

make
time for
play
time



Ideas to keep your child physically active.

Physical Play

Physical activity is a must for the healthy growth and development of young children.

Through active play, young children learn about their bodies, about what they can do with them, and how to control the world around them.

A love for physical activity is one of the most important gifts parents can give their children.

This booklet gives parents, caregivers, child care workers, and early childhood specialists ideas for many physical play activities.

Each activity is planned to promote a child's joy for movement. Each activity also coincides with the physical, mental, and social skills of children aged 6 months to 10 years.

How Does Play Help My Child?

Play helps develop:

- Strong bones
- Strong muscles
- Problem solving skills
- Social skills
- Healthy heart
- Better coordination
- Self-confidence

Activities

Let Baby Move!

Get your baby out of the crib, playpen or infant seat and let him move!

Shake It Up!

Move your body and shake a rattle. Have your baby try to do what you are doing and move the way you are moving.

Bubble Burst

Put your baby in a chair that reclines. Make sure your baby is strapped in. Blow bubbles within your baby's reach. Show him or her how to pop the bubbles.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Sit on the floor and sit the baby between your legs. Face forward. Hold a cardboard tube (from a roll of paper towels) in front of the baby's arms so you are both holding onto it. (Make sure your baby doesn't put the cardboard roll in his mouth!) Gently rock back and forth.

Movements to Work on with Your Child

- Crawling
- Creeping
- Grasping
- Rolling Over
- Reaching
- Sitting Up
- Standing
- Walking

SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

- Children can fall. When you work on these movements, make sure your child is on the floor.
- Never leave your child unattended.

Toys

- Infant swing or outdoor swing with restraining strap
- Large, plastic snap-lock beads
- Spoons, plastic bowls or cups
- Empty boxes or baskets
- Pop-up toys
- Bubbles
- Soft blocks or balls
- Chime bells
- Floor mirrors
- Low climbing platforms
- Pat mat
- Push and pull cars

SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

- Small toys can pose a choking risk.
- Make sure items are bigger than the inside of a toilet paper roll.
- Bags and boxes can cause suffocation.



Activities

Squeeze Me

Ask your child to grasp, squeeze, and release soft cloth, yarn, foam, or crumpled paper balls, and to move the object around different parts of their body.

Let's Pretend

Show your child how to act like:

- A tree swaying in the wind....
- The sun rising....
- A cat arching its back....
- A kangaroo jumping....
- A train chugging along a track.

Ask your child to imitate you.

Challenge Walk

Let your child walk twisting pathways, up and down small hills, along sidewalks, and up and down low steps. Hold your child's hand. Your child will feel safe and loved!

Movements to Work on with Your Child

- Clapping
- Jumping
- Pulling
- Rolling
- Swaying
- Grabbing
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Stomping
- Walking

Toys

- Blocks
- Large light balls
- Rhythm instruments
- Push and pull toys
- Squeeze toys
- Tot tunnels (for crawling)
- Riding toys (push with feet)
- Wagon (low and open)
- Toys that look like adult tools:
 - Rake
 - Broom
 - Vacuum
- Plastic bowls, cups and spoons



Activities

Chase Me, Chase Me

In fun, safely chase your child all around the house or playground and hug him or her when you catch up.

Super Kids

Help your child jump and land safely by taking his or her hand while jumping from low steps, curbs, or sturdy boxes. Practice landing on both feet and bending the knees.

Log Rolling

Show the child how to be a long, stiff, log shape on the floor with the fingers together above the head and the arms straight out so they hide the ears. Ask the child to roll like a log by keeping the legs straight and “glued” together.

Movements to Work on with Your Child

- Bouncing
- Dashing
- Flying
- Jumping
- Soaring
- Tossing
- Darting
- Dodging
- Hopping
- Searching
- Springing

Toys

- Light wheelbarrow
- Ball and bat (light weight)
- Push and pull toys
- Realistic riding toys like cars, tractors, motorcycles, etc.
- Rhythm instruments: drums, xylophone, tamborine
- Rocking horse (waist height with handles)
- Spinning seat
- Dress up clothes
- Pretend toys like rakes, kitchen sets, and work benches
- Bubble set

SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Warning! Small toys can cause choking. Make sure kids only play with toys recommended for their age.



Activities

Read, Run, and Race About

Pick a favorite action storybook. Read the story aloud. Ask your child to do what the characters in the story do.

Alphabet Zoo

With your child, act like animals at the zoo. Start with an animal that begins with an "A," like ape. Then go to an animal that begins with "B" and so on, until you get to "Z".

Bodies in Motion

Read this rhyme and do these things with your child:

Our bodies are made of special parts.

Let's wave our arms, Shake our legs...

Nod our heads...

And touch our chests to feel our hearts.

Let's stomp our feet, snap our fingers...

Rub our bellies and wiggle our toes...

Now let's stand very tall and touch our noses!

Movements to Work on with Your Child

- Balancing
- Climbing
- Hiding
- Holding
- Jumping
- Marching
- Rolling
- Running
- Shuffling
- Sliding
- Turning
- Twisting

Toys

- Plastic bowling set
- Jump ropes
- Soft balls
- Lightweight hand paddles
- Rhythm band instruments
- Toy cars and trucks
- Soft baseball and bat
- Stick pony
- Tricycle
- Baby dolls with strollers

SAFETY IS VERY
IMPORTANT!

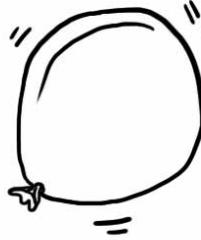
A safe play area is one where
an adult is watching.



Activities

Targets

- Throw balls and soft objects at targets like cardboard boxes.
- Line up plastic bottles and cans and roll a ball to knock them down.
- Roll a Hula-Hoop toward a target.



Balloon Body Juggling

Throw a balloon into the air. Say out loud which part of the body (knee, foot, elbow) your child will hit the balloon with. You and your child can also hit, kick, or bounce the balloon back and forth.

Movement Month

You and your child pick a different physical play skill for each day of the month:

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| • Skipping | • Chasing | • Running | • Hopping |
| • Tumbling | • Jumping | • Twisting | • Turning |
| • Throwing | • Catching | • Rolling | • Kicking |

Movements to Work on with Your Child

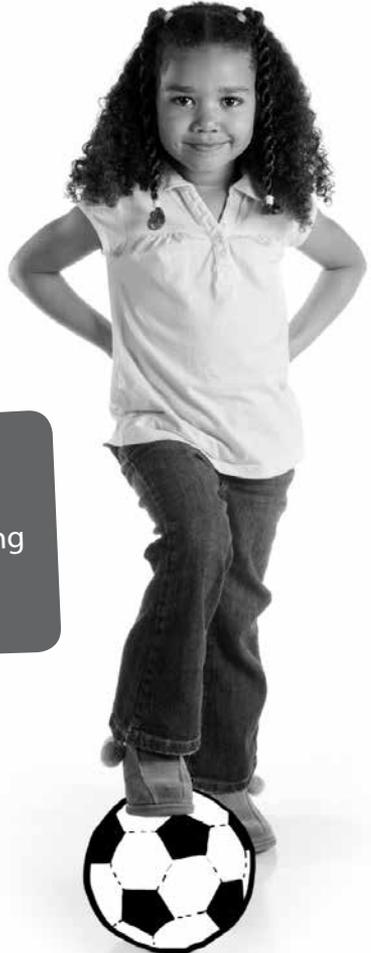
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|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| • Catching | • Chasing | • Dangling | • Jumping |
| • Leaping | • Skating | • Skipping | • Sneaking |
| • Swinging | • Throwing | | |

Toys

- Bicycle with training wheels
- Junior-size soccer ball, football, volleyball, basketball, bat and tee
- Climbing ropes
- Full-size scooter with helmet and elbow/knee pads
- Sidewalk chalk
- Hopscotch mats
- Jump rope
- Kites
- Tennis balls
- Tumbling mats

SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Children can fall. Always have your child wear a safety helmet when using riding toys of any kind, or a sports helmet as needed.



Activities

Popcorn

Have the children hold onto the sides of a large sheet. Put a few balls or soft objects (like socks) on the sheet. Have the children shake the sheet until all the “popcorn has popped” (all the objects are off the sheet.)

Red Light, Green Light

Put your child at the end of the yard or open area in the house. Tell the child you are a traffic light. When you say green light the child runs. When you say yellow light the child slows down. When you say red light the child stops. When you say green light the child runs again, and so on.

Cone Course

Put out cones to look like a course. Your child can then:

- Dribble a ball through
- Kick a ball through
- Use a stick to push a ball through

Movements to Work on with Your Child

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| • Catching | • Chasing | • Jumping | • Leaping |
| • Prancing | • Skating | • Skipping | • Sneaking |
| • Swinging | • Throwing | • Tiptoeing | • Tumbling |

Toys

- Baseball/softball glove
- Bicycle with helmet
- Climbing ropes
- Full-size scooter with helmet and elbow/knee pads
- Hula-Hoop
- Jump ropes
- Junior-size soccer ball, football, volleyball, basketball, bat and tee
- Rhythm sticks
- Tennis balls
- Tumbling mat
- Whiffle balls



SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Don't fall over toys.
Remember to put them
away after play time.

Activities

Outside Olympics

Use many items from around the house to create events. Objects to use for possible events:

- Small cardboard boxes for hurdles.
- Air mattress or sleeping bag for tumbling routine.
- Towel tied in a knot for a towel toss.
- Spoon and egg for fast egg walk. (See how fast your child can cross the finish line without breaking the egg).

Simon Swims

If your child can swim, take him or her to a pool or lake that is safe. In the water, play “Simon Swims.” Tell your child you are “Simon.” Your child does the swimming stroke that Simon says. Take turns so your child can also be Simon.

Movements to work on with your child

- Catching
- Chasing
- Jumping
- Leaping
- Prancing
- Skating
- Skipping
- Sneaking
- Swinging
- Tagging
- Throwing
- Tumbling



SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!
Children can drown.
Always watch your child during water activities.

Toys

- Baseball/softball glove
- Junior-size soccer ball, football, volleyball, basketball, bat and tee
- Bicycle with helmet
- Full-size scooter with helmet and elbow/knee pads
- Hula-Hoop
- Jump ropes
- Rhythm sticks
- Roller blades
- Tennis balls
- Tumbling mats
- Whiffle balls

SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT!

Children can fall. Always have your child wear a safety helmet when using riding toys of any kind, or a sports helmet as needed.



Reference

Parent's Guide to Physical Play. Hofstra University:
Rhonda Clements and The Diane Linder-Goldberg
Child Institute



www.scdhec.gov/wic