of Movement with Attention begin with you. Through your awareness and practice, Movement with Attention quickly becomes second nature, just part of the way you do things.