

MAKE A MUSCLE

Theme: Me and My Choices

Overview: In this series of activities, students will be introduced to the relationship between movement and their muscles. They will play a Simon Says game using muscle movement. They will do an investigation to learn what muscles help them move for different movements. Finally, they will move in different ways to get different muscles working.

Vocabulary:

- Energy: What we need to move, work and play. Some activities require more energy than others.

Activity 1: Make a Muscle

Type of Activity: Energy to Move, Energy to Discover, Energy to Read

Domain: Cognitive, Language, Physical

Students will:

- Move their muscles using large and small muscle movements.
- Follow directions in a modified game of Simon Says.
- Learn and name body parts.

Materials:

- Rubber band or Silly Putty
- Flip chart

Time Frame: 20-30 minutes

Directions:

1. Ask students to make a muscle!
2. Explain to students that muscles are the parts of our body that help us move. Invite students to guess how many muscles we have in our bodies. Write down all guesses on chart paper. Then, share that we have more than 600 muscles in all parts of our body! There are even muscles in our eyes, our toes, and our tongue!
3. Invite students to move around and feel their muscles working. They can run, jump, hop, skip, dance, or do whatever they want.
4. Invite students to sit in a circle. Pass around the rubber band (or silly putty) and ask students to guess how it is like a muscle. Explain or guide students to understand that muscles have to get smaller and bigger in order to help us move. Using the rubber band, show students how the muscles stretch out (get bigger) and contract (get smaller).

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5. Explain to students that some muscles are moved by us on purpose and others move by themselves. Ask students to clap their hands. They are moving arm muscles, back muscles, and hand muscles!
6. Now, ask them to make their hearts beat. Explain that their heart is a muscle that moves all by itself.
7. Ask students to stand up and explain that you are going to play a version of Simon Says called “Mikey Muscle Says.” You will tell them to do an action that makes their muscles move. If you say, “Mikey Muscle Says” before the movement, they should do it. If you don’t say “Mikey Muscle Says” before the movement, they shouldn’t do it. If they do, they can move to another spot in the room and continue to do the movements until the final child remains in the game.
8. Play the game using any movement until just one student is left. Here are some suggestions for movements:
 - Smile
 - Touch your toes
 - Touch your shoulders
 - Clap
 - Twist your body
 - Flap your wings
 - Yawn
 - Blink
 - Run in place
 - Hop
 - Lift your knees
 - Roll
 - Stick out your tongue
 - Dance

Activity 2: Move That Muscle

Type of Activity: Energy to Discover, Energy to Move, Energy to Create

Domain: Cognitive, Language, Physical

Students will:

- Conduct a series of investigations to identify muscle movements.
- Make observations about which muscles they are using during a series of movements.

Materials:

- Flip chart
- Child figure handout – included at the end of this day’s activities
- Pencils or crayons

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- Bowl of grapes
- Napkins

Time Frame: 20-30 minutes

Directions:

1. Invite all students to sit in a circle.
2. Draw a stick figure body on the flip chart.
3. Ask students if they remember how many muscles there are in the body. (More than 600). Remind students that they have more than 600 muscles, which can be found in every part of their body!
4. Explain that you are going to ask them to do some movements and you are going to ask someone to come to the flip chart and point to which part of the body's muscles are doing the work.
5. Ask all students to smile.
6. Then, ask a volunteer to come to the flip chart and point to the body part where muscles are doing work. Guide them to point to the mouth. Say: *That's right. When we smile, our mouth muscles are working.*
7. Then, ask students to clap their hands. Ask a volunteer to come to the flip chart and point to the body part where muscles are doing work. Remind students that some movements make more than one body part's muscles work. Guide them to point to the hands, arms, and/or shoulders. Say: *That's right. When we clap our hands, our hand muscles, our arm muscles and our shoulder muscles are working!*
8. Distribute a Child Figure handout to each student.
9. Then, ask students to sit at a table with a grape on a napkin. Ask them to pick up the grape and put it in their mouths and eat it. Then, ask them to circle the body parts on their stick figure where their muscles were working. They should circle their hands, fingers, mouths, tongue muscles and even their throat muscles!
10. You can repeat this investigation with any of the following movements: catching and throwing a ball, doing a push up, or dancing.

Activity 3: Muscle Moves

Type of Activity: Energy to Move

Domain: Physical

Students will:

- Practice large, small, and gross motor muscle movements

Materials:

- Mat or rug

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Time Frame: 20-30 minutes

Directions:

1. Remind students that it takes many muscles to make our bodies work! When we move, we help to build strong and healthy muscles!
2. Invite students to stand up. Ask them if they have ever done a jumping jack. Teach them to do a jumping jack. Then, challenge them to do three to five jumping jacks. Ask students which muscles they think they are working. Jumping jacks work many muscles including the arms, legs, and even the heart muscles!
3. Then, ask students to lay on their backs on a mat or rug. Show them how to do a sit-up by lifting their upper torsos and touching their toes. Challenge them to do three to five sit ups. Then, ask students which muscles they think they are working. Sit ups work arm, leg and stomach muscles.
4. Finally, show students how to act like crabs to do the crab walk or commando crawling. They must lay on their backs and lift their bodies up with their arms and legs. From this position they must walk backwards, using both their arms and legs to navigate. Time them doing the crab walk for 20 seconds. Then, ask students which muscles they think they were using.
5. If time allows, invite students to do other animal movements. They can hop like a kangaroo, slither like a snake, prance like a pony, jump like a frog, or scurry like an ant!
6. Finally, invite students to practice any movement that uses their muscles!

Modifications:

Pump It Up for Older Students

- Older students can learn about specific muscle names like biceps, triceps, hamstrings, quadriceps, etc.
- Older students can do extra repetitions of the movements and more complicated movements.

Cool It Down for Younger Students

- Younger students can do fewer repetitions of the movements.

NAEYC Standards Alignment

- **2.A.10** The curriculum guides teachers to incorporate content, concepts, and activities that foster social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development and integrate key areas of content including literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety, and social studies.
- **2.K.01** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage good health practices such as serving and feeding themselves, rest, good nutrition, exercise, hand washing, and tooth brushing.
- **2.C.03** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that support fine-motor development.

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- **2.C.04** Children have varied opportunities and are provided equipment to engage in large motor experiences that stimulate a variety of skills; enhance sensory-motor integration; develop controlled movement; enable children with varying abilities to have large-motor experiences similar to those of their peers; range from familiar to new and challenging; help them learn physical games with rules and structure.
- **2.G.03** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage them to use the five senses to observe, explore, and experiment with scientific phenomena.

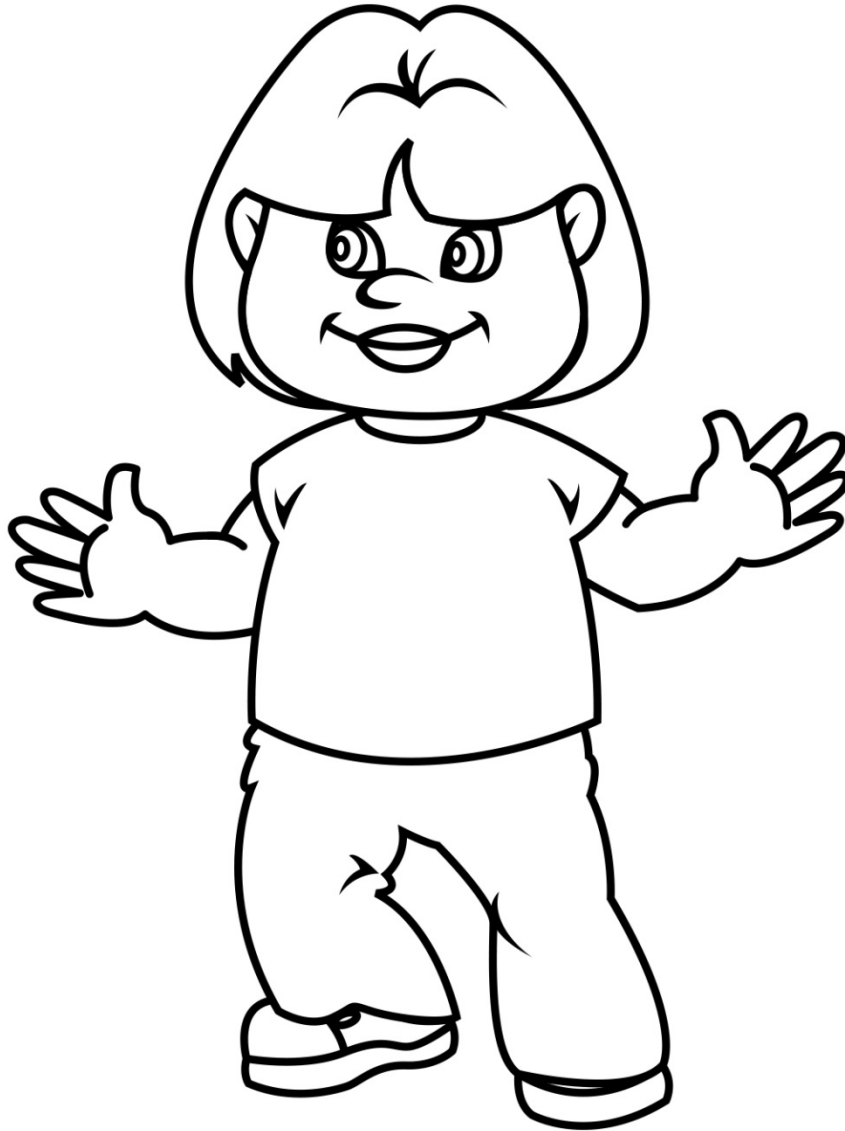
Be Smart from the Start at Home!

Preschool-aged children are not expected to understand calories or how their bodies use energy, but they can begin to learn foundational information to help them make healthy decisions around diet and exercise. The Smart from the Start lessons are a set of flexible activities designed to introduce and reinforce these concepts, and we encourage you to integrate the rest of the activities in Me and My Choices and Give it a Try! into your existing curriculum. Throughout these activities, children will learn about energy they need to work and play; to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink from a variety of food groups; and how to move throughout the day with fun activities that help keep their hearts strong and healthy.

As your students progress to elementary school, the [Healthy Decisions, Healthy Habits Together Counts™ curriculum](#) can help them focus on more rigorous concepts related to self-esteem, decision-making, healthy nutrition and regular physical activity.

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Energy at Home

This week, your child learned that muscles are an important part of their body that helps them move. They learned that they have more than 600 different muscles in their body and that every movement makes at least one muscle work. We even move our muscles when we laugh, blink, and smile!

Regular exercise helps us build strong and healthy muscles. It is recommended that preschool children be physically active for at least 60 minutes each day. Ask your child to show you the movements he or she did in class and the muscles those movements worked. Then, get out and move with your preschooler and make your muscles work!