

Tips for Providers: Keep Children Active

Physical activity is very important for all children. They should be active and move as much as possible throughout the day. Get the whole center involved. Create active games, use playgrounds, or just take a walk. Read more below on the suggested tips for children and physical activity.



1 Be Active.

Children from one to three years of age should get at least 60-90 minutes of vigorous physical activity every day. Children from three to six years of age should get up to two hours of vigorous physical activity every day. The total time can be broken into shorter time periods and spread out over the day. Examples of vigorous physical activity are running, jumping, dancing and hopping.

2 Free Play.

Free play or unstructured activity is when children decide how to play. Children should get 60 minutes up to several hours of free play each day. Make sure small, portable equipment like jump ropes and balls are available for free play. Other examples of free play are playing tag, riding tricycles, pushing toys, or playing hide and seek.

3 Adult Led Games.

Adult led games are planned activities or games. Children from one to three years of age should get 30 minutes of adult led games per day. Children from three to six years of age should get up to an hour of adult led games per day. Breaking the time into slots of five to 10 minutes each works well. Examples include singing the Hokey-Pokey, going on a nature hunt, acting like different animals or playing follow the leader using big movements.

4 Playtime Rewards.

Use more playtime as a reward for good behavior and manners. Being positive about physical activity helps children enjoy it. Avoid denying playtime as a punishment. Work to increase playtime, not decrease it!

5 Infant Adventure.

Infants need the chance to move daily too! Place infants on their tummy for at least three to five minutes a few times each day. Avoid leaving infants in a seat that limits movement; such as bouncers, swings, strollers, and car seats when not riding in a car. Give infants a chance to explore!

6 No Sitting!

Keep children moving. Children should not be seated for more than 15 minutes at a time each day, except when they are eating or sleeping.

7 Screen Time.

Avoid using television, DVDs, or computer games for children under two years of age. Limit screen time for children over two years of age to no more than two hours per day.

8 Outdoors.

Take the children outdoors to play at least twice a day for a total of 60-90 minutes. Every day can be a play outside day as long as the children are dressed in proper clothing for the weather!

9 Weather.

Have a plan in case of bad weather so the children can still play indoors. Play active indoor games like dancing.

10 Safe Spaces.

Children need safe and large open spaces for play. The space should be large enough for lots of running and jumping.



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