

The Midline Movements

The Midline Movements focus on the skills necessary for easy two-sided (left-right) movement across the midline of the body. The vertical midline of the body is the necessary reference for all such bilateral skills. The midline (first defined by Dr. Dennison) is the area where the left and right visual fields overlap, requiring the paired eyes and all of their reciprocating muscles to work so well as a team that the two eyes function as one. Development of bilateral movement skills for crawling, walking, or seeing depth is essential to the child's growing sense of autonomy. It is also a prerequisite for whole-body coordination and ease of learning in the near-visual area. The Midline Movements help to integrate binocular vision, binaural hearing, and the left and right sides of the brain and body.

Many learners beginning school are not developmentally prepared for the bilateral, two-dimensional skills of near-point work. Sometimes a student is coordinated for play or sports activities (involving three-dimensional space and demanding binocular vision only beyond arm's length), yet is not ready to use both eyes, ears, hands, and brain hemispheres for near-point work, such as reading, writing, and other skills involving fine-motor coordination. Other students show coordination for academic skills or near-point activities, yet are not ready for whole-body coordination on the playing field. The Midline Movements facilitate completion of developmental skills and give the learner permission to build on the concrete operations already established. They help students to increase upper-lower body coordination, for both large-motor activities and fine-motor skills.

Cross-motor activities have been used to activate the brain since our understanding of laterality began over a century ago. Noted authorities such as Orton, Doman, Delacato, Kephart, and Barsch have used similar movements successfully in their learning programs. Dr. Dennison drew from his knowledge of these programs in developing the Midline Movements series.

Paul Dennison has worked closely with behavioral optometrists for more than twenty years. He recognizes the value of perceptual-motor and vision training for certain students, and has included his own movement innovations for releasing visual stress and creating eye-teaming skills.

Some of the Midline Movements have been adapted from activities used in behavioral optometry to increase brain-body coordination. Others are borrowed from sports, dance, or exercise programs. Still others, totally unique to Edu-K, are the innovations of Dr. Paul Dennison.

