

Let's go in the ring

(tune of brown girl in the ring ¹)

Let's go in the ring, tra la la la la x 3
We'll watch you doing your thing.

E.g. *Tia goes in the ring*

*I might change the words to fit what the child chooses to do in the middle e.g. Tia jumps in the ring etc.



I find it is simpler to just sing the child's name, as it frees the movement from a label and language. There are no rules, other than those which keep us safe. Sometimes a child chooses to stand or sit still in the ring and that is grand. It requires a lot of courage to even go into the middle.

What I do:

We take our shoes and socks off if possible, so we can really enjoy our movement and feel our bodies from the inside out.

I sit in a circle with a group of children and adults. We all hold onto the scrunchy together. Individual children take it in turns to go in the middle and 'do their thing'.

There are no rules at all about what to do in the middle, apart from being careful that we do not hurt ourselves or any of our friends.

I do not ask a child to tell me what they are going to do in the middle. The children I work with have limited language. I have also found that putting them on the spot in this way makes it harder for them to enjoy it.

I try to show that I value every child who goes into the middle. I show as much interest and praise for the child who sits picking their nails and looking at the carpet, as I do for the child who is showing me their ballet pirouettes or break dancing.

I stay engaged and look at the child in the middle. I try to encourage eye contact. I try to give them my full attention to show that I value whatever they choose to do.

Shyer children often prefer to go in the ring with a friend, and I encourage this.

I offer each child a 'high five' on their way out of the ring. I might ask them 'What was your thing?' if I think they are able to tell me, and might like to. There is no pressure though. If the child doesn't want to tell me or I know they cannot, I would comment on and praise what they did, then give them a high five for their efforts.

¹ Brown girl in the ring, by Boney M. Thanks to Boney M. for giving us such a classic tune. I hope they would not mind us using it to encourage children to have so much fun.