



THE **BODY** IN THE **ENVIRONMENT**



Comune
di Modena

Benedetto Marcello Infant-Toddler Center
1 year old class

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What fosters the determination and the motivation to move? What are the contexts that can promote movement?

After having observed the children for a period, some important aspects came up:

- Children curiosity about objects
- The importance of emotional support by the adult
- The conditions that promote movement
- New learning is developed through the body
- The importance of the emotional boost
- Children searching their own limits

Curiosity about objects

For many children, the feeling of satisfaction related to movement is stimulated by the will for reaching an object. So we created contexts of exploration in which we introduced new elements that were placed out of the rug, in areas that were close but not too much to the desired objects.



February, Ludovico and Edorardo 10 months old



Support from the adult

For many children, movement is first towards the adult than towards objects. In these situations, the proximity of the adult supports the child both emotionally and physically.



January, Edoardo 9 months old



January, Alessia 8 months old

Conditions that promote movement

We gave the chance of exploring different types of surfaces: hard, soft, with slopes. The direct contact of the naked body with these different surfaces gratified children in their attempts to move, avoiding the risk of slipping. That's why we took pants and socks away.



April, Stefano 12 months old



April, Ludovico 12 months old

New learning developed through the body

This type of learning has to do with holistic skills, involving the emotional, cognitive and relational areas: the sensorimotor achievements are the base for the next linguistic, cognitive, emotional and relational development of the child.

In this difficult situation, for example, the child – through his/her body – is developing cognitive strategies to solve the problem and orientates in a narrow place which is full of objects, in order to get out of the table and reach another place.



Tommaso is 12 months old and, while crawling under the table, he gets stuck in a chair and - to get out of it - he goes back, moves the chair and creates the necessary amount of space to exit.

Noemi is 13 months old and she discovers the pleasure of going up by climbing on the chair with her feet and clinging to the radiator; then, during the decent, she sits down in order to avoid the loss of balance.



The emotional boost

Movements and actions of the child are always based on an emotional boost that pushes the child to face various experiences with his/her own time and in his/her own way. It is due to the emotions felt during a certain experience that children consider whether to go on, stop, go back or try again.



February, Riccardo 10 months old

The emotional boost for mastering the standing position

Mastering the standing position and the verticality strengthens the feeling of mastery on the environment and puts also the child in a new situation of instability in managing balance. Different objects are used to sustain the body and to make the first movements: at the beginning going up and down, then passing from a supporting object to another one, and then trying to set up the movement pushing oneself and moving autonomously in the environment making the first steps. In this situation of physical instability, the involvement and motivation of the child are crucial for him/her to acquire new motor patterns.



February, Teodora 13 months old
Tommaso 12 months old



February, Riccardo 10 months old



January, Noemi 12 months old

Searching your own limits: climbing

Children test themselves searching the limits of their capacities. They learn to control and master the necessary actions to go up, go down, slip, go from one place to another one... everyone with their personal strategies.



January,
Teodora 12 months old



February,
Davide 12 months old



March, Tommaso 13 months old
Noemi 14 months old



April, Stefano and Riccardo 12 months old

Descents



April, Davide 15 months old



April, Tommaso 15 months old
Ludovico 12 months old



March,
Riccardo 11 months old



February,
Teodora 13 months old



March, Noemi 14 months old
Tommaso 13 months old



When children try to measure depth, they try and try, and they look for strategies like using legs, arms or parts of the body in order to consider how much they need to dare if they want to go over.



Conclusions

This project shows the importance of emotional support from the adult, who should reassure and sustain the child through his look, posture, closeness, in order for the child to feel free to perceive his own body in the environment and to orientate in the space.

The child – if given the right situation – is strongly motivated to reach new motor patterns (from crawling to standing position) that produce new cognitive learning, as for example solving problems and increasing concentration abilities.

The child – through the consciousness of what he is able or not able to do – structures himself also under the emotional point of view, he acquires self confidence and trust in others, he's not afraid of the unexpected and reacts to frustration by trying again.

