



# PAPER PLAYGROUND :

a participatory dance, drawing and music performance  
for very young children and their adults

## Participant's Guide

Written by Julie Lebel

Vancouver, BC, Canada, May 2019





## PAPER PLAYGROUND IS...

A playful and interactive dance performance where children are free to join in and explore, because that's what young ones do best!

**Paper Playground** is a stimulating experience set on a large paper carpet, created especially for children five and under that is full of dancing, drawing, live music and projections. Fully immersive, **Paper Playground** welcomes children as true creative collaborators and they become an essential part of the performance.

Exploring the theme of water with boats, fish, crabs and sharks, performers present irresistible invitations to roll, fall, draw, breathe – to welcome children into moving with the performers.



## HOW TO PLAY IN THE PAPER PLAYGROUND

- Children are welcomed to dance with the dancers.
- Adults are asked to stay sitting on the outskirts of the paper carpet.
- Children are invited on to the carpet at any point during the performance.
- Some children prefer to stay close to their accompanying adult. It is best not to pressure children to join in, they will also learn a lot from watching.
- Your children will be introduced to basic choreography. Your children may move toward you and away. Let them decide how they want to move and where they want to be.
- Adults can still participate! Some of the movements can be done while sitting.

Open your eyes!  
Open your ears!

We count on your help to discover this  
wonderful imaginary world, together.



## BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE, a few playful suggestions

**Freeze Dance:** Dance to the music, stop the music and make a *shushhhh* sound and fall slowly to the ground, pause, and start again. Model taking a deep breath before the *shushhhh*. Perhaps raise your hands to the ceiling as if your body was filling up with air.

**Freeze Draw:** Listen to various genres of music and their rhythms, provide paper and crayons. Some music may inspire children to draw dots, continuous lines or zig zags, etc... Explore! Stop the music and stop drawing, listen for the quiet, look at your drawing, and start over with other music.

**The Wave:** Sit in a circle and ask the children to remember the space where they are sitting. Invite a child to name a sea creature and then invite all to move as suggested within the circle: crabs, jellyfish, etc... After a minute or so, take a deep breath while raising your hands to the ceiling, and invite all to lower their body to the floor and gently tap the floor like a drum with their hands. It could be like the sound of a wave rumbling on the rocks of a beach. This rumbling sound is the signal to go back to their spot in the circle and be swept away by the "wave". Pause, listen for the quiet. Start again!



## INSPIRATION...

**Paper Playground** is inspired by Dancing the Parenting, a program designed by Julie Lebel which welcomes families who want to experience relationship-based dancing with their children. The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education inspired a creative process that introduces playful and creative exploration of developmental movement patterns and engaging parents into their own dancing just as much as the children.

Dancing the Parenting is also deeply inspired by the research of the Luna Dance Institute. You may want to read this article for inspiration:

<https://dancersgroup.org/2012/05/the-first-steps-luna-dance-institute/>

Or, watch this documentary for more inspiration:

<https://foolishoperations.org/dancing-the-parenting/>

This photo is by Yvonne Chew.



## CREATIVE TEAM

Julie Lebel - Artistic direction & performance

Meredith Bates - Music composition & performance

Jackie Rolston - Animated films

Created in collaboration with all performers:

Caroline Liffmann, Sarah Gallos and Sophie Brassard

Dramaturgy support from:

Sarah Dixon, Jo Leslie and Isabelle Rousseau

Amanda Lye - Accessories

Peggy Leung - Accessories assistance

Rémi Thibeault - Stage manager





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- Thanks to Moberly Arts and Cultural Centre and the Vancouver Park Board who allowed us to create giant messes in order for us to find all the ideas to make this show.
- Thanks to the children of la Garderie tartine et chocolat and director Karine Grand Maison, for helping us in our process of translating our performance into French.
- A warm thank you to this guide's contributors: Susan Hoppenfeld, Karine Grand Maison, Caroline Liffmann and Cyndy Chwelos.
- Paper Playground was created on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh. We are humbled by this history and grateful for our use of this land.
- The photos of this guide are by Riz Herboza, thanks!  
<https://foolishoperations.org/>



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