

## The Kinderman: Super Entertainer!

John "Kinderman" Taylor's mother told him she could feel him dancing inside her before he was born, says the Kinderman, who still dances and gives lessons. But if disco hadn't gone out of style, there might never have been the Kinderman. Back in the 1970s, he was teaching the hustle and other disco dances for the Fred Astaire dance studios.

When disco died, he had to reinvent himself, the Kinderman says. While teaching exercise classes, he got involved in Wolf Trap programming. On the spur of the moment, he renamed himself Kinderman after performing at a daycare center in Michigan. "Like Superman or Batman," he explains, "easy for the kids to remember." Performances led to more performances, records, tapes, and a TV show.

Whether he's doing *Kindercise in Action*, *Get Loose with Mother Goose*, or another of his original programs, a key element is call-and-response. He learned that technique, the Kinderman says, from a teacher of African dance. Before books, call-and-response was a way people learned, he says.

The Kinderman's newest project is something he calls reading pop-up theater. He's collected pop-up books for years—"I have about a thousand of them"—and now he offers vivid readings of classics like "Little Red Riding Hood." "Dramatizing gets them interested," he says.

Communicating with children could challenge even the most experienced entertainer, but after almost 40 years of working with them—including 18 years as an art teacher—the Kinderman offers some insight. He follows the "ABCs of learning," he says: offering attention, making them feel like they belong, and making them feel cared about.

And, of course, he keeps on dancing!

To learn more about the Kinderman, to contact him, or to order his music CDs and DVDs of his Emmy-Award-Winning TV show, see [www.kinderman.us](http://www.kinderman.us).

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