

Movement in Early Childhood



Division of
**Nutrition &
Physical Activity**

Moving your body

Being active is an important part of a child's life. Physical activity helps to build strong muscles, strong bones, and a strong heart.

The additional benefits in being active are improving brain health, improving academic performance, helping to maintain blood pressure and blood sugar, along with reducing the risk for many chronic diseases in life.



Keep in mind

Children learn best through play.

They model the behaviors that they are shown. The more you encourage and model by example on how to move your body the more children will want to move.

Children need safe environments to:

- Walk
- Climb
- Crawl
- Run
- Jump
- Balance
- Throw
- Catch
- Hop
- Kick

Best Practices

- Children ages 1-6 need at least 60 minutes or more of unstructured physical activity daily.
- Toddlers need at least 30 minutes of structured activity daily.
- Preschoolers need at least 60 minutes of structured play daily.
- Infants through Preschool need daily supervised outdoor time in a safe setting.
- All children need their indoor environments set up for safe developmentally appropriate play and free exploration.

Infants can move, too

Young infant's who are not mobile yet will need assistance in building these skills.

Encourage tummy time 2-3 times a day for as long as they will tolerate.

Set up their environment to encourage fine and gross motor skills.

These interactions could be:

- Reaching and grabbing
- Looking for something beside them
- Pushing up on their hands
- Grasping toys
- Assisted sitting (on a caregivers lap)
- Peek-a-boo with a scarf

Resources:

[English PhysicalActivityGuide FINAL.pdf \(d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net\)](#)

[Why Should People be Active? | Physical Activity | CDC](#)