BrainDance Benefits and Tips

**Breath** increases the flow of oxygen to the brain and doing this first pattern brings awareness of importance of breath for ease and flow of movement.

*Take deep breaths while breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth. I often use my arms to create interest in different kind of breaths.*

**Tactile** pattern strengthens bonding and develops sensory integration and proprioception (sense of self in space). *Use various types of touch, move from head to toes and up the back side of your body. Touch as much of your back as possible. Children like coming up with different types of touch. Keep the tactile pattern full of contrast*

**Core-Distal** movements help a person relate to self and others. It develops full body extension and awareness of core for correct alignment. *Move from a position where your core or center is contracted and you are in somewhat of a hiding position to a very open position where your arms, legs, head are all reaching outward. We often go from making ourselves really really small to really big. It helps to say “ta-da!” at the most open position*

**Head-Tail** Moving in the Head-Tail pattern helps the body create an open path for the central nervous system to fully function. The pattern also increases the spine flexibility and neck strength, helping the body move through space with ease. *Roll your head gently around to start and then let your head lead you down into a comfortable bend. Come back up and bend knees slightly and look up at ceiling. You can move your head and tail separately and together and also try to move in a curvy way forward and back like the old Mr. Gumby toy.*

**Upper-Lower** pattern assists the body in articulating body halves for mobility, stability, function and expression. It helps develop emotional grounding where one reaches for goals and sets boundaries. *Move your head, arms, hands and shoulders while lower body is kept still or grounded. Do the same with the lower body. Try moving upper and lower at the same time for something different.*

**Body-Side** pattern articulates body sides and helps balance the two sides of the body. This pattern is especially useful in strengthening horizontal eye tracking and side dominance.

*Do horizontal eye tracking moves where eyes do the work and head moves only as a part of the upper body, not by itself. This can be done in small movements or large body movements that look like a book being opened. The eyes stay on the thumb or hand that moves. Body-Side movements are where one side of the body stays still or grounded while the other side moves all parts and then switch. The time between switching can become shorter. You can also move this pattern through space.*

**Cross-Lateral** This pattern integrates the brain hemispheres and develops vertical eye-tracking, which, in combination with horizontal eye-tracking, is essential for good reading skills. This pattern also helps the body create complex and 3 dimensional movements. *Move one hand up and down across your body with your eyes following the hand that moves. Switch hands and do the same vertical tracking moves. Following the vertical eye tracking, move into whole body cross lateral moves by moving one hand and the opposite leg or by moving across the midline of the body in criss-cross type moves.*

**Vestibular** The last pattern of the BrainDance develops spatial awareness, balance and coordination. This very important system is used when we read, hear, speak, touch, balance, and move.

*Spin one direction for a short time (till dizzy) or counting a certain number of spins works with kids at first. When you are no longer dizzy, spin in the opposite direction. Some people do not like to spin but they can get the benefit of going off balance by swinging front to back, tipping side to side or rolling from side to side. This pattern can also be done at the beginning.*