



Have a Ball Together!

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Resource Centre/Centre de ressources
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Physical activity for 2.5-4 year olds

Physical activity is important for all children – especially preschoolers who are developing healthy lifestyle habits that will lead to healthy and active lives.

For preschoolers, physical activity is all about exploring new challenges and having fun with movement!

24-Hour Movement Guidelines

Move

- Children 1 to 4 years old should be physically active at least 180 minutes a day, including energetic play – more is better.
- As children turn 3, at least 60 minutes of the minimum 180 minutes should be energetic play – more is better.

Sleep

- 11-14 hours a day for those aged 1 and 2, including naps, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.
- 10-13 hours a day for those aged 3 and 4, which may include a nap, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.

Sit

- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (such as stroller or car seat).
- Screen time should be no more than 1 hour per day.
- When sedentary, reading, storytelling and similar activities with a caregiver is encouraged.

Benefits

Physical activity helps your preschooler:

- Build a healthy heart, lungs, bones, muscles and joints
- Improve coordination and balance
- Build confidence and positive self-esteem
- Develop independence
- Learn life skills
- Nurture imagination and creativity
- Increase attention and concentration
- Build a foundation for more difficult movement as they get older





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Skills to Develop

Here are some physical skills you can help your preschooler develop:

- Walking up the stairs
- Running
- Kicking a ball
- Throwing a ball
- Jumping off both feet
- Balancing on 1 foot
- Hopping on 1 foot

Tips

To help your preschooler develop their movement skills, you can:

- Choose age- and skill-appropriate activities.
- Provide lots of opportunities for repetition to learn and practice.
- Be an active role model and play with your preschooler.
- Make sure the activity is fun so your preschooler enjoys their active time.
- Encourage your preschooler to make up their own games.
- Ensure activities aren't too complicated.
- Keep your preschooler interested by providing lots of variety.
- Try something active instead of watching the TV.
- Encourage outside play as children are more active when outside.
- When appropriate, walk instead of using a vehicle to get places.
- Remember to be positive, enthusiastic and provide plenty of encouragement.

Activity Ideas

Here are some activity examples which will get your preschooler moving:

- Play a game of *Follow the Leader*.
- Visit the local playground to swing, slide and climb.
- Try some yoga.
- Play a game of tag.
- Practice kicking a ball toward a target.
- Play a game of freeze dance.
- Throw a scarf in the air and try to catch it as it floats to the ground.
- Have a 'snowball' fight with balled up pieces of paper.
- Try a tricycle or scooter.
- Have a potato sack race.

Whether at home, in childcare, at school, or in the in the community, we all have a role in getting kids active. Help set the path to a happy childhood and a lifetime of healthy living!

References

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (<http://csep.ca>)

Nipissing District Developmental Screening (<http://www.ndds.ca>)

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