

Early learning

Play: a study in movement

At Charles C. McLean Public School, the children were rolling. They rolled various sized balls down a ramp, a small hill and a larger hill.

Teacher Robyn Best and early childhood educator Julie Wright took notice and decided to build on their interest.

"We suggested they think of other objects they could try," said Wright, like hula-hoops.

In the classroom, they tried rolling objects in the block area and one group discovered if they rolled a cylinder down a ramp towards a wall of blocks, they could knock the wall down.

When the snow arrived, they rolled snowballs and watched them grow with each layer of snow, leaving tracks behind. Inside, students continued investigating tracks by rolling paint-covered marbles covered on a cookie sheet lined with paper.

The abundant snow outside shifted the students' interest from rolling to sliding.

They wondered what mate-



Big ideas
Norm Blaseg



Aubrey Lloyd (left), Ellie Maxwell and Chase Taylor of Charles C. McLean Public School get the ball rolling to begin a study of movement.

SUPPLIED

rial would give them the best run down the hill at their school — cardboard, plastic, a rug, a cloth, a piece of fabric, and a garbage bag to see if it allowed them to slide more easily. After trying these materials, the educators asked them what they learned.

"Some can slide and some can't," said Lily.

The teaching team noted much of what the children were exploring when rolling and sliding related to movement.

To take it a step further, they asked students to think about the following question, "What is movement?"

This prompted countless responses as the children began linking movement with objects that move and bodies that move. And they quickly made a deeper connection — the idea of the brain and its importance in making the body move.

When they experiment and when they share their theories with others, they find out what works and what does not. This inquiry-based approach to learning builds on children's interests and motivates them to dig deeper.

Norm Blaseg is Director of Education for Rainbow District School Board.

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After training extensively across Canada and abroad, Dr. Amanda Fortin returned to her roots in the north in 2011 to open her practice and begin her family. Her office is located on the 1st floor of Health Sciences North in Sudbury. She has a special interest in breast surgery, encompassing both cosmetic and reconstructive aspects.



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