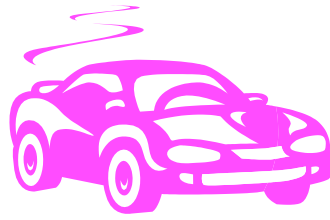
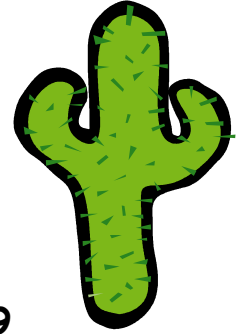




## "On the Go!" and "South of the Border"



Winter 2009



*Thank you for joining in our MG&M fun this winter! Although I'm happy it's spring, it seems too soon to say good-bye to some of our friends. Best of luck to everyone!*

*Read on for highlights of our MG&M classes and other ideas to try at home...*

### Quotable Quote



*"Happiness is activity."*

*-Aristotle*

### Early Childhood FYI



Our "On the Go" transportation theme is a metaphor for children's natural tendency to be "on the go". We adults sometimes struggle to keep up with their natural energy and enthusiasm. However, it takes practice to develop large motor skills, and develop lifelong habits for health and happiness by being active. A well-rounded preschool curriculum includes lots of active learning and movement opportunities to foster children's coordination, balance, and strength, as well as their self-esteem. Children need plenty of time for running, jumping, climbing, and balancing outdoors, and can also work on these skills indoors with creative movement activities and games. Movin' and groovin' through music and movement is an important goal for My Grown-up and Me sessions. Creative movement activities develop large muscles, language and listening skills, problem-solving ability and creativity. Large motor activities also pave the way for the development of fine motor skills which are needed for success in school in later years. See the attached article "Let's Get Moving!" from *Parent & Child* magazine for more ideas on why it is important and how to get moving together with your child. The nice weather can also inspire us to get outside and be active!

## ***Creative Projects***

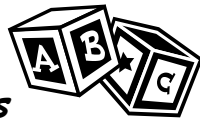


We began our winter session traveling by road and rail in art projects. We used large muscles to explore cause and effect, as well as gravity, as we painted train cars with rolling golf balls. We fostered an important physical skill to use both sides of the body (crossing the mid-line) by making tire track paintings. Finger painting "waves" was a sensory activity, and like our dotted coyotes and snakes, it encouraged experimentation and exploration with different art media. Our butterfly blot paintings demonstrated the concept of symmetry. Another "on the go" art activity could be to make a train with empty cardboard boxes for your child and his/her friends to ride and stretch their imaginations. Decorate each train car (box) with your child, drawing, using paper and glue, or painting them. Then add pie tin or paper plate wheels. Like our Mexican maracas, another tried and true activity to develop eye-hand coordination is making sand jars, using a funnel and layering colored sand in a plastic or glass container. Be sure to fill it to the very top before adding a lid to keep the layers from shifting.



## ***Science & Sensory Explorations***

We begin each MG&M session with playdough to squish, flatten, roll, and cut to develop hand muscles. This time the aroma of chocolate was added for Valentine's Day (just replace some of the flour in the home-made playdough recipe with cocoa powder). We also had "Love Potion" in the sensory bin - colored water, confetti, and test tubes - to help develop eye-hand coordination by filling and pouring. "Fishing" with nets also fostered eye-hand coordination. Sand and construction vehicles, cornmeal with desert creatures, and beans and pots were activities to explore different textures and use imagination. Picking up pom poms with tweezers was designed to promote hand dexterity. Try using chopsticks at home, too (there are various designs just for children) for eating and for play to develop fingers and hands and get ready for writing down the road later on.



## ***Toys & Manipulatives***

Some toys to highlight in this session are the different types of blocks we used: magnetic blocks, tree blocks, bristle blocks, and block puzzles. Block building uses creativity and coordination! Other theme-inspired toys were gears, twisting nuts and bolts, and lacing vehicles, all of which used fine motor skills, while hammering toys tapped large motor skills. Puzzles and key matching utilized the children's visual discrimination skills. Desert puppets encouraged creativity with pretend play.



## Good Reads

A few recommended books for our "On the Go" and "South of the Border" themes are:

- Freight Train (Donald Crews has many transportation books!)
- All Aboard!: A True Train Story (Kuklin)
- Truck Duck (Rex)
- Rattletrap Car (Root)
- Trains and My Car (Barton)
- On the Go! (Morris)
- I Read Symbols (Hoban)
- Lizard's Song (by David Shannon - The book I *intended* to read instead of Lizard's Home!)
- Listen to the Desert (Mora)
- Alejandro's Gift (Albert)
- The Tortilla Factory (Paulsen)
- The Seed and The Giant Saguaro (Ward)
- Way Out in the Desert (a counting book)



## Music & Movement

We buckled up and "drove" hula hoop "cars" as partners to "On the Road to Where We're Going". We explored rhythm, beat, and tempo with rhythm sticks for "Working on the Railroad" and "The Trail Ride". Shaker eggs set the pace as we went "On the Road Again". Several families asked about the artists for the "Drivin' in my Car" movement song (they are Peter and Ellen Allard from their "Good Kids" CD). In the songs, "I Am Here and You Are Here" and "Wild Running Horses", we used listening skills and different parts of our body for each verse. We developed coordination and balance as we danced to "La Mariposa" (the butterfly) and the Mexican Hat Dance. In "Circle of the Sun", some friends took a spin on the parachute to stimulate their senses, while others developed upper body strength pulling them along. We used the maracas we made to explore the colors in the Mexican flag in English and in Spanish!



## Lisa's CD Picks

Some favorite CDs this time were "Travelin' Magic" by Joanne Bartels, and "Choo Choo Boogaloo" by Buckwheat Zydeco. We listened to "Latino! Latino!", and also an all-time favorite CD of mine "World Playground", both from Putamayo World Music.

## Take Home Tunes



### Lyin' in my Sleeping Bag

*A rhythmic chant where children can fill in each verse with a new “nighttime” sound. It can be done with one sound for each verse, or cumulatively, requiring memory skills to “replay” each and every sound for each verse.*

I was lyin' in my sleeping bag (*tap thighs to the beat*)

I couldn't get to sleep

The wind began to howl (*cup hands and howl for the word “howl”*)

And the bugs began to creep (*“creep” fingers on the floor*)

So I rolled to the left (*roll fisted hands and lean left*)

And I rolled to the right (*roll fisted hands and lean right*)

And I heard every sound (*lower voice and cup hand to ear to listen*)

That I could hear at night... (*whisper*)

