



Book co-author Robyn Crowe watches Maddie, 4, play.

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Teaching 'em young

By Geoff Edwards

A TRANS-Tasman effort by two school teachers has produced a fascinating book on enhancing the learning of pre-schoolers.

With the help of e-mail, Robyn Crowe, in Somerville, and Gill Connell, in Christchurch, New Zealand, have shared their ideas about how parents and music can be used to stimulate movement and learning in children up to three years.

The result of their three-year project has been set out, with music, in a book *Moving To Learn* – "Making the connection between movement, music, learning and play".

The two women met in Melbourne through mutual friends and found

their ideas about child development were similar.

They also realised children learned more in the first three years of life than at any other time.

While ample books guided parents on feeding babes and changing nappies, there were few available about using movement to encourage toddlers to play, move and sing freely and be comfortable about themselves.

"We have written music specifically to stimulate children to move, jump, run, dance while in the home," said Mrs Crowe.

"We show creative, simple enjoyable ways a child can learn about himself and his world through movement, music and play.

"This can be done so effectively within your own home and with little or no cost involved," she said.

Mrs Crowe, a mother of three, specialises in movement, dance and music education.

She teaches at The Woodleigh School's junior campus Minimbah, and at Mt Eliza House, a childcare and early learning centre attached to Peninsula School.

Mrs Crowe's sister, singer Kate Hanratty, of Ballarat, helped create the book's accompanying music, a varied mix ranging from lullaby to bop, to jazz, to Latin-American.

"These songs have been tested on the pre-school children I teach and they love them," said Mrs Crowe. "They smile and laugh and sing, sometimes singing on when the music has gone away.

Moving To Learn will be launched at Mount Eliza House on Friday, May 16.