TPR in the Language Nest

Total Physical Response is a perfect match for energetic young bodies. The basis principle of action + command = language works for teaching young children a second language. Just be sure to keep your commands clear and concise. Always remember to use real objects and body movements to demonstrate. With young children keep the vocabulary within the realm of their understanding, keep things moving and have lots of fun!
To learn more about this energetic teaching strategy check out the many websites on the subject (search TPR or Total Physical Response).

Sample Beginner Lessons

Introduction: Each lesson does not have to be lengthy. About 7 – 10 minutes long. Keep the children active and physically moving. Remember to continuously model for the children.

Notes:
Have students sit in circle formation or two rows. I found it easier to get the students to sit on the floor; however, later on you may want them to sit on chairs.

At first, have all the students participate at the same time. In later lessons you want to vary the groups, such as, all the boys/girls, all the ones on one side, 2-3 individuals, and eventually have individual students perform on their own.

It is important to remember that many of our children are hearing these sounds and words for the very first time; therefore, it is very important to be repetitive in the beginning. Also, make sure to continually model the actions for and with the students.

In the beginning the commands are given in the imperative, singular pronoun form, for example, "_________ name (singular), walk to the door". In later lessons, you may begin teaching the plural forms of commands.
TPR Unit 1: Lesson 1

Time: 7 to 10 minutes

1. Teacher Models Actions
   stand up
   sit down
   walk
   stop

2. Teacher does actions with one or two children at time. Once they are familiar with the actions you can vary the groups.

3. Sample Commands:
   **Note At this time there is no expectation to know the names of these objects, just model for the students or just gesture to indicate where you want the student to sit.

   a. Stand up, sit down, stand up, sit down
      (for variety, you can have your students stand up quickly/slowly – just change the tone of your voice).
   b. Stand up, sit down (slowly), stand up (slowly), sit down, stand up (quickly), sit down
   c. Stand up, sit down (for variety, you might want the students to sit down on different objects, such as, chair, floor, bench, coat, paper, etc.)
   d. Stand up, sit down, stand up , sit down
   e. Stand up (quickly), sit down (slowly), stand up, sit down (quickly), stand up, sit down
   f. Stand up, walk, stop, walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), sit down
   g. Stand up, sit down, stand up, walk, stop, sit down, stand up, walk, stop, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk, stop, (turn the students), sit down
   h. Stand up (slowly), walk (quickly), stop, sit down, stand up (slowly), walk, (turn the students), walk, stop, walk (slowly), stop, (turn the students), sit down (slowly)
Unit 1: Lesson 2

Time: 7 to 10 minutes

1. Review actions from previous lesson:
   - stand up
   - sit down
   - walk
   - stop

2. New Vocabulary
   - turn
   - run
   - fast
   - jump

3. Sample commands:
   a. Stand up, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, sit down (make sure students are returned to the starting point).
   b. Stand up slowly (this time use the word), sit down slowly, stand up slowly, walk, stop, walk, stop, walk, stop, turn, walk (all the way back to starting point), turn slowly, sit down slowly
   c. Stand up quickly, sit down quickly, stand up quickly, sit down quickly
   d. Stand up slowly, walk quickly, stop, turn, walk slowly, stop, turn, sit down quickly
   e. Stand up quickly, sit down slowly, stand up slowly, walk slowly, stop, turn, walk, stop, turn, sit down
   f. Stand up run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, turn, run, stop, run, stop, run, stop, turn, sit down

These are just a couple of lesson ideas to help start you off. Be creative and add in any number of actions and vocabulary. Try things like, “jump to the door and close the door with your head” or “stand up, walk to the table, sit on the table and cry”. Anything goes in TPR. Children love the unpredictability of it and the nonstop action.