Healthy physical, cognitive, and affective (emotional) development relies on the child’s ability to move and the adult’s willingness to allow the time and space for children to do so. Moreover, movement and creative play enhance a child’s “feelings of self-confidence and will benefit children socially, emotionally, and physically” (Pica, 2013, p. 3).

Active movement boosts oxygen and increased blood flow which both feeds the brain and increases the child’s ability to learn new skills. Early childhood experiences with free play and active movement and music experiences enhances a child’s spatial, mathematical, and kinesthetic awareness that only increases the child’s ability to grasp early literacy concepts (Pica, 2013, p. 104).

Teachers and homeschool educators may utilize a child’s natural need to move by incorporating creative movement into school days and across curriculum subjects. Integrating movement into language arts and an early literacy curriculum will enhance a child’s cognitive abilities and make learning more natural and enjoyable.

According to Rae Pica (2013) when children are given “the opportunity to physically demonstrate such action words as stomp, pounce, stalk, or slither - or descriptive words like smooth, strong, gentle, or enormous - word comprehension is immediate and long lasting (p. 7).”

Math education through movement is an opportunity to discover shapes, numbers, and equations, while science lessons incorporating movement may include weight, gravity, and balance.

Play-based education can be incorporated into the homeschool curriculum to enhance physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities in children by allowing children to be active throughout the day, by creating areas in the house and outside containing boxes, balls, and other props to play on and around, and by encouraging children to use manipulatives and hands-on experiences during school time. Use these movement skills to get you started creating and adding to your amazing play based curriculum: crawl, creep, run, jump, leap, gallop, hop, slide, pull, push, lift, strike, climb, stretch, dribble, roll, shake, bounce, twist, fall, dodge.

References
**Sweet Corn: Poems**

by James Stevenson (1995)

OK, this is far from new, but it is a fantastic way to see poetry in an informal presentation. These are summer poems, fanciful poems, short and friendly poems. “I wish there was a color-coded—these—these have a catalog “shelf location” listed as 811.54, and the library has dozens. Poetry, ages 5 - 15.

**Poetrees**

by Douglas Florian (2010)

Poetry and science (author’s end notes about trees, entitled “Glossaetre”) together, make this an essential older book. You will notice how different this book is put together, as soon as you open the cover. Florian does the art in his books, and it is an art that a child can look at and say, “I can do that, too!” PPLD has over two dozen of Douglas Florian’s books! Read them all. Poetry, ages 5 - 15.

**Emma Delimma: Big Sister Poems**

by Kristine O’Connell George (2011)

I love these stories, and this is all that and more. Little sister Emma is into everything. Big sister Jessica is not always happy about that. There is a little sister accident in this book — Emma falls off a chair and breaks her arm. There is opportunity to read and discuss sibling relationships, what we like, what we don’t like, and maybe space for a little more understanding. Poetry, ages 5 - 15.

**You Read to Me, I’ll Read to You**

by Mary Ann Hoberman (2010)

This is a series of books that make excellent “performance” pieces for homeschoolers. The books wear out at the library; they are worth tracking down. This particular one allows two readers to take turns reading one story — the first story is blue color coded - with only a few lines that are read together. It takes practice to get the timing just right, but it all ‘school’ time. Poetry, literature ages 5 - 15.