



The Groove for kids facilitator training

Part 1: Introduction and Grooving children ages 4-6

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Press play

"I've never felt so free in my life!"

I loved this moment. My last day sharing Groove in schools in 2019, this happened! It felt like the most perfect send-off, the most beautiful way to wrap up another school year reminding me how powerful of a medicine it is to groove together.

I find myself coming back to this video for motivation whenever I'm feeling tired or deflated. She reminds me of why I'm doing what I'm doing and inspires me to keep going despite whatever obstacles are presented along the way. It is our birthright to "feel this free" and the gift of groove is so uniquely special, I can hardly wait to see the impact we will make together.

Thank you for being here, let's get started!

xo,
Dani

Why is Groove so good for kids



Groove is the perfect place for kids of all ages to strengthen their bodies and stimulate their brains in ways that traditional sports and dance do not do.

It is a movement playground that fosters body awareness, confidence, critical thinking, creative self-expression and connection among peers.

One of the most important benefits of Groove, especially for kids is that it encourages PLAY.

By inviting children to play with different kinds of energies without a goal of it looking a particular way or to get it “right,” they can experience diverse movements with associated feelings (such as; heavy stomp, soft sway, obscure crawls) to dance through them.

Not only does groove help develop key physical competencies in children and youth, it also helps nurture emotional awareness in a non-verbal, creative way.

Cool fact

“Scientists have recently determined that it takes approximately 400 repetitions to create a new synapse in the brain - unless it is done with play, in which case, it takes between 10 and 20 repetitions!”

-Dr. Karyn Purvis



Main differences between adult and kids program

1. Warm ups are upbeat and great ice-breakers. We typically start in a circle with a song that is unifying and grounding. Or, alternatively, a fun current pop song where we play with rockstar poses, dance walks and high 5s. The core of the class is all about connections and exploring diverse styles and genres. We typically save the softer, more creative and obscure movements for the end of class before stillness.
2. The overall facilitation is "layered" meaning there's more talking, more cueing and a kind of build up to reach the full movement. This will feel like you're teaching more "follow the leader" style and you may find you want to transition between moves more frequently to keep the kids engaged.
3. We use imagery and sometimes create "stories" to inspire them to get into the groove, works especially well with young children.
4. Class length is usually shorter. 30-45 min for young children, 45-60 min for kids and teens.
5. We do not offer a "personal song" in kids groove. Typically we end with a creative functional training activity like "hydro space, chariots of fire or pulse" before stillness.
6. Chill out zone or Freestyle zones do not exist in the kids experience...as we would most likely not have any groovers if they did!
7. You won't use all the Groove Truths and you will word some of them differently.
8. You'll utilize your supreme classroom management skills and practice not letting their spontaneous behaviour negatively affect your internal state :)



Grooving with children ages 4-6 years old

Focus & Approach

A key focus grooving this age group is to develop (in fun and creative ways!) fundamental movement skills, such as; galloping, hopping, running, jumping, crawling, rolling and balancing.

We also work on simple rhythm connections (QQS) and easy partner interactions like swing your partner and high 5s.

I usually theme the class as a “trip around the world!” and they love it!

We fly to different destinations in between songs and by the end, the kids have traveled to a variety of countries and explored diverse movements to fun music.

The beautiful thing about grooving with young children is that they typically LOVE to DANCE and feel FREE to express themselves because dancing still feels NATURAL to them.

Encourage them to express this freedom and creativity!

Have fun with them and enjoy embracing your inner child as you venture on this ride!

Introduction



It all starts with a solid and confident intro. Let it be fun and playful, this will help keep them engaged!

First I introduce myself and say we're going to have a DANCE PARTY!

Usually my spiel sounds like this...

"Who in here loves to dance? We're going to do something called Groove, which is SUPER FUN! I'm going to show you very easy moves and I want us to all do the same move together but make it your own and let yourself get creative and have fun with it! Really important, when you dance these moves in your own way, I want you to explore moving through the space backwards, sideways and you can also try turning (I demonstrate). Also try to do some of the moves on your tippy toes or getting really low to the ground.

Also really important boys and girls, when you're grooving try not to copy your friends! Because we want you to show your own unique style and personality. So let's practice this! Everyone strike a pose with me.

Great! Now can you do another pose, something totally different but try not to copy anyone! Perfect!! Now, boys and girls, the best part about grooving is that when you do it in your own way, you absolutely can't get it wrong!! Can you tell your neighbour, You can't get it wrong!...Can you tell your other neighbour, you can't get it wrong!

Awesome. Now before we get up, please check your shoe laces and footwear to make sure you're all secure. Beautiful.

Now get up and find your own DANCE bubble where you have lots of room around you."

Pre-warm up walk

Practice moving around the room exploring all directions and levels with them before you start grooving without music.

Make sure you emphasize moving around safely as the dance party can get a little wild and you want to avoid little human collisions! This is really important. I use a lot of "freeze" to change the command to emphasize safety.

I like to get them strike a pose or jump and land in a cool shape with their body, then start the groove.

My "go to" Grooves



	It Takes a Village Groove Kids! - Vol. 1	Benjamin Bidlack	2011	Dance	3:54
	Wipe Out Wipe Out	The Surfaris	1963	Rock	2:46
	Everybody Gonfi Gon Dance Pop & Disco Hits Vol.2	D.J. Pop Mix	2010	Pop	2:53
	Urban Babylon Groove Kids! - Vol. 1	Benjamin Bidlack	2011	Dance	3:15
	Estrella Barnstomer	Tom Eno	2009	Singer/Songwriter	3:48
	Pulse Strong (with Misty Tripoli)	Benjamin Bidlack	2011	Dance	...
	Hydro Space Groove Kids! - Vol. 1	Benjamin Bidlack	2011	Dance	4:56
	The Beauty of the World Groove Kids! - Vol. 1	Benjamin Bidlack	2011	Dance	3:35
	Over the Rainbow Somewhere Over the Rainbow - The Best of Isra...	Israel Kamakawiwo'ole	2011	Pop	3:32

As you can see, my playlist is much shorter for this age group, just under 30 minutes including 5 minutes of "quiet time." I factor 5-7 minutes in for the introduction and pre-warm up walk, making this experience approximately 40 minutes total.

Breaking it down...



Each song has a specific purpose related to developing a physical skill while integrating imagination and play

It takes a Village	Elephant, Monkey, Snakes & Cheetahs	Exploring animal movements in Africa
Wipe Out	Funky goofy swims and tricks on your surfboard	Being a surfer in Hawaii
Everybody Gonfi - Gon	Galloping with a lasso, swing your partner	Taking a trip to the country - Calgary, Texas...or wherever there are cowboys!
Urban Babylon	Exploring egyptian inspired statue shapes and mummy shuffles	Visiting the pyramids in Egypt
Estrella	Dramatic Tango walks, picking roses and throwing them, QQS rhythm	Going to Argentina to dance Tango!
Pulse	Superman / Superwoman crawls on hands and feet	Taking it to the streets of NYC
Hydro Space	Slow motion floats on the moon	Leaving Earth and going to the moon

Quiet Time



Stillness and silence is a very important component of the Groove kids experience, please do not skip it! I like to call it “Quiet time” with this age group. It usually takes a couple minutes to set it up. Bring them in close and tell them “we’re going to practice being super still, relaxed and quiet for a few minutes and that this is especially important after moving so much and working so hard.” Maybe remind them how amazing they did!

I ask them to find their own special spot in the room where they have lots of space around them so they don’t disturb their neighbour as this is something we’re going to practice on our own. Unite them in a couple deep breaths and ask them to gently close their eyes. They can place one hand on their belly and one on their heart to feel their breath move up and down. This is a good way to connect them deeper to their body and breath. Feel free to guide some sort of visualization, if it feels natural to you.

Stay here for at least 5 minutes. I like to say quiet for most of the experience, however I do remind them to “relax, be still and feel your belly rise and fall” throughout, especially if I notice some kids struggling with staying still.

You can wake them up with a big stretch or breathing exercises. Often I like to ask them to hug themselves super tight and thank themselves for doing such an amazing job being creative and having fun with their peers. Then I usually get them to give their neighbour a hug and thank them for dancing with them. If you’d like some extra guidance leading quiet time for this age group, you can check out my recording on [iTunes here](#).



Practice

Review class demo and tutorial videos of “It takes a Village” and “Hydro Space.” Practice facilitating on your own. You can write down key facilitation points or dance around in your living room facilitating aloud. Plan a time to meet your partner on a video chat and practice together, each leading one song. After facilitating each other, provide some feedback. What worked really well and what maybe didn’t? Be honest and caring with how you share.

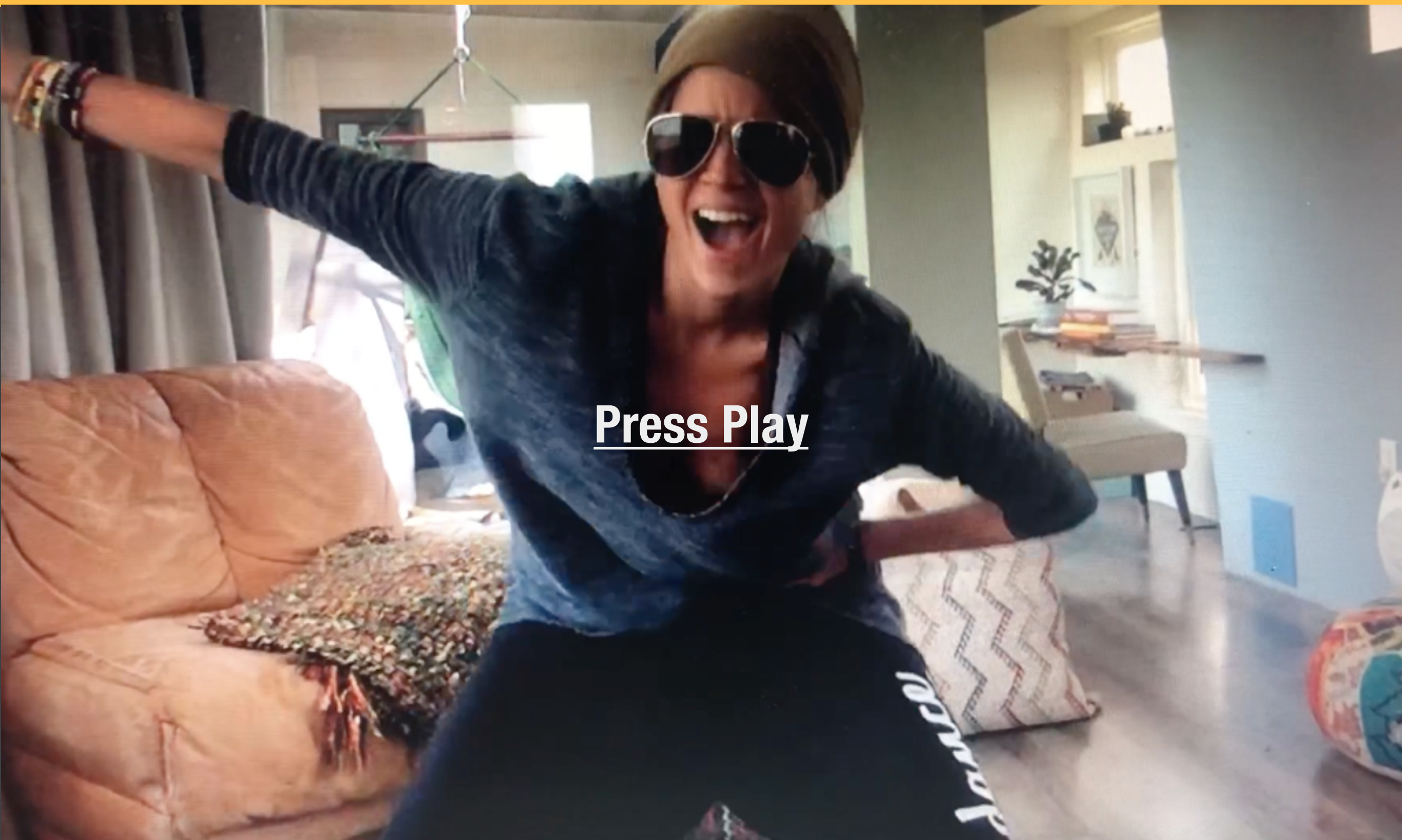
Embody

How can you add a touch of youthful spirit to your day and week? Could you prance to your car as opposed to walking to it? Or take a moment to be enchanted by the natural world? What about enjoying a bowl of ice cream with as much excitement as a 6 year old child? Let your imagination run wild and have fun with it. Feel free to journal about your experience.

Write

In your journal or notebook, write a letter to your 6 year old self. Let yourself write whatever comes to mind. It could be advice, words of encouragement or you could draw upon a particular experience. You don’t need to share this letter so feel free to express yourself honestly.

Congratulations, you just completed Part 1!



Get up! You deserve a HAPPY DANCE!