



## Get Moving!

Children need to move! Your child should get at least 60 minutes of exercise, most, if not all, days of the week; it doesn't have to occur all at once – in fact, young children thrive on small doses of activity throughout the day.<sup>1</sup> Physical activity should take the form of 'active play' and be part of everyday routines. Active play can occur indoors or outdoors, alone or with friends and family. It also has many health benefits and is a key factor in a young child's physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. Here are some tips for promoting movement and active play:

### YOUR INFANT (birth to 2 years old):

- See that your baby has plenty of active playtime, where he can kick, reach for things and push himself up. Support him as he learns to sit up, crawl and pull to standing. Help him play with rattles, busy gyms, blocks and other infant toys he can grasp, bang and shake. Roll, throw and kick a ball with your child.
- Try a simple 'soccer game' with your young child. Have your child sit with legs apart (in a "V" shape) and roll the ball between her legs. If the ball hits her tummy, you get the goal. If your child can stop the ball before it touches her tummy, she gets the goal!
- Get moving as a family. Go for a walk with your child. Push your infant in the stroller, pull your self-sitting infant in a wagon, or let your toddler ride the tricycle while you walk alongside.

### YOUR TODDLER (2-3 year olds):

- Play *Simon Says*. Ask your child to move his body in different ways: walk backwards, gallop slowly, run in a circle, hop sideways, or jump gracefully.
- Play *Freeze Dance*. Turn on some music. Tell your child to dance while the music is playing, but stop dancing when the music is off. Try different kinds of music, such as classical, jazz, pop and country, as well as different tempos (fast or slow) of music.

### YOUR PRESCHOOLER (4 year olds):

- Set specific goals for your child and family regarding physical activity, such as an hour of active play each day, a family walk once a week, or a trip to the local playground once a month.
- Encourage your child to try new things and different types of sports: ride a tricycle or bike with training wheels, roller skate, use a scooter or skateboard, kick a soccer ball, play catch, swim, hit a ball off a tee with a large bat, shoot baskets into a laundry basket or other large container, or hit a golf ball with a plastic child's golf club.
- Make an obstacle course using everyday objects. For example, the course might involve hopping in/out of hula hoops, weaving around buckets, walking along a rope laying on the ground, or running between two blocks. Consider challenging your child to a race.

## Book Suggestions

Get Up and Go by Nancy Carlson • Ten Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed by Annie Kubler

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<sup>1</sup> "Active Families," Let's Move <[www.letsmove.gov/active-families](http://www.letsmove.gov/active-families)>.