

[MUSIC]

As a childcare provider, educator or recreation leader, you can make a difference for the children you work with. Give them an early start in active play, and you set them on the path to a happy childhood and a lifetime of healthy living!

Here are 5 tips to help the children in your care get moving!

5. Develop a culture of physical activity

Provide plenty of opportunities for physical activity in your programming and limit the amount of time children spend sitting. Have equipment for physical activity readily available and encourage children to stand when crafting, completing a puzzle or building with blocks.

Also, display photos of children being active throughout the space and don't forget to be a good role model by joining in when the children are participating in games and activities.

4. Incorporate physical activity into existing programming

Physical activity doesn't need to be an add-on. Try including it in what you are already doing!

For example, when learning about literacy, you can have children make letter shapes using their bodies. When learning about numeracy, you can have children count the repetitions of a physical activity. And during circle time, you can use active songs or games like Simon Says or the Hokey Pokey! Just make sure the space is free of obstacles so children can be active safely.

Also, don't forget about outside time! When children play outside, they move more and sit less.

3. Engage parents and guardians

We all have a role in getting children active so make sure parents know why physical activity is so important. You can include this information in a letter or newsletter you send home with parents. Don't forget to include some activities they can try with their children!

You can also include parents in the learning. Put out a call to see if anyone has a special skill they can share with the children. Maybe you have a yoga instructor or a soccer coach that would be willing to volunteer their time.

2. Make sure everyone is involved

The best physical activities allow for everyone to participate. Use cooperative games where everyone gets to play and no one needs to sit out. If you use smaller groups, there are more opportunities for children to be involved.

Also, provide an inclusive environment for children of all abilities to take part. This may mean that some modifications may be needed. Try larger, softer balls and larger goals and target areas.

1. Make it fun

Make sure physical activity is fun. If the children are enjoying themselves, they will want to continue being active. Here's a neat tip... the best time to end an activity is when the children are having the most fun. This way, they will be excited to play again the next time!

Let the children choose the game they want to play or the equipment they want to use. Try lots of different activities, games and sports so the children can find what they enjoy.

Also, make sure being physically active is a positive experience... be enthusiastic, provide encouragement and create lots of opportunities for success through achievable challenges.

Whether at home, in childcare, at school, or in the in the community, we all have a role in getting kids active. And when kids are active, they are more likely to lead healthy and happy lives!

For more information, tips and activity ideas, visit haveaballtogether.ca