

Community of Movers: Personal Space Bubble

Valerie Branch, Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist

*In this video, **Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Valerie Branch** shares a **dance and movement readiness strategy** for supporting children's exploration and understanding of **personal space**. Using **imagination**, Branch creates an opportunity for children to learn **self-awareness, social awareness, and practice respecting boundaries**.*

This experience is designed to provide educators with an opportunity to:

- Introduce personal space through imaginative play to support respect for self, others, and surroundings.
- Build communication and self-awareness using repeat-after-me movement and multi-sensory engagement.
- Encourage safe, creative movement by helping children visualize and take ownership of their personal space.

Target Age: Pre-K, ages 3 to 5

Key Vocabulary: level, low, middle, high, circle, front/back, top/bottom, side, personal space

***Connections to Early Childhood Learning Goals**

- **Language and Literacy:** Child attends to communication and language from others. Child understands, communicates, speaks, and builds vocabulary.
- **Cognitive Development:** Child uses imagination, and exercises creativity and creative self-expression.
- **Social Emotional Development:** Child engages in and maintains positive interactions with other children. Child demonstrates an awareness of others' feelings and needs. Child recognizes self as a unique individual with abilities and emotions.
- **Motor Development:** Child develops awareness of their own body and other people's space during interactions. Child develops control, strength, and coordination of large muscle groups.

Arts Concepts Highlighted in this Experience

- **Dance/Movement:**
 - Teacher uses the elements of dance (space and direction) to visualize and create awareness of personal space.
 - Child explores space (low, middle, high) and direction (forward, back, side, up, and down) to create a personal space bubble.
- **Music:**
 - Teacher uses call and response chant to activate self-regulation and readiness.

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Readiness Chant Lyrics by Valerie Branch (adapted from “Hold It” by Roberta Lucas, Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist)

Take your two fingers, wiggle them by your brain, and repeat after me!

Wake up brain. (Wake up brain.)

It's time to move. (It's time to move.)

Time to dance. (Time to dance.)

And time to groove. (And time to groove.)

Extending the Experience:

- Personal space bubbles can be created while standing, sitting on the carpet, or sitting at desks. Adjust your language to guide children in creating their bubbles depending on how children are positioned.
- Use poly spots or tape to help children identify their own space while creating their personal space bubbles.

Getting Ready to Try this Experience with my Classroom or Group

- Is there anything I need to do to prepare children and adults for this experience?
- Where could I do this experience? Do I need to make adjustments to my space to make it successful?
- Do I need to have any special materials?
- When would this experience work best for my class or group?

Reflections for Inclusive Practice

- Do I need to adjust this experience for the mobility, sensory, or processing needs of children or adults in my class or group?
- Would I want to change the content or context of this experience to make it more relevant or accessible to the children and adults I work with?
- How can I implement this experience in a way that considers the language needs of the children and adults I am working with?

Resources

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>

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Notes from the Teaching Artist:

Valerie Branch: “Helping children understand the concept of personal space through activities like “Personal Space Bubble” sets an important foundation for developing future social skills. I encourage you to adapt this strategy as is useful for your learning environment and the children in your care!”

Valerie Branch is a Maryland-based dance/movement artist and is a Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist.