

These Books Were Made for Dancing
By Ruth Gilbert, Youth Services Librarian

We've had a fantastic summer at the Kirkland Town Library. We've seen magic, touched real dinosaur fossils, thrown eggs out our tower window, and more! Our special summer programs are almost at an end, but there's still one that I've been looking forward to for months: the Toddler Dance Party. If you're able to find the right song you'll unlock toddler dance moves that are truly inspired. Toddlers dance with their whole hearts and bodies. Given the right rhythm and beat, they'll create choreography that no adult should attempt unless they have a trusted chiropractor. If you weren't able to make it to our toddler dance party, or your toddler needs a little nudging to get their groove on, these books may provide a little inspiration.

"How Do You Dance?" by Thyra Heder is full of snapshot-like illustrations of people dancing in all different ways. You'll see grownups in business suits, little girls in fancy dresses, and everyone in between doing dances like "the jiggle" and "the sneak." My favorite is the picture of dads doing quintessential dad dances. The sense of movement in the illustrations is enough to make anyone get up and boogie.

"Tap! Tap! Tap!: Dance! Dance! Dance!" by Herve Tullet is full of splashes, splotches, and swirls of blue, red, and yellow paint that are meant to be touched and tapped. Each page asks readers to interact with the book by moving their bodies in some way, like moving a hand from one page to the other "like a ping-pong ball." You'll be dancing without any music!

"Josie Dances" by Denise Lajimodiere and Angela Erdrich, is about the careful preparation involved before a young girl's first powwow. Josie, an Ojibwe girl, has to learn the dance steps to honor her ancestors, but also needs help gathering the special clothing she needs. She also receives her spirit name, which gives her the confidence to dance in front of everyone at the powwow.

"John's Turn," by Mac Barnett and Kate Berube, is also about nervousness before a performance. Every Friday John's school has an assembly called "Sharing Gifts" where students can perform or share a talent. When it's John's turn, we see him looking apprehensive in his ballet dancing outfit before his performance begins. But as he dances he relaxes and has fun, and his fellow students all clap for him at the end.

"Harmony & Echo: The Mermaid Ballet," by Brigitte Barrager, is a cute story of two mermaids practicing for their mermaid ballet performance. Harmony is a bit of a worrier and is afraid she'll forget all her dance moves in front of an audience, so her more relaxed friend Echo comes up with a sweet way to reassure her during the performance.

"Everybunny Dance!" by Ellie Sandall is a perfect book for younger toddlers who need to get some wiggles out. A group of bunnies is having a great time wiggling their tails, playing instruments, and singing songs, until they notice a fox lurking in their midst. Someone yells "everybunny run!" and the bunnies scatter and hide, but they notice the fox isn't chasing them at all. Instead, he's showing how he can also dance, play, and sing, and at the end the book asks the reader, "Everybunny clap!"