

Active Solutions



Engaging Children of All Ages in Physical Activity

There are many different ways to incorporate physical activity into the day. We can all do our part to ensure that children get the 60-90 minutes of physical activity that they need each day. Here are some ideas and examples to help ensure that physical activity is part of your daily routine for children of all ages.



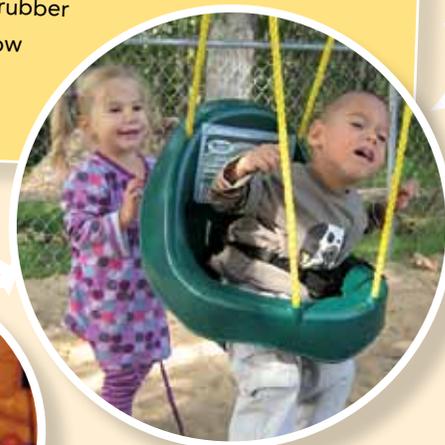
Schedule time for physical activity:

- Within the day, look for time where you can schedule 30 minutes for adult-guided, structured play time – indoors or outdoors – to be physically active.
- Designate one day of the week for learning new movements or physical activities. For example, schedule “Movement Mondays.”
- Choose a “movement” word of the day. When the word of the day is used, everyone has to stop what they are doing, and engage in the movement. For example, when the caregiver uses the word “happy,” everyone will stop and hop five times.

- Look for times throughout the day to turn on music, and invite children to move and dance.
- Build in monthly events for children and their families that help raise awareness of the importance of physical activity. For example, go for a walk in a nearby park and invite families to participate on their lunch break; or, have a Family Music Day - make your own instruments and invite parents to join in the marching band as you walk through the neighborhood creating music.

Help kids prepare to be active:

- Think about what kids need in order to be active, such as proper footwear and comfortable clothing.
- Ensure that children have appropriate clothing for outdoor activity. Early childhood educators may choose to have extra clothing available, such as ski pants, toques, mittens and rubber boots, to allow for outside play.



Be an active role model:

Whether you are an Early Childhood Educator or a parent, consider how you can influence a positive attitude toward physical activity:

- Set a strong example by leading an active lifestyle yourself.
- Be positive about the physical activities in which the children you care about participate.
- Make physical activity fun. Activities can include free play, team sports, individual sports or recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, swimming, playground activities or free-time play.
- Set limits on screen time. Ensure children do not spend too much time in front of the television or computer.



Create an Active Environment:

- Create an environment with equipment, such as balls, balloons and mats, that encourages physical activity.
- Take young children to places where they can be active, such as public parks, community baseball fields or basketball courts.
- Be safe! Always provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads or knee pads and ensure that activity is age and developmentally appropriate.
- Use stations to help children explore new activities, while reducing the amount of time at one given activity. For example, one station may have mats and balls, another station bean bags and hoola-hoops, while another station could have scarves.



Find out what children enjoy:

- Talk to the kids in your program to find out what activities they enjoy.
- Provide a range of opportunities, such as yoga, soccer, dance or hiking.
- Some groups of children will have a favorite game or activity. Set aside one or two days a week to participate in favorite activities to keep children excited and engaged in physical activity.
- As children get older, they may not feel comfortable talking about what they would like to participate in, especially in front of their peers. Invite them to write down their interests and hand the paper in to you.

- For ideas for moving “on the spot” in tight spaces: www.toronto.ca/health/movingonthespot/movingonthespot_booklet.htm

RESOURCES:

- Active Healthy Kids: www.activehealthykids.ca
- Building Better Bodies and Brains: drjean.org/html/monthly_act/act_2010/04_Apr/index.html
- For fun DVDs to help keep kids active: www.eyelearner.com/?gclid=CKjxz4PqjqQCFc1K5wodo2skHw



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