

FIFTH EDITION

Children Moving

A REFLECTIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

George Graham

Shirley Ann Holt/Hale

Melissa Parker



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A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education

George Graham

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Shirley Ann Holt/Hale

Linden Elementary School, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Melissa Parker

University of Northern Colorado



Mayfield Publishing Company
Mountain View, California
London • Toronto

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Graham, George

Children moving: a reflective approach to teaching physical education /
George Graham, Shirley Ann Holt/Hale, Melissa Parker.—5th ed.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7674-1748-8

1. Physical education for children—Study and teaching—United States.
2. Physical education for children—United States—Curricula. 3. Movement education—United States. I. Holt/Hale, Shirley Ann. II. Parker, Melissa. III. Title.

GV443 .G73 2001

372.86'044—dc21

00-058677

CIP

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4

Mayfield Publishing Company

1280 Villa Street

Mountain View, California 94041

Sponsoring editor, Reid Hester; production editor, Carla White Kirschenbaum; manuscript editor, Elaine Kehoe; text designer, Anne Flanagan; design manager, Jean Mailander; art manager, Rennie Evans; manufacturing manager, Randy Hurst. The text was set in 9.5/12 Stone Serif by Black Dot Group and printed on 45# Somerset Matte by Courier Westford. PMS #3295.

Text Credits: Fig. 4.1 Adapted from *Physical Activity for Children: A Statement of Guidelines*, 1998, with permission from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1599. P.382 Definition of “balance” by permission. From *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary, Tenth Edition*. Copyright © 1999 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. NASPE Content Standards and Assessment Examples reprinted from *Moving Into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education* (1995) with permission from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1599.

To a shared love of teaching children and a friendship
that spans twenty-five years of professional writing.

Preface

Somewhere between Philadelphia and Atlanta on the return flight from the 1975 AAHPERD convention in Atlantic City, the concept of “teaching by skill themes” was first conceptualized. We never dreamed that twenty-five years later skill themes would become a curricular model for many elementary schools throughout the world. Our goal was simply to do our part to make physical education better for children. Inspired by the work of a Canadian movement educator, Sheila Stanley, we believed that movement education provided a curricular and instructional format that would be effective for all children, not only the athletically gifted or the physically fit. But, it was too British, and we wanted to Americanize the best that movement education had to offer the world. Hence, teaching by skill themes was born.

When the first edition of *Children Moving* was published the research documenting the benefits of physical activity and the importance of physical education in school curricula was nonexistent. Today, this has changed drastically. As we complete the fifth edition we have an increasing number of national research and consensus reports that solidly document the important contributions physical activity can make to one's health. There are also straightforward recommendations about what should be included in quality physical education programs for children and how that content can be effectively taught. More than ever before, this edition of *Children Moving* clearly defines and explains how teachers can start to “guide youngsters in the process of becoming physically active for a lifetime,” and it heavily relies on national documents and research to do so.

It has now been six years since the *Surgeon General's Report* and the *National Standards for Physical Education* were published. When we wrote the last edition they were brand new. Today, they have become benchmark documents and our task is no longer to simply understand their intent, but to show how to align programs so that they meet the guidelines suggested in these documents. Physical educators can no longer justify



programs that simply keep youngsters “busy, happy, and good,” giving classroom teachers a planning period. In this era of increased accountability and testing, state legislatures and school districts are mandating that teachers document what youngsters have and have not learned, often through high-stakes testing with highly publicized results. Now, physical education programs that do not have sound educational goals and practices guiding their instruction are more vulnerable than ever before.

This edition frequently references five national documents that have provided direction, guidance, and support for physical education in schools by translating research and consensus reports into meaningful and worthwhile experiences for children. *The Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity* and the consensus report on physical activity sponsored by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health promotion, both published in 1996, clearly documented the value of physical activity. They also recommended that more time be allocated for physical education programs that are designed to build the foundation for youngsters to become physically active for a lifetime. The *National Standards for Physical Education*, published by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) in 1995, gave us guidance for the content and goals of physical education programs. NASPE's *Developmentally Appropriate Guidelines for Children's Physical Education* (1992) and *Appropriate Practices for Elementary Physical Education* (2000) provided guidance for the structure of quality physical education programs along with suggested content. The authors of *Children Moving* have been involved with these and other national, regional, and state level projects in various ways. Our involvement is one of the key reasons for the match between *Children Moving* and the recent national and state advances substantiating the importance of physical activity that have been made. This edition includes literally hundreds of practical learning experiences and assessments for reaching the goals and objectives outlined in the National Standards and various state standards.

While we have expanded and clarified the information from the documents of the mid-1990s, much remains from previous editions, especially our goal to keep the text both informal and practical. What we wrote in the preface to the first edition remains true: “We are teachers of children first. And writers second. Individual insights gained during years of teaching experience and ideas to enhance teacher success are sprinkled throughout the text. We hope that by sharing these experiences we can help others to enrich the lives of children.”

We begin the fifth edition of *Children Moving* by describing the value and purpose of physical education. Part One, “Introduction and Overview”, provides an overview of the skill theme approach, which is what the program suggested in *Children Moving* has come to be known as since we originally wrote about it in 1980, and our beliefs and values about children’s physical education. An expanded and completely rewritten Chapter 1 highlights the benefits of physical activity, then explains the purpose of physical education and what makes a quality program. Chapters 2 and 3 define the skill theme approach. These two chapters also illustrate the connections between the National Standards and the skill theme approach. Chapter 4 has been revised to include the latest information on the potential role of physical activity in the lives of children and advice about transforming those principles into physical activities. Suggestions are included for using fitness evaluation as a formative assessment item designed for student goal setting and growth. Examples of how wellness can be linked with physical education lessons are also included. Chapter 5 makes the case that schools are different from one another and that quality programs reflect those differences. The final chapter in Part One provides an overview of disabilities, the philosophy of inclusion in physical education, and our role in providing quality physical education for children with special needs.

Part Two, “Teaching Skills,” contains Chapters 7 to 15, which focus on the process, or pedagogy, of teaching, beginning with a chapter describing our system for determining the content children are ready to learn based on their developmental needs and interests (generic levels of skill proficiency) as opposed to determining what should be taught based on age or grade level. Chapter 8 outlines planning in a simple straightforward manner that presents planning as four-step process. Chapters 9 and 10 focus on practical ideas for developing and maintaining a positive learning environment in which children learn to be responsible for their own actions. Chapter 9 clearly focuses on developing an environment that is student directed based on personal and social responsibility. Chap-

ter 10 also addresses strategies for youngsters that may need extra help in learning how to function appropriately in a physical education environment. Because *Children Moving* describes a child-centered rather than a subject-centered approach to teaching, it is important that teachers constantly observe children to determine the progress they are making so that lessons can be adjusted for individual differences. Chapter 11 describes some observation techniques and provides some checklists that can be used by reflective teachers. New examples of checklists that teachers can use to focus their observation have been included in this edition. Chapter 12 describes how teachers organize content into meaningful experiences by developing a logical progression of tasks (learning experiences), cues (critical elements), and challenges designed to make physical education classes a true learning experience. These ideas are presented in a user-friendly manner designed for easy understanding. Chapter 13, which describes a variety of instructional approaches used by teachers to heighten children’s enjoyment and understanding of the lessons, has been expanded to include cooperative learning and provides an analysis of when each approach may be appropriate based on the needs of the students and the pedagogical skills of the teacher. Chapter 14, on assessment, has once again been completely revised in response to the current assessment trends. It contains a variety of assessment examples based on our teaching experiences as well as the National Standards. Assessment icons are then used throughout the text to indicate performance assessments that are explained in detail in Chapter 14. In addition, the assessment tool of checks for cognitive understanding is indicated with the  icon. Another icon you will find in the text  is an alert for a strong emphasis on safety in a given situation. Chapter 15 includes a variety of practical ways that teachers can assess their own teaching to determine if, and how, they are using the techniques employed by effective teachers of children’s physical education.

Parts Three and Four of *Children Moving* focus on the content of the skill theme approach. Chapters 16 to 18 describe how the concepts of space awareness, effort, and relationships are taught in the skill theme approach. These chapters include references to the National Standards for both content and assessment ideas. They are followed by the skill theme chapters (19 to 31), which contain hundreds of learning experiences designed to help children learn the motor skills that are necessary for successful participation and enjoyment of a variety of physical activities and sports. Each skill theme chapter begins with an overview of the content followed by a description of a series of tasks, the critical elements or cues that are

necessary to succeed at these tasks, and challenges designed to maintain children's interest in learning the tasks. The tasks are organized according to the Generic Levels of Skill Proficiency in a spiral progression from beginning to advanced. New to this edition are almost 200 assessment options or ideas that have been added to the skill theme chapters and keyed to the assessment chapter. As in the fourth edition, the chapters on Skill Themes in Dance (20), Skill Themes in Gymnastics (25) and Skill Themes in Games (31) remain in Part Four. These are placed near the skill themes that precede the development into dance, gymnastics, and game forms. This placement provides a stronger link between the skill themes and the three content areas of elementary physical education.

Chapters 32 and 33 make up the final part, "The Future," in this fifth edition of *Children Moving*. The first describes some of the changes teachers have successfully used to build support for their programs and has been revised to include advocacy and dealing with political bodies. Chapter 33 is our favorite and includes our dreams for children's physical education as we enter the new millennium.

Ancillary items are updated and expanded with this edition. As with the past three editions, Shirley Ann Holt/Hale has revised the lesson plans designed to accompany *Children Moving* based on her twenty-seven years of teaching children at Linden Elementary School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Based on the recommendations of our reviewers and a number of other teacher educators, there is once again an Instructor Manual to Accompany *Children Moving*. Each chapter in the manual begins with an overview of the chapter content and includes key points for classroom lectures and discussions with overhead transparency masters, active learning experiences for both the classroom and the gym, computer lab assignments and other assignments to be completed outside of class, along with worksheets and test questions for each chapter. The Instructor's Manual is again developed by Eloise Elliot, Ph.D., who was a kindergarten and elementary school physical education teacher for a number of years. She is currently the Department Chair of the Health and Physical Education program at Concord College in Athens, West Virginia, where she uses *Children Moving* with her classes of future physical education and classroom teachers.

New to this edition is a student video and website specific to the book. The video, developed by Shaunna McGhie of Southwest Missouri State demonstrates three skill themes so that students are able to see the differences in proficiency levels. The student video

can be packaged with the text at a discounted price for students so that each of them can study the concepts it illustrates on their own time and at their own pace. Contact your Mayfield rep to receive a copy of the video. *Children Moving* also has a book specific website assessable via the Mayfield Web site, www.mayfield-pub.com/graham, and linked to PE Central. The website contains an annotated list of related websites as well as a menu of downloadable transparency masters and worksheets for instructors.

Acknowledgments

Needless to say, we are grateful to a number of people for assisting us in the process of revising *Children Moving*. Although we can't name everyone, we are especially grateful for the assistance of the following individuals:

- Lans Hayes of Mayfield Publishing Company, who, in 1977, took a huge risk on four unknown authors with a very radical idea.
- Dolly Lambdin, University of Texas, for her ongoing, insightful, and honest reviews of our work. She continues to provide us with inspiration and direction.
- The children at Linden Elementary School in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, who create as well as follow our dreams of physical education for children.
- Clay Thurston, for his ability to capture children's movement through photography.
- The children and principal at St. Mary's Elementary School in Grand Forks, North Dakota, who provided such a rich lab for the teaching of children.
- Casey Jones and the children at Kipps Elementary School in Blacksburg, Virginia.
- All the teachers we are fortunate to meet at conferences and meetings who share with us the different ways they are using *Children Moving* in their programs.
- The reviewers for their valuable insights: Ruth A. Arnold, Eastern Connecticut State University; Elizabeth Cozzalio Bate, University of Northern Colorado; Shaunna McGhie, Southeast Missouri State University; Pug D. Parris, McMurry University; Gloria Napper-Owen, University of New Mexico; Thomas Ratliffe, Florida State University; Marty Selby, East Carolina University; Deborah A. Sheehy, Springfield College; Sandy Stroot, Ohio State University; and Deborah A. Wuest, Ithaca College.

- The professionals at Mayfield Publishing for their patience and gentle prodding: Michele Sordi, Sponsoring Editor for her vision and dedication to our work; Reid Hester, Sponsoring Editor, for taking care of us in the end; Carla Kirschenbaum, Senior Production Editor; Marty Granahan, Permissions Editor; Rennie Evans, Art Manager; and Elaine Kehoe for her attention to the many and complicated details of editing.
- Boyce Nute, retiring owner of Mayfield, for his belief and support over the past twenty-five years.
- Finally we would like to thank the countless teachers and students who have made so many positive and helpful comments since the first edition of *Children Moving* was published. Your support and encouragement continues to be much appreciated.

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