

101 Tips for Increasing Physical Activity in Early Childhood

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN LOVE to move and young bodies need to move! Give children opportunities to learn by exploring, discovering and using everything they come in contact with at home, while in child care and in the classroom. Acquiring motor skills involves the introduction of new concepts and skills, exploring them physically by applying the movements to a variety of simple games and cooperative movement activities. When early childhood caregivers model and



teach the importance of physical activity, young children are more likely to adopt a lifetime of healthful practices and behaviors. The National Association for Sport and

Physical Education (NASPE) and Playworld Systems have published *101 Tips for Increasing Physical Activity in Early Childhood*, a booklet to help teachers and caregivers plan and provide age-appropriate physical activity experiences.

Suggestions from the booklet:

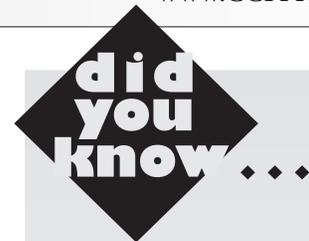
Provide Developmentally Appropriate Movement Opportunities

- Recognize children's differing movement capabilities and promote learning experiences that challenge each child to move to the next level of individual development.
- Appreciate the important role of movement in your children's development and foster a feeling of success through movement.
- Provide daily physical activity for infants that enable them to explore the environment through movement.

Maximize the Environment for Play

- Take children outdoors to play as much as possible each day.

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- ▶ The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends toddlers and preschoolers get from 60 minutes to several hours of **unstructured** physical activity each day.
- ▶ NASPE further recommends toddlers get at least 30 minutes of **structured** physical activity and preschoolers get at least 60 minutes of **structured** physical activity daily.
- ▶ Only one in three children is physically active every day.
- ▶ Children now spend more than seven and one-half hours a day in front of a screen (e.g., TV, video-games, computer).

Source: National Association for Sport and Physical Education, President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition

Quotable Quotes

“If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.”

— J.R.R. Tolkien

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- ◆ Grocery Shopping Activity
- ◆ Recipes
- ◆ Food Funny

101 Tips for Increasing Physical Activity in Early Childhood

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- Paint game markings, such as for hop scotch, on safe surfaces.
- Use lightweight balls and beanbags for tossing and catching during indoor play.
- Play age-appropriate music to liven up the environment and inspire movement.
- Plan several walking field trips to nearby parks.

Be Creative With Equipment

- Collect age-appropriate manipulative equipment such as balls, beanbags and hoops and teach children how to use each piece of equipment in multiple ways (e.g., rolling, bouncing and throwing a ball).
- Make homemade equipment such as sock balls and yarn balls and make use of cardboard boxes.
- Use ordinary objects as equipment (e.g., wide masking tape as a balance beam).
- Use equipment to teach spatial awareness and relationships such as over, under and around.
- Have scooters, tricycles and riding toys available outdoors.

Make Safety a Priority

- Provide adequate and active supervision.
- Use age appropriate equipment that is the right size and weight.
- Keep a first aid kit on hand.
- Practice sun safety by using shade and sunscreen.

Use Play to Teach Social Skills

- Use cooperative activities to create a supportive environment.
- Use games to teach the concept of a buddy, partner or pal.
- Model the use of positive language during game play.
- When introducing an activity, model how to share and take turns.

Provide Instruction During Structured Play

- Keep instruction and directions simple and concise.
- Use quick and non-threatening methods to place students into pairs or small groups (e.g., “Stand back to back with someone who is wearing the same color shirt as you”).

- Make the process of distributing and collecting equipment part of the activity.
- Play simple songs for children to help them perform creative movement.

Integrate Physical Activity Into the Curriculum

- Use movement vocabulary, such as “balance,” “sideways,” “low-level,” and “curved pathway.”
- Use colors, letters and numbers during movement activities and games.
- Read action books aloud so that children can move to the words in a variety of creative ways.
- Lead children in performing cultural games such as the Mexican Hat Dance.
- Include motor skill challenges during transition times (e.g., “Please hop back to your seat”).

Be Reflective and Flexible

- Ask children what they enjoyed most, least and why.
- To the extent possible, provide children with physical activity choices.
- Change elimination games to inclusion games to keep all kids active. Instead of “Tag, you’re out” play Freeze Tag, in which players “unfreeze” frozen players.

Talk About and Practice Healthy Eating

- Teach children about the need to drink water for proper hydration.
- Explain how some foods provide energy for movement.
- Provide food-tasting opportunities.

Download the entire *101 Tips for Increasing Physical Activity in Childhood* booklet at:

http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/IPAN/Brochure_101TipsIncreasePhysicalActivity_NatlAssocSportsPhysEduc.pdf

Find online professional development opportunities, as well as activities and tools to inspire creative movement based play and healthy food choices at The Head Start Body Start National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play website www.headstartbodystart.org

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Help! Head Lice

HEAD LICE ARE A COMMON PROBLEM and the solution lies in cooperation between child care providers and parents. Don't panic, learn more!

What are head lice?

Head lice are insects that live on the human scalp and feed on blood by biting the scalp, causing intense itching. Lice are about the size of a sesame seed and change in color from clear to brown.

Head lice do not jump, fly or live on pets. They lay eggs (nits) that attach to the hair shaft and hatch in 6 to 10 days.

Who gets head lice?

Anyone can get head lice. Young children are particularly at risk because the school or child care environment, regardless of how clean it is, provides many opportunities to pass lice from one person to another.

How are head lice spread?

Head lice crawl from one person or object to another. This happens when heads touch (sleeping together, hugging or playing) or personal items are shared (combs, brushes, hats, car seats, bedding, hair bows and ties).

How are head lice diagnosed?

A diagnosis is usually made by finding nits attached to the hair near the scalp. Scratching or scratch marks on the scalp, behind the ears or on the nape of the neck may also be a clue.

How are head lice treated?

Treatment involves getting rid of the lice and nits from the infected people, environment and personal items. Nits must be removed or killed to prevent them from hatching. Nit combing and removal for at least two weeks is essential. Individuals must be re-inspected to prevent re-infestation from missed nits. Consult your physician before any treatment with chemicals.

How can you help prevent the spread of head lice?

Practice healthy habits and teach children not to share personal items such as hats, combs, brushes, hair ribbons, scarves, towels or bedding. Place items in children's cubbies so that coats and clothing do not touch. Parents and providers should inspect children's heads regularly for lice or nits.



When can a child return to child care?

Some programs allow children to return as soon as they have been treated. Others require that no nits be present before a child is readmitted. All programs need to establish their own written policy on when children can return to care that is both clear to parents and staff and used fairly and consistently.

Treatment issues

- None of the chemical treatments are 100 percent effective in killing lice and nits. **Manual removal with a lice comb is the best option when possible and especially when treatment products have failed.**
- Over-the-counter head lice treatments are pesticides and there are **no** safe pesticides. Treatment can be harmful to the person applying the treatment *and* the person being treated. Always follow instructions carefully. Do not leave the product on longer than recommended.
- Those especially at risk from pesticides include:
 - Women who are pregnant or nursing
 - Anyone on medication or who has a pre-existing medical condition such as allergies, asthma, epilepsy or cancer
 - Children under two years of age
 - Children who have been repeatedly exposed to chemical treatments
- Treat only individuals who have head lice and give each person a complete treatment.
- Treat children at the sink to minimize body contact with the pesticides in the product.
- After treatment, remove nits daily with a nit or flea comb until all nits are completely removed.
- Using lice spray is unwarranted and poses personal and environmental risks. Simply vacuum carpets, furniture and car upholstery and wash clothing, bedding and washable bed toys in hot water and dry in a hot dryer.

Sources: California Childcare Health Program and National Pediculosis Association

Classic Granola

Rolled oats, old fashioned	3 cups
Walnuts, chopped	1 cup
Coconut, unsweetened	½ cup
Almonds, slivered	½ cup
Sesame seeds	¼ cup
Sunflower seeds	¼ cup
Canola oil	⅓ cup
Maple syrup	¼ cup
Honey	¼ cup
Raisins	1 cup

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine oats, nuts and seeds in a large bowl.
2. Heat the oil, syrup and honey in a small pan until warmed. Pour syrup over dry mixture and stir with a spatula until mixture is thoroughly coated. Spread evenly on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Bake for 15–20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes until the granola is light golden brown. Stir in raisins and cool. Store in airtight container at room temperature.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads

— *Cooks Illustrated*

Brussels Sprouts and Apples

Brussels sprouts, halved	1 pound
Apple, cored and sliced	1
Olive oil	1 Tbsp
Salt and pepper	to taste
Dried cranberries	¼ cup
Walnuts, chopped	¼ cup
Maple syrup	1 Tbsp

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss Brussels sprouts and apple slices with olive oil, salt and pepper on a rimmed baking sheet.
2. Bake for 25–30 minutes or until the Brussels sprouts are tender and browned on the edges, stirring halfway through the cooking time.
3. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in cranberries, walnuts and maple syrup.

Yield: 10 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable

— *Oh My Veggies*

Activity Corner

Make Grocery Shopping a School Readiness Experience

Everyday life is full of learning experiences for your child. When you're together shopping, walking, playing at the park or waiting for an appointment, your child learns by watching you and talking with you.

Talking together builds your child's confidence, curiosity and vocabulary—skills that will help your child be successful. Try these ideas for turning shopping into an interactive school readiness experience.

Identification: As you put things in the shopping cart, say each name out loud: *"This is milk. Milk starts with the letter M. M sounds like mmmmm."*

Counting: Count things as you put them in your cart: *"1, 2, 3. I have three cans of vegetables."* Count the people in front of you in line.

Touching: Let your child put the food in your cart. Talk about how it feels. You might say: *"This apple feels smooth."* *"These frozen vegetables are lumpy and cold."*

Recall: When you get home, ask your child to describe your trip to the store together.

— *Adapted from First 5 Contra Costa*

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Food Funny Q: What is big and green and goes gobble gobble?
A: TurkeySaurusRex!