Active Early

A Wisconsin guide for improving childhood physical activity

Endorsements from the Early Care & Education Field

The following organizations, associations and departments are invested in promoting physical activity and nutrition in early childhood as a means to prevent obesity. Each has reviewed and endorsed *Active Early* and *Healthy Bites* as an effective, evidence-based method of improving physical activity and nutrition.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Supporting Families Together Association
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Wisconsin Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
Department of Family Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This publication may be viewed and downloaded from the Internet at http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfpwellness.html and www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Community/Childcare/index.htm.

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Active Early

A Wisconsin guide for improving childhood physical activity

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Dennis G. Smith, Secretary

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Eloise Anderson, Secretary

This publication is available from:

COMMUNITY NUTRITION TEAM
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53707
608.267.9129
http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfp1.html

OBESITY PREVENTION UNIT
Division of Public Health
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
P.O. Box 2659
Madison, WI 53701-2659
608.267.3694
http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/index.htm

BUREAU OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
Division of Early Care and Education
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
201 E Washington Ave
Madison, WI 53707
608.266.8880
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov

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foreword

In Wisconsin, 31% of children ages 2-4 years are reported as being overweight or obese. A poor diet and lack of physical activity are the most important factors contributing to an epidemic of overweight and obese children.

We want young children to develop healthy habits and we know that these habits begin at home and in the early childhood setting. Wisconsin has the capacity to serve more than 170,000 children in regulated child care facilities. These children are relying on early care and education (ECE) professionals to provide a significant portion of their daily physical activity, nutrition intake and nutrition education. Child care providers need resources to help them provide nutritious meals and incorporate age appropriate physical activity that will help children develop lifelong healthy habits.

Recognizing the importance of child care settings in helping our youngest children get a healthy start, our Wisconsin partners have created the following guides *Active Early: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Physical Activity* and *Healthy Bites: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Nutrition*. These guides are designed to help ECE professionals address childhood obesity by improving physical activity and nutrition.

We believe that ECE professionals can improve child health and wellness by establishing child care program policies within their business practices.

By developing and implementing program policies that will improve the nutritional quality of food, encourage physical activity and educate child care providers, parents and caregivers, children can develop a sound foundation for optimal growth and development.

The guides are based on current scientific evidence and provide a self-assessment to allow child care programs to freely assess their own environment, program policies and practices as they relate to nutrition and physical activity. The guides also will suggest key areas for improvement and information on how to implement strategies for developing program policies in child care settings.

By working together with providers, caregivers and parents, the children of Wisconsin will have the opportunity to adopt healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Tony Evers, PhD
State Superintendent
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Henry A. Anderson, MD
State Health Officer
Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Eloise Anderson
Secretary
Wisconsin Department
of Children & Families

table of contents

foreword iii
introduction 2
program assessment 7
quality improvement plan 8

TAKE ACTION

Physical Activity Recommendations 12

Development 14

overview 14
gross motor milestones 16
infants 18
toddlers 19
preschoolers 20
multi-age groups 21
inclusion 22
cultural competency 23
tools included 23
engaging families 23
engaging communities 23

Child Assessment 24

overview 24
assessing the children in your program . . 24
how to fit assessment into your day . . 25
what comes after assessment 25
considerations for all ages 25
infants 26
toddlers 27
preschoolers & older children 27
multi-age groups 28
inclusion 29
cultural competency 29
engaging families 29
engaging communities 29

Daily Routines 30

overview 30
considerations for all ages 30
infants 32
toddlers 33
preschoolers 34
multi-age groups 35
inclusion 36
cultural competency 37
tools included 37
engaging families 37
engaging communities 37

Environment 38

overview 38
considerations for all ages 39
infants 40
toddlers 41
preschoolers 42
multi-age groups 43
inclusion 43
cultural competency 43
engaging families 43
engaging communities 43

Resources 44

overview 44
inclusion 46
cultural competency 46
tools included 46
engaging families 46
engaging communities 46
curriculum & books 47
articles & websites 48
assessment tools & materials 49

Business Practices 50

overview 50
what is a policy? 50
policy development 50
types of policies 51
infants 52
toddlers 52
preschoolers 53
multi-age groups 53
staff & worksite wellness 54
inclusion 55
cultural competency 55
tools included 55
engaging families 55
engaging communities 55

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Let's Move Child Care Checklists:
Physical Activity and Screentime 57
Appendix B: Child Care Physical Activity Policies 63
Appendix C: Active Early Quality Improvement Plan 64
Appendix D: Language Development Chart 65
Appendix E: Full Day Sample Schedules:
Group Child Care and Family Child Care 68
Appendix F: Full Day Sample Schedule: Infants and Toddlers . . 69
Appendix G: Books to Move to: Physical Activity and Literacy . . 70
Appendix H: Homemade Physical Activity Materials 71
Appendix I: Physical Activity Materials & Equipment Ideas 72

Acknowledgements 73

introduction

"Children learn healthy habits from the adults and caregivers in their lives. We have the opportunity to supply a generation with nutritious foods and healthy habits in an environment that is fun and safe and they trust us."

– Jan Pelot
Wood County Head Start
Wisconsin Rapids

what are Active Early & Healthy Bites?

Active Early and *Healthy Bites* are companion guides designed to help early care and education (ECE) professionals address childhood obesity by improving physical activity and nutrition in the program. *Active Early* focuses on physical activity while *Healthy Bites* focuses on healthy eating, nutrition environments and on strengthening the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern. The guides are based on current science, public health research and national recommendations.

who should use Active Early & Healthy Bites?

The guides can be used by ECE professionals in a variety of settings, including:

- Group and family child care centers, after-school programs, Head Start centers and other CACFP facilities
- Sponsoring agencies, community coalitions, local early childhood organizations, government agencies and other groups interested in improving local nutrition and physical activity practices in ECE settings

Child care programs will find resources to help them learn what program policies to create, what strategies to try, how to help staff improve physical activity and nutrition, and how *Active Early* and *Healthy Bites* fit with other Wisconsin early childhood initiatives and licensing.

Child care teachers will find specific recommendations for improving physical activity and nutrition in their classrooms.

ECE training and technical assistance providers and **community organizations** interested in improving local nutrition and physical activity in ECE settings also will find useful information for working with child care providers.

common definitions

Early care and education (ECE) programs refers to all group and family child care centers, after-school programs, preschool programs, 3K and 4K programs, Head Start centers and emergency shelters serving young children.

Parent(s), family(ies) and caregiver(s) are used in the broadest sense to mean those adults with primary responsibility for children.

Physical Activity describes bodily movement of any type, including recreation, fitness and participation in sports, as well as movement in routine activities. Physical activity varies in level of intensity:

- **Sedentary,** marked by little to no activity, such as napping or sitting quietly
- **Light activity,** such as coloring, pushing toys on the floor, crawling, walking at a slow pace
- **Moderate activity,** such as walking at a fast pace, lifting or building with blocks
- **Vigorous activity,** such as running or jumping.
- **Structured Physical Activity** is teacher-led and should occur both indoors and outdoors.
- **Unstructured Physical Activity** is initiated by a child, like free play, and should occur both indoors and outdoors.

Ages are generally broken down into the following groups

- **Infants:** under 1 year
- **Toddlers:** 12-23 months
- **Preschoolers:** ages 2-5
- **School-age:** 6 years and older

how do Active Early & Healthy Bites fit into Wisconsin's existing early childhood initiatives?

Physical activity and nutrition have a place in nearly every aspect in the current context of the ECE field in Wisconsin.

Licensing & Certification

Physical activity and nutrition clearly fit within licensing and certification rules. For example, children must have outdoor play daily, weather permitting, and all regulated group child care centers must follow the current CACFP meal pattern guidelines.

YoungStar

Sixty minutes of daily physical activity can earn your child care program an additional point in YoungStar. This could be the one point needed to push your program into the next star-level. YoungStar also includes a point for nutritious meals served daily. Providers can verify nutritious meals:

- By participating in the CACFP, including training associated with the meal program
- By providing three months of menus to demonstrate well-balanced meals and snacks

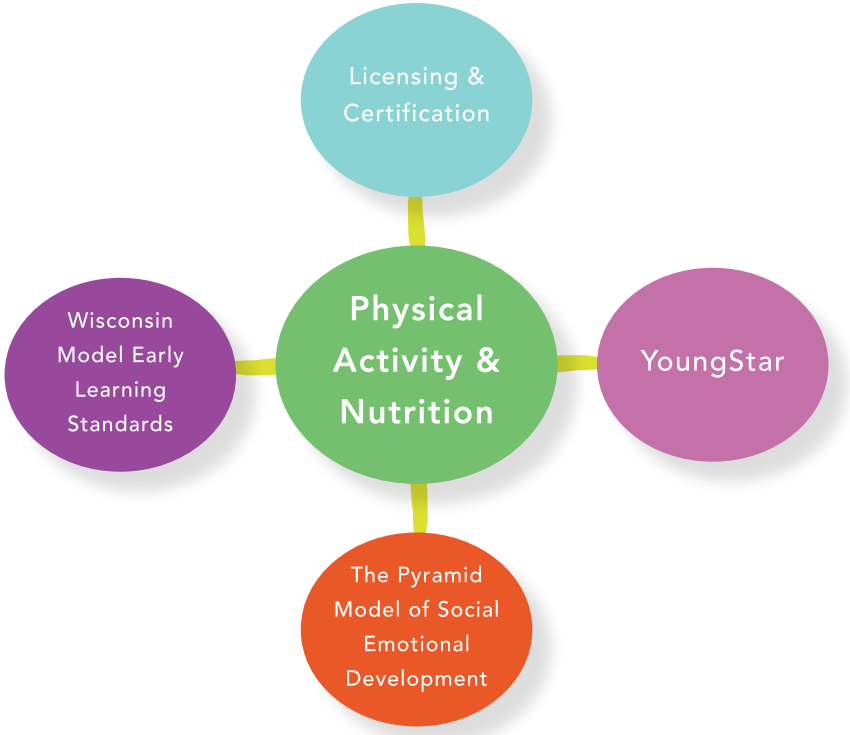
For more details about YoungStar, go to: http://dcf.wi.gov/youngstar

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards

Physical activity clearly fits within the Health and Physical Development Domain through skill and motor development, but also supports the other four developmental domains. Nutrition also is covered in the Health and Physical Development Domain and covers standards related to role modeling healthy eating habits, self feeding and table manners during mealtimes.

The Pyramid Model of Social Emotional Development

Establishing high-quality supportive environments and engaging in new experiences, such as learning about and trying new foods or physical activities contribute to social and emotional development. For example, children establish self-awareness as they learn about their bodies and how to move them, whereas experiences like family style dining can develop a child's awareness for appropriate social behavior.



"I think that each of these programs is complementary in that they support the 'whole child' and ensure that children are getting a well-rounded early childhood experience."

– Brenda Flannery,
Lil Blessings Child Care, Crandon

Why Active Early & Healthy Bites?

Across the nation, early childhood obesity and overweight rates are on the rise. In Wisconsin, 31 percent of low-income 2-4 year-olds, 25.1 percent of high school students, and 64.9 percent of adults are considered overweight or obese.[1-3] Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are central causes of obesity. Action is needed now to decrease rates of obesity and improve the health of Wisconsin residents.

Researchers have warned that if childhood obesity rates continue to rise, children today are likely to live shorter lives than their parents.[4] Early childhood obesity dramatically increases a child's chances of becoming an obese adult and increases risk for many chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease and diabetes.[5]

Physical activity and eating habits develop early, making early care and education settings important in preventing obesity. Wisconsin has the capacity to serve more than 170,000 children in regulated child care facilities. On average, children under age 5 spend more than 30 hours per week in early childhood settings.[6]

Studies show that early care and education settings have the ability to combat childhood obesity by promoting the following habits:

- Be more physically active
- Watch less television and spend less time using computers and electronic games
- Breastfeed infants longer
- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Eat fewer high-energy dense foods, such as candy, chips and cookies
- Drink fewer sugar-sweetened beverages such as regular soda, fruit juice cocktails and energy drinks

Note: The contents of the guides are subject to change, based on new science, public health research and national health recommendations. The online version of the guides will be updated as needed. The most current version is available on the following websites: http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfpwellness.html and www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Community/Childcare/index.htm.

Citations

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2009. Surveillance Summaries. *MMWR*. 2010;59.
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4. Olshansky SJ, Passaro DJ, Hershow RC, et al. A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 2005;352(11): 1138-1145.
5. Serdula MK, Ivery D, Coates RJ, Freedman DS, Williamson DF, Byers T. Do Obese Children Become Obese Adults - A Rreview of the Literature. *Preventive Medicine*. Mar 1993;22(2):167-177.
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Obesity is a condition in which there is a very large amount of extra body fat stored in the body.

Overweight is a condition in which there is more body fat stored in the body than what is normal for a person's age, height and build, but not to the extent of obesity.

Prevention is the act of stopping something before it happens.

What causes obesity?

- Behavioral Factors, such as diet and physical activity levels
- Environmental factors, such as social setting and physical environment
- Biological Factors, such as genetics
- Other contributors:
  - Eating patterns
  - Low-birth weight
  - Excessive weight gain during pregnancy
  - Formula feeding
  - Overweight/obese parents
  - Parenting styles and habits

how do I use Active Early & Healthy Bites?

First, assess your program using the **Let's Move! Child Care Checklist** **(Step 1)** found in Appendix A. Use these results to prioritize any areas where you want to make changes and identify physical activity goals. Keep in mind not all areas need to be addressed immediately.

Second, use the **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** **(Step 2)** found on page 8 and in Appendix C to outline how you will make your improvements. Use the Take Action section, which includes recommendations for best practice, and environment and program policy changes, to develop the QIP. These will become your desired outcomes. It is especially important to include written program policies to support and sustain the improvements you want to make.

Next, **implement changes** **(Step 3)** using ideas and tools from the **Take Action** section. How you implement changes will be determined by the tasks outlined in your QIP, potential barriers, responsible parties, and available resources.

Lastly, **repeat the assessment** **(Step 4)** process on a regular basis. Ongoing assessments can direct your program toward additional opportunities for improvement. You can continue to measure your progress toward your goals and gauge your success using the QIP. Please note that you should also evaluate your program for nutrition improvements by completing the self-assessment in *Healthy Bites*.

The diagram below was adapted from the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards* Teaching Cycle.

Active Early Take Action includes:

- Development
- Child Assessment
- Daily Routines
- Environment
- Resources
- Business Practices

In each section you will find:

- An overview of the topic
- Quick tips
- Activity Ideas
- Inclusion
- Cultural Competency
- Tools included in the appendix
- Engaging Families
- Engaging Communities

Steps 1 & 4:
Program Assessment

Use the **Let's Move! Child Care Checklist** to get a picture of your current program and to prioritize areas that need improvement. **Repeat assessment** to understand whether your policy and program changes were effective.

Step 2:
Quality Improvement Plan & Policy Development

Based on your assessment results, use the **Take Action** section to create a **Quality Improvement Plan** and **write program policies**.

Steps 3:
Implement Changes

Implement changes using ideas and tools from the **Take Action** section to help make positive changes to your child care center.

understanding where you are & where to start

Assessment is often an overlooked step. However, taking the time to assess your program increases the chances that you will make the right changes with the most impact for children, staff and parents. The strategies outlined below can be used for *Active Early* and *Healthy Bites* and will help determine what currently is being done and what more can be done in the future to improve nutrition and physical activity in your program.

Start with the *Let's Move! Child Care Checklist: Physical Activity and Screen Time Checklists*

This self-assessment tool allows you to freely assess your environment, policies and practices and will suggest key areas for improvement. See Appendix A for a copy of the Let's Move checklist. *Healthy Bites* includes a nutrition self-assessment.

This tool can supplement the self-assessment required for YoungStar and will help you look specifically at your program's physical activity environment.

> *"The self-assessment helped us to understand the changes we had to make to be better. The QIP helped us understand what obstacles were keeping us from being successful and what we needed in order to improve physically."*
>
> – Toni Nader, Library Square School, Kenosha

Ongoing Assessment for Evaluation and Quality Improvement

Document changes you are making to show if progress has been made in the quality improvement areas. Repeat the self-assessment process on a regular basis to ensure your QIP is still aligned with the type of improvements you want to make. This will help you see the results of the changes made and celebrate your successes.

Other Ideas for Assessment

It is important to engage families and center staff in the assessment process as well. Use a simple questionnaire or interview.

Parent Survey: Use a questionnaire to ask parents for their opinions on nutrition and physical activity in the program. The questionnaire could be distributed at pick-up time or sent home with a child. Questions could be used to find out what, if any, concerns parents might have. Here are some sample questions:

- Do you feel our program supports your child's nutrition and physical activity habits?
- Do you think our program regularly communicates information on nutrition and/or physical activity?

Staff Interviews or Survey: Use a questionnaire to ask staff for their opinions on what could be done to support nutrition and physical activity. This can be used to learn more about staff interactions with children and parents and to better understand the program's environment. Asking staff their opinions also may help build buy-in for making changes later. Some sample questions:

- What are you currently doing to support nutrition and physical activity?
- How can nutrition and physical activity be improved?

SAMPLE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

directions

Using the results of the self-assessment, prioritize the quality improvement area(s) to be completed within the plan. Not all physical activity areas need to be addressed immediately. Start with three to five aims/outcomes to work on at a time. More aims/outcomes can be overwhelming and too few will limit the success you experience in your program. Be sure to write your goals in a way that demonstrates how they are inclusive and culturally competent.

example

Original QIP Date: January 1, 20XX

Date of QIP Review: March 15, 20XX

Quality Improve-ment Area	Aim/ Desired Outcome	Potential Barriers	Tasks	Responsible Party(ies)	Resources On-hand/ Resources Needed	Measurement	Timeline/ Benchmarks	Test of Plan
Physical Activity	Provide children with regular opportunities for physical activity	Physical activity is withheld from children who misbehave	• Brainstorm other ways to guide children who misbe-have • Create a center policy stating physical activity won't be withheld from children who misbehave	• Administra-tor or owner • Staff, if applicable	• Creative owner/staff • Active Early guide	• Alternatives strategies for guiding children who misbehave created and used. • Policy created	• Brainstorm this week • Create and implement policy by end of month.	Worth doing? (Y) or N Measurable? (Y) or N Improve Outcomes? (Y) or N Inclusive? (Y) or N Culturally Competent? (Y) or N
Sample program policy: Our center will not withhold physical activity from children who misbehave.								

quality improvement plan definitions

Aim/Desired Outcome:
What you hope to achieve with your plan or your aim.

Barriers:
Problems, attitudes, and challenges you should think about and address to achieve success.

Task(s):
Steps/strategies to reach an aim/desired outcome.

Responsible Party(ies):
The person(s) assigned to the task.

Resources On-hand/Resources Needed:

- **Resources on-hand:** People, time, materials, and know-how that already exist within your program and could be used to accomplish your tasks.
- **Resources needed:** People, time, materials, and know-how outside of your program needed to accomplish your tasks.

Measurement – How will the team know if the aim is achieved?
A simple way to track progress toward an aim/desired outcome. Successful programs check in on average of every two weeks. For example, if you have a goal of increasing physical activity you need to:

1) Understand how many minutes of physical activity is currently happening on average throughout the program.
2) Introduce your task/strategy for achieving your goal.
3) Re-measure the amount of time of physical activity occurring in the program after your strategy has been rolled out
4) If your goal has not been reached, try a new strategy

Timeline / Benchmarks:
The time frame that programs assign to a task or aim. Benchmarks are the steps along the way that will let a program know they are on track toward achieving their aim/outcome.

Test of Plan:

- **Is this plan worth doing?** Yes means you believe achieving your aim will have positive results for children, families, staff, or your business.
- **Is this plan concrete, specific, and measurable?** Yes means that when you look back at the aim, you will be able to show clear results through your measurement.
- **Will the result of this plan improve outcomes for children, families, staff, or your business?** Yes means there is a high likelihood that changes will be positive.
- **Are the outcomes inclusive of all children, culturally competent, and developmentally appropriate?** Yes means these positive changes are good for ALL children and families, including those with disabilities and other special needs. Individualizing learning experiences and environments accommodate optimal development for all children in care; for families with a variety of points of view, life experiences, and cultural and language differences; and make sense for each age and stage of child development.

Dates:
Record the original date the QIP was completed and the date(s) it was reviewed for on-going assessment.

SUCCESS STORY

Positive developments from regular active play

The Child and Family Center at Madison College has made great strides in keeping their kids active and moving throughout the day. Lisa Jones, a teacher at the center, and the staff keep a collection of physical activity ideas with them at all times to ensure they always know how to encourage the children to keep moving. Lisa draws inspiration from Color Me Healthy, SPARK, and Mailbox Magazine because she finds the physical activity ideas outlined in these resources simple, effective, and often educational. For example, a popular game at the center called "Rabbit Race" starts with paper carrots scattered around the room. Children then hop like rabbits to collect as many carrots as possible.

"I recently introduced the colored scooters into my classroom and the children quickly adapted to moving around the room on their stomachs or bottoms," Lisa described, "The benefits to the children went beyond the physical aspect though. Socially they were able to figure out how to maneuver the connected scooters together. At one point in time, we were all on them, 9 children and one teacher, pretending it was a train. I thought it was amazing to see 2 and 3 year olds working together in this way.

Since the Child and Family Center increased the amount of daily teacher-led physical activity, teachers have noted that they need to discipline children less often, a positive development that they attribute to the "controlled chaos" of regular active play.

When asked about the importance of teacher-led physical activity, Lisa said, "Teachers need to participate in the activities, too. You have got to get up and move with them. When kids see you doing the activities, they are more likely to get up and move with you, not to mention the impact it has on our own health."

"I dislike exercise, but I love to play," Lisa added.

TAKE ACTION!

Physical Activity Recommendations

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School Age
Physical Activity	Physical activity and active exploration **daily**.	At least than **60-90 minutes** per eight-hour child care day	At least **90 to 120 minutes** per 8-hour child care day.	At least **60 minutes** of daily physical activity.
Structured or Teacher-Led	**Daily** caregiver-infant interactions that encourage physical activity and active exploration.	At least **30 minutes** per eight-hour child care day	At least **60 minutes** per 8-hour child care day	
Unstructured or Free Play	Active exploration and physical activity **daily**.	At least **30 minutes** per eight-hour child care day	At least **60 minutes** per 8-hour child care day	
Outdoor Play	**Play outdoors daily,** weather permitting. • Make time for independent gross motor play outdoors. • Balance the use of riding strollers with plenty of independent outdoor time. Dress infants appropriately for weather.	At least **2–3 times (60 – 90 minutes) daily** of outdoor play, weather permitting. • Dress toddlers appropriately for weather, including appropriate footwear.	At least **2–3 times (60 – 90 minutes) daily** of outdoor play, weather permitting. Dress children appropriately for weather, including appropriate footwear.	School aged children should have daily outdoor time.
Sedentary Time	Infants should not be in settings that restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.	**No more than 60 minutes** of sedentary time per day. **No more than 15 minutes** at a time, unless sleeping.	**No more than 60 minutes** of sedentary time per day. **No more than 15 minutes at a time**, unless sleeping.	School aged children should have **no more than 120 minutes** of sedentary activity at a time.

Physical Activity Recommendations, cont'd.

	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School Age
Physical Activity Environment & Practices	Place infants in safe settings that: • facilitate physical activity • promote the development of movement skills • allow small and large muscle activities	Make sure there is plenty of: • indoor and outdoor space • equipment for active play • opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills Physical activity should never be withheld for misbehavior. Instead, let children calm themselves before returning to active play.	Make sure there is plenty of: • indoor and outdoor space • equipment for active play • opportunities to develop gross and fine motor skills Physical activity should never be withheld for misbehavior. Instead, let children calm themselves before returning to active play.	Physical activity should include aerobic as well as age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities. (This can be done in small doses of 10 – 15 minutes throughout the day.) It is important to encourage participation in physical activities that are appropriate for their age, that are fun, and that offer variety. It is not recommended to play elimination games.
Screen Time	Zero hours of screen time for infants	Zero hours for 2 year olds and younger Limit to educational or active movement programs	Less than 30 minutes per week for 2 year olds Limit to educational or active movement programs.	Limit screen time to **less than one hour a day.** In after school settings, parent permission should be requested for children participating in any screen time. This includes: TV/DVD, computer, and video games.

Sources: NAP SACC - Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care. Ammerman A, Ward DS, Benjamin SE, Ball SC, Sommers J, Malloy M, Dodds J. An Intervention to Promote Healthy Weight: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) Theory and Design. Prev Chron Dis (serial online) 2007 July. Available from: www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/jul/toc.htm. AAP – American Academy of Pediatrics. Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition. RWJ – expert panel funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). Model Physical Activity Standards for Child-Care Providers (For Infants Through Preschool-Age Children) Developed by the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN). NASPE - National Association for Sport and Physical Education. ECERS - R – Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. SHAPES – Study of Healthy Activity & Eating Practices and Environments in Head Start. NYC – New YorK City standards. COC - Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition Comprehensive Set of Standards (will be published in 2011)

"It is important to be active for children to build small and large muscles and to use the calories they consume."

– Darlene Tanck, Dolly's Daycare, Merrill

overview

Physical development refers to a child's rate of growth and control over muscles, coordination, and ability to sit, stand, walk and run. Motor development is part of physical development, and refers to the growth in the ability of children to use their bodies and physical skills.

Motor development can be divided into gross motor skills and fine motor skills.

- **Gross motor skills** refer to a child's ability to control larger parts of the body, including balance, coordination, purposeful control, locomotion and stability
- **Fine motor skills** refer to the level of coordination of and ability to manipulate smaller body parts (such as using thumb and forefinger to pick up a raisin)

A child's ability to be physically active depends on physical growth and development. There are many aspects of physical and gross motor development, including:

- **Locomotor skills:** rolling, crawling, walking and running
- **Balance and coordination skills:** standing, squatting, tiptoeing and jumping
- **Manipulative skills:** carrying, throwing and catching

Although all children will not grow and develop at the same rate, it is important to keep in mind the overall patterns of growth in young children. This growth pattern explains a lot about a child's movement and activity. Keep these key points in mind as you are working with the children in your care:

- **At birth, the head is the fastest growing part of the body.**
  - As a result, infants and toddlers have a higher center of gravity
  - This makes it difficult to balance and is the reason young children are likely to fall

- **The torso lengthens throughout early childhood.**
  - This lowers the center of gravity
  - With this growth, children are able to balance and are less likely to fall
  - Children do not develop a center of gravity similar to adults until about age 6
- **Children grow from their torso out.**
  - Children's arms grow before their hands, which grow before their fingers. Their legs grow before their feet
  - For this reason, children develop gross motor skills before they develop fine motor skills
  - Infants demonstrate this process as they learn to grasp objects. Newborns will use their entire arms to swipe at things. As they grow, they begin to use their entire hands to grab objects. Eventually they will use their fingers to grab objects

Brain Development refers to the growth of the brain and the creation of new connections in the brain. Movement and activity positively impact brain development. Physical activity helps the body make a chemical that acts like Miracle-Gro for the brain.[1] A number of factors influence early brain development:

- Physical activity
- Genetics
- Oxygen
- Responsiveness of caregivers
- Daily experiences
- Love

Language Development refers to the process of learning to speak and communicate. Language development is linked to physical development. Knowing the words that describe the body, types of movement, intensity, direction and spatial relationships help children learn, practice and master skills. Movement and rhythm stimulate the brain (frontal lobes) and enrich language and motor development.

Movement & the Brain

Because the motor center affects other parts of the brain, movement assists in and benfits:

- Brain development
- Integration of senses
- Vision
- Hearing
- Coordination
- The ability to plan out a movement before physically taking action

quick tip

When participating in physical activity with the children in your care, talk about movements using vocabulary that will help children understand their activities.

"I have been trying for months to teach a child to skip. She is 4 1/2 and has a hard time crossing the midline with her body, and I have been struggling to find a way to teach her. When given some of the tools, it was the Choosy CD that helped teach these skills. The day she was able to skip, we all got very excited and did a little dance. It was great to see her feel so good about accomplishing the skill."

– Teresa Storm, Tender Times Child Care, Amery

1 John Ratey, MD. Harvard Psychiatrist.

Gross Motor Developmental Milestones: Quick Reference Chart

AGE	Traveling Skills	Balancing Skills	Manipulative Skills
Birth to 1 year	• Holds head up steadily • Lifts head/shoulders by propping up on arms • Rolls over from back to stomach • Crawls • Pulls to Stand	• Sits alone momentarily • Stands momentarily without support • Can prop sit • Rocks back and forth on hands and knees	• Opens hand to release toy • Reaches with one hand • Bats at rattle that is held near • Reaches for toy with entire hand
1 to 2 Years	• Cruises while holding on to furniture • Walks across room, starting and stopping • Walks up and down stairs, with support • Walks independently • Moves body in new ways, such as tumbling • Walks sideways and backwards • Walks to a ball and kicks it • Runs alone • Runs with increasing speed • Jumps in place • Jumps over objects or off a step	• Squats to pick up toys • Stands on tiptoes to reach something • Gets in and out of adult chair • Kneels while playing • Straddles across beam or sandbox edge • Tries to stand on a flat board	• Carries a large ball while moving • Flings a beanbag • Throws a ball or other object by pushing it with both hands • Catches a large, bounced ball against body with straight arms • Kicks a stationary ball • Holds object in one hand and bangs an object with the other • Dumps pail with one hand and retrieves shovel that falls out with other • Throws ball intentionally • Throws ball overhand, using both arms, while standing
2 to 3 years	• Walks across room • Uses a hurried walk • Walks backwards • Pushes a riding toy with feet while steering • Uses a walker to get to the table • Marches around room • Walks up and down stairs alternating feet, holding handrail or with help • Jumps in place, two feet together	• Squats to pick up toys • Stands on tiptoes to reach something • Gets in and out of adult chair • Kneels while playing • Straddles a taped line on the floor • Sidesteps a taped line on the floor • Sidesteps across beam or sandbox edge	• Carries a large ball while moving • Flings a beanbag • Throws a ball or other object by pushing it with both hands • Catches a large, bounced ball against the body with arms straight • Kicks a stationary ball

Gross Motor Developmental Milestones: Quick Reference Chart, cont'd.

AGE	Traveling Skills	Balancing Skills	Manipulative Skills
3 to 4 years	• Runs • Avoids obstacles and people while moving • Walks up and down stairs alternating feet • Climbs at least two rungs of a jungle gym • Climbs up and down on playground equipment • Rides tricycle using feet to push forward • Rides tricycle using pedals • Gallops, but not smoothly • Jumps over objects or off a step	• Walks forward along sandbox edge, watching feet • Jumps off low step, landing on two feet • Jumps over small objects	• Throws a ball or other object • Traps thrown ball against body (bending arms when catching) • Strikes a balloon with a large paddle • Kicks ball forward by stepping or running up to it
4 to 5 years	• Runs smoothly, quickly changes directions and stops/starts quickly • Jumps and spins • Marches • Moves through obstacle course • Gallops and skips with ease • Plays "Follow the Leader" using a variety of traveling movements • Plays games that require jumping or kicking a ball	• Hops across the playground; hops on one foot then the other • Walks across beam or sandbox edge, forward and backward • Attempts to jump rope • Hops, skips or twirls around and stops without falling	• Steps forward to throw ball and follows through • Catches a thrown ball with both hands • Throws a hand-sized ball • Dribbles a ball • Strikes a stationary ball • Bounces and catches a ball • Kicks moving ball while running • Pounds with, shakes, twists or swings an arm or leg

From *Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children From Birth to Age 5*, 2nd Ed. (2009), www.AAHPERD.org, National Association of Sport and Physical Education

infants

Infants are absorbing all of the information around them as they learn to control their movements. They not only communicate through cries, but also their body language. Child care providers can actively support the physical, cognitive and language development of the infants in their care.

Physical Development
"Tummy time" encourages physical development in infants by giving them time to practice raising their heads and upper bodies, which will eventually develop into crawling. This also gives infants the opportunity to learn to roll over. Even young infants should experience tummy time. Additionally, you can begin to gently move the arms and legs of younger infants back and forth and side to side. As infants grow, you can use favorite objects to encourage infants to wiggle and move.

"For the infant, I watch him closely and change the environment so he has safe opportunities to climb, pull himself up, and also to support his body so he can bounce and dance with the other children."

– Brenda Flannery,
Lil Blessings Child Care, Crandon

Language Development
Long before young children begin to form speech, infants soak in the sights and sounds around them that are essential to language development. As you touch and move infants and encourage physical activity, talk to them continuously. Say the names of different parts of the body as you move them and describe the motions they are making.

quick tip

Keep it Simple! It is important for toddlers to master what they can do before moving on to the next stage of development.

Brain Development
Touch is an important stimulant for brain development. Take time to find out what the infants in your care enjoy. For example, one infant might like the arms and hands to be gently stroked, while another may respond better to a firmer touch. Some opportunities for stimulating brain development include crossing infants' arms and legs over the midlines of their bodies. This will lead to improved physical coordination.

activity idea

Pillow Obstacle Course

Place pillows and couch cushions on the floor for baby to creep, crawl, roll and climb over and around.

– *Dr. Craft's Active Play!* page 99

"Give babies safe objects to pick up, put in their mouths, handle and throw down. These activities help them develop hand-eye coordination."

– From *Dr. Craft's Active Play!* page 98

toddlers

It is important for caregivers working with toddlers to realize that every child has an individual rate of growth and development. This will help providers encourage the progressive skill development for this age group.

Physical Development
As toddlers' bodies grow taller and their arms and legs become stronger, balance and coordination improve. As you promote physical activity in your program, remember that physical growth and development happen in a sequence. For example, a toddler learns to stand before walking, and walks before running. Think about the sequence of skill development as you design activities for the toddlers in your care.

Brain Development
The brain itself and the connections in the brain grow rapidly in toddlers. These connections help toddlers build not only the skills needed to be active but also cognitive and social skills. Toddlers need a variety of experiences to continue to stimulate brain development. Movement and physical activity stimulate the brain and promote learning, so it is important that toddlers have space and encouragement to keep moving throughout the day. Nutrition and sleep are also vital for brain development.

Language Development
As toddlers learn new words, they need context to accompany those words and you may find that you need context to understand the words they are using. When teaching toddlers new vocabulary relating to physical activity, build from simple vocabulary such as up, down, in, out, fast, slow, jump and hop. Model what new words mean so toddlers have the context needed to add the words to their own speech. Don't worry if toddlers use words incorrectly—continue to use and repeat the words, modeling them each time.

activity idea

Clean Up the Floor

Indoor throwing practice has never been more fun! Dump a basket full of rolled-up pairs of socks and watch all of the children have a wonderful time cleaning up the floor.

Learn more about this activity on page 40 of *Dr. Craft's Active Play!*

"I have found that with increasing the amount of physical activity in my 2-year-old classroom that the children have a better appetite, take a good nap and even some behavior issues have lessened"

– Debbie Wright,
COA Child Care Center,
Milwaukee

preschoolers

Many people believe young children are naturally active enough. Preschoolers may seem to be always on the move; however, research shows that much of their physical activity is light, including sitting, squatting, laying down, standing and walking. On average, today's preschoolers are not as active as in previous generations, nor are they as active as they need to be to stay healthy.

Physical Development
During the preschool years, children develop more complex gross motor skills that usually involve several stages. For example, skipping requires coordinating steps and hops, and riding a tricycle involves steering and pedaling. Give your preschoolers time to practice their gross motor skills every day.

While gross motor skills are developing quickly so are fine motor skills. These skills help children make smaller movements and include holding and using small objects, such as crayons and pencils, with fingers rather than fists. Although we often think about fine motor skills in terms of writing or drawing, we also use these skills in physical activity. We need fine motor skills to be able to hold and manipulate smaller objects, for example a baseball. As gross and fine motor skills continue to develop, preschoolers improve their motor control and hand-eye coordination, both of which foster physical activity.

Brain Development
Throughout the preschool years, the brain continues to grow and develop and experiences spurts of developing connections. These connections in the brain are critical for healthy development, enabling children to sharpen, control and coordinate both their gross motor and fine motor skills. Experience stimulates all of this brain activity and children need opportunities to learn, practice and master physical activities.

Language Development
Preschoolers learn new words at an amazing rate. They will use words they are familiar with to expand, increase and explore their vocabulary. Children can learn terms such as swaying, exercise and heart rate when you introduce them alongside words they already know. The more they can see you model the meaning of words, the more they are able to use these words themselves. Additionally, preschoolers learn grammar at the same time as vocabulary, so they are better able to understand and follow instructions that include more than one step.

> *"To be able to jump over the limbo bar when it is at its highest, they are so proud they can do it."*
>
> – April Orth,
> April's Child Care,
> Salem

activity idea

Animal Movements

Choose the favorite animals of the children in your care, making cards to act as cues for movement. Get your CD player ready for children to move like their favorite animals when the music is playing. To begin this activity, choose a card and then start the music. When the music stops, the children freeze and wait to see which animal card will be chosen for them to imitate next. Be sure to take this opportunity to teach movement vocabulary, using phrases such as "walk like a crab" and "hop like a bunny."

multi-age groups

Working with children of multiple ages means working with children in completely different stages of development. It is important to know where each child is in terms of physical, brain and language development so you can adapt activities, routines and environments to address the developmental stages of all children.

Multi-age groups can occur in centers with multiple staff members to help or in home environments with only one provider. With a variety of developmental levels, activities have to be flexible. Here are some ideas to engage multiple developmental levels in one activity:

1. **Scaffolding.** This is a great tool when you have two children close in age and ability, with one slightly ahead of the other. Give the children a physical activity that involves the older child helping the younger child, such as dribbling a ball, throwing a ball through a hoop or swinging. This will help both children develop their skills.
2. **Support child-initiated activity.** Large dice with different gross motor skills on each side or picture flashcards depicting gross motor skills are great tools for promoting self-directed play. Older children can take turns rolling the dice or picking cards and acting out their own physical activities.
3. **Make the best of technology (but only when you really need it!).** When the day is hectic and you need a quick distraction for the children, it is helpful to have music and movement CDs and active DVDs on hand.

activity idea

Scarves of Many Colors

Have each child pick out a different colored scarf and act out things found in nature, such as trees, water, the sky or animals.

Give scarves to infants as well so they can learn from sensory exploration. Infants also will see the older children and process what they are doing.

inclusion

Physical activity may be different for children with a developmental disability. If you are working with a child who has an identified developmental disability, think about how physical activity opportunities can be adapted to meet the child's individual needs. Here are a few examples:

- A child with a speech or language delay or hearing loss may need more frequent visual and verbal cues, such as counting to three by voice and on your fingers, and jumping three times
- A child with a cognitive delay may need instructions broken into small, simple steps. The child may benefit from partnering with a friend who can help demonstrate the steps
- A child with autism may be more or less sensitive to noise, touch or light. You may need to adapt equipment, materials and the environment. Additionally, routines are very important with activities occurring at the same times throughout the day
- A child with physical challenges can thrive in environments that provide ample space to navigate. Include adaptive equipment and store materials accessibly. You can modify activities to use different body parts or motions

Be careful not to generalize. Not every child with a certain type of disability or delay will respond to the same adaptations. Get to know the children in your care and customize adjustments to each child.

If you are aware that a child is developing at a different rate or in a different way, be sensitive to the needs of that child and the child's parents. Be sure you understand the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and how it relates to physical activity. Physical activity should be flexible and adaptable to all children in your care. Resources are available to help you adapt activities and materials so all children can participate in physical activity.

cultural competency

One of the most important concepts in cultural competency is to honor the individual. The best way to ensure you are honoring each child's culture is to get to know every family in your care through constant communication about each child's progress and needs and to understand the values of each family.

Ways to learn a family's culture and how physical activity is viewed include:

- Ask questions about physical activity in interviews and conferences
- Have an "All About Me" section in your curriculum. Include pieces that ask how children and families are active. Include photos of physical activity to promote physical activity in your classroom and at home
- Do a physical activity Show-and-Tell. Children can share a game or activity they do with their families at home. You may learn new games and activities too

tools included

- **Language Development Chart.** Use this chart to refresh your movement vocabulary so you can teach your children how to communicate about movement and physical activity. (Appendix D)

> *"At our parent events, we always incorporate a movement activity. The best so far was dads doing a rhythm stick dance."*
>
> – Verna Drake,
> Westby Day Care and Learning Center,
> Westby

engaging families

Plan family nights that focus on physical development and activity. This will also give you an opportunity to learn how active lifestyles fit into the cultures of the families in your program.

engaging communities

Collaborate with your local children's museum to promote physical activity. Consider exhibits designed to educate families about physical development and promote physical activity.

> *"We had a father who is a teacher in the public school come in and do a "Family Activity Night." We had several stations set up for active participation, including a stretching station, obstacle course, family tug-o-war, hula hoops and fill in the bucket activities. We had a great number of families participate."*
>
> – Wendy Eagon,
> University Children's Center,
> Menasha

CHILD ASSESSMENT

overview

Child Assessment evaluates individual developmental patterns and milestones, including the development of gross motor and fine motor skills. Observing and documenting each child's development helps to:

- Identify delays or any unusual development for early intervention
- Understand each child's capabilities so that lesson plans address the needs of all children
- Sequence skill development throughout a curriculum
- Know how to adapt physical activity programs and environments
- Observe a child's behavior and understand more about the reasons or context for those behaviors

"I have used my observations to plan opportunities that encourage physical activity for an infant, three 2-year olds, one 4-year-old and two 6-year-olds. Some of the ways that I have done this is to watch for the types of activities that are piquing their curiosity at each age."

– Brenda Flannery,
Lil Blessings Child Care,
Crandon

assessing the children in your program

The **Gross Motor Developmental Milestones Quick Reference Chart** (on pages 16 and 17) will help you observe and assess the physical development of individual children in your care. Features include:

- A focus on physical development and skills
- Skill categories within the physical development domain
- Suggestions for sequencing physical skill development
- Separate versions created for different age groups

how to fit assessment into your day

Observing the physical and gross motor development of the children in your care does not have to feel like an extra responsibility to fit into the day. You can purposefully plan activities to help you assess skills and strategically place your recording tools for easy access during the day. You can make useful observations while you interact with children, lead activities, support child-initiated play, and reflect back on the day's events.

Documentation
To make documentation easy, think about how your environment is set up and which methods of documenting will work best for you. In their book *Focused Observations: How to Observe Children for Assessment and Curriculum Planning*, Gaye Gronlund and Marlyn James discuss a variety of tools and ideas you can use to record a child's development. Included are an observations record, a quick check recording sheet, a file folder and sticky notes, and a folder with index cards.

You may want to carry a tab of paper or a ring of index cards to jot down notes throughout the day, or you may prefer to have a clipboard for each child that you fill in during quieter times of the day or after children have gone home.

Don't be discouraged if you have to try a few methods to find out what works best for you and your program. This just means that you have really figured out what works best!

quick tips

- Have the tools used to record observations and assessment easily accessible in your home or classroom. For example, keep an index card for each child on a ring that clips to your belt loop.
- Observation and assessment are an ongoing process. Once you have completed your action steps, start observation and assessment again to evaluate progress and identify new areas for improvement.
- Keep a journal of successful physical activity. You can look back and see progress and remember why you do what you do!

what comes after assessment?

Create action steps for child development.
Once you have assessed the children in your care, use the information gained to create schedules and lesson plans that provide time to practice skills and foster physical development. Because your assessment has provided a picture of the physical development of all of your children, you can prepare adaptations for children at different skill levels. Be sure to communicate successes to parents and give them ideas of how to continue their child's growth and development at home.

considerations for all ages

Children grow up fast and it is important to record and document their development.

- **Use a variety of activities** to help assess skills children have mastered, skills they continue to practice and improve, and skills that may need extra attention
- **Make regular observations** of how children respond to and participate in physical activity, how they initiate their own physical activity, and how they continue to develop physically
- **Communicate observations with parents.** Consider adding a physical development section to your daily report or creating a development portfolio that is frequently shared with parents
- **Involve parents in assessment** by inviting them to share their observations from home or encouraging them to contribute to their child's portfolio

infants

Assess infants' physical development by engaging them in a variety of activities that will help you see their progress toward various milestones, such as grabbing, sitting and crawling. For example, use the Tummy Time activity below to assess infants' development in terms of lifting their heads, holding their heads up, rolling over and crawling. Use your interactions as a method of assessment as well. Lead infants in little activities throughout the day, such as grabbing for different objects, dancing around the room with an infant in your arms, and moving infants' arms, legs, fingers and toes as you name these body parts out loud. Observe how infants react to different activities and how they start to initiate their own movements as well as their continued physical development.

quick tip

With increased mobility in toddlers, be sure to arrange safe, low places for climbing and provide toys that can be pushed or pulled. This will help them develop all of the gross motor skills, including traveling, and manipulative and stabilizing skills.

activity idea

Tummy Time

Place an infant on his or her tummy. Roll brightly-colored soft play balls nearby. Encourage the infant to follow the balls (visually from side to side), reach for and touch the balls.

Equipment: Soft blanket or mat, colored balls

Time frame: 5-10 minutes or until interest is lost

Adaptations: Adjust the distance that balls are rolled; change the texture or size of balls

quick tip

Touch a toy to the infants' hands to encourage grabbing every day. As they develop, you will see infants progress from using their entire arms to swipe at objects to using their entire hands to grab, then just using their fingers to grab.

toddlers

By providing a variety of materials and toys that emphasize gross motor development, such as soft materials to throw and catch (e.g., scarves and Mylar balloons) and portable toys that can be pushed or pulled, you will have the opportunity to observe the toddlers in your care as they explore the materials available.

You also can structure activities for toddlers so specific gross motor skills and physical activities can be observed. For example, the Scavenger Hunt described at right allows you to observe traveling skills such as walking or running, manipulative skills such as pushing and pulling, and stabilizing skills such as standing and balancing while reaching. If a truck push toy is placed on the opposite side of the room, you could observe the toddler walking, pushing and balancing. If a ball is placed on a shelf that is a little higher than the toddler, you could observe the child's ability to reach and balance. The options are endless and they are all up to you!

activity ideas

Scavenger Hunt

Place favorite toys all over the room so toddlers must get to the toys by crawling, cruising or walking. Choose a variety of toys that will give toddlers a chance to feel different textures, see different colors, and carry objects of different shapes and weights. Use this time to observe and record gross motor skills.

Equipment: Children's favorite toys

Time Frame: 5-10 minutes or until interest is lost

Adaptations: Adjust the distance between items

quick tip

Create activity cards that capture animals, objects or people in different balancing positions. For example, show a stork standing on one foot, a frog squatting or a toy soldier standing at attention. Try making cards for other skill sets, such traveling skills or object-manipulation skills.

preschoolers & older children

Structure a variety of activities to observe preschoolers' gross motor skills and physical development. Think about specific skills you are interested in assessing and how you can engage children in practicing those skills. For example, you might want to use yoga cards to have children practice different balancing skills, such as standing on one foot, squatting, and standing on tiptoes. Additionally, you could create dice to use in practicing different traveling skills. Have a different traveling skill, such as walking, running or sliding, on each side of the die. Then have children roll the die and practice the skill!

Space Invaders

Prepare a 10-foot by 10-foot square marked with clear lines. As children move through this space, assess the personal space and general space that children travel in. Use cues such as "Look at our small play area. When I say 'go,' walk around our play area without bumping into anyone else." You can use this time to observe and record posture, speed and comfort. Say, "Now run in our play area without bumping into anyone else." Observe and record again.

Equipment: Four cones or place-markers and tape

Time Frame: 10 minutes

Adaptations: Make multiple play areas to accommodate more than 4 or 5 children. Encourage children to use other locomotor skills, such as walking backward or hopping. Play music in the background

multi-age groups

Multi-age groups of children bring a special quality to the assessment process. Younger children watch older children to see how they move. Regardless of age, providers should always try to understand each child's preferred method of learning. But with a multi-age group you can really see how interactions between children who have mastered a skill and children who are learning a skill can promote physical and gross motor development. Your observations can then inform your lesson-planning processes so that more activities are structured in a way that helps children of varying ages learn.

activity idea

Follow the Leader, Simon Says, or Copy-cat

Choose an activity in which children have to mimic one another, such as Follow the Leader, Simon Says or Copy-cat. Instruct older children to lead different activities so you have an opportunity to observe the skills of younger children. If you have specific skills that you would like to assess, make cards or dice that can be rolled to give the older children guidance in selecting activities. Then switch and have the younger children lead the game.

Equipment: None necessary, but props such as dice, bean bags or scarves could be used

Time Frame: Variable

Adaptations: Go indoors and outdoors for variation. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to expand or limit the space available

quick tip

Often the best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else. Have an older child teach a new physical activity or gross motor skill to a younger child.

inclusion

Do not assume a child has a developmental delay or disability if he or she has yet to reach a developmental milestone. Think about possible explanations, including health problems, the family's culture and the child's history. After exploring these options, if you still feel a child may not be developing normally, then take action.

If you have concerns about how a child is developing, discuss your observations and concerns with the child's parents. Sensitivity is important. Your goal in discussing this with the parents is to support them in providing the best care for their child. This can be done through giving parents support and understanding. It is best to objectively tell them your observation and recommend they discuss this with their child's pediatrician.

cultural competency

Understanding a family's values and culture before starting assessment is helpful, but it is never too late to learn more. As you are assessing the individual development of each child in your care, you will see differences, and it is important to understand why these differences exist.

Culture can be one reason for differences. For example, in one family it may be the norm for a child to wait patiently to be invited to join an activity, while in another family, the child may be encouraged to actively explore their environment at any time.

When assessing development, asking "why?" is critical. It is important to understand why a child has or has not achieved a developmental milestone. Understanding a family's values and culture will help you make reasonable conclusions about a child's development. Be sure to look at the broader picture of a child's life before drawing conclusions about development. When culture and assessment are brought together, you also have the advantage of using the information to create culturally appropriate lesson plans and classroom environments so they are truly supportive to the children in your care.

engaging families

Use portfolios to share children's physical and gross motor development progress with families. This could include photos, quotes from the children, and objective, strengths-based observations!

engaging communities

Encourage your community to assess its own commitment to physical activity. Counties, cities and neighborhoods routinely conduct community needs assessments. Challenge your community to make physical activity a part of its next needs assessment!

tips for communicating with parents

Be strengths-based...

- Be kind
- Be warm
- Be real
- Be of service
- Be child-focused
- Be aware of parent reactions

Be an active listener...

- Present
- Patient (avoid interrupting)
- Accepting
- Nonjudgmental
- Curious

Be a cooperative partner...

- Share information with parents
- Invite parents to share information
- Create next steps with parents

overview

To promote health and prevent obesity, physical activity must become a daily habit for children starting at an early age. Adding 120 minutes of physical activity into each day may seem extremely difficult; however, this is not the case. Early care and education programs around the state of Wisconsin have successfully integrated 120 minutes of physical activity into their **schedules**, **transitions** and **lesson plans** without having to add time to their days!

considerations for all ages

Schedules

Daily schedules can help you ensure that physical activity is intentionally planned every day. Here are a few things to consider when creating your schedule:

- Make time for at least 60 minutes of child-led, free active play each day
- Incorporate teacher-led activities throughout the day for a total of 60 minutes each day
- Make sure teacher-led and child-initiated active play occur both indoors and outdoors
- Plan for physical activity throughout the day, but stay flexible. Make a backup plan for physical activity for those days that don't go as planned
- Make your schedule visible to the children so they can tell when they will have their next opportunity to be active and release energy
- Provide adequate rest times for children
- Encourage parent involvement on a regular basis. Ask parents to join in opportunities for physical activity, send home information about physical activity in newsletters, and share each child's successes in daily reports for parents

"I find that the children are able to focus and learn better after implementing 120 minutes of physical activity in our daily schedule."

– Kimberley Yehle, Library Square School, Kenosha

"The most important lesson I've learned regarding physical activity is that you can fit it into your day during times that you were previously inactive. The children in my care love to do jumping jacks while waiting for everyone to be ready for lunch. Being active can be simple, spontaneous and fun!"

– Gail Pitzen, Country Care Children's Center, Cuba City

Transitions

Transitions provide an excellent opportunity to promote physical activity throughout the day. Whether you are moving from free play to group time or from outdoors to indoors you can also give children the opportunity to develop skills and release energy. Keep these tips in mind for successful and smooth transitions:

- View transition times as opportunities to utilize and practice gross motor development skills
- Active transitions can help meet the recommendations for teacher-led physical activity for toddlers and preschoolers. For example, as children wait to wash their hands, play *Simon Says* or simply have children jump rather than walk from one space to another
- As you lead children in activities, model physical activity for them. This makes expectations for each activity clear
- Plan ahead. Active transitions that are thought out and well-designed maximize success
- Strive to meet both group and individual needs for physical activity. Provide modifications for children with more advanced skills
- Always give children clear expectations and simple directions for transitions so they occur smoothly

Lesson Planning

Lesson plans ensure that physical activity is integrated into every part of the day across all content areas. Physical activity can be integrated into each part of your day. Ideas include:

- Integrate physical activity into ALL curriculum content areas, including literacy and mathematics. For example, children can act out stories and use mathematics as a guide for active indoor or outdoor exploration
- Use movement as one method of learning. Children will be more successful when they have the opportunity to learn from seeing, hearing and doing
- When creating lesson plans, think about ways to introduce new materials that will be available during free choice times
- Model how to use any new movement materials that you provide for children. When children of all ages know how and when to use materials, there will be fewer mishaps during the week
- Plan out physical activities for group times throughout the week, including a couple of backup ideas, just in case
- As you create the lesson plans, outline clear expectations, simple directions and goals for activities. This will ensure the success of your active lesson plans

"A balance of structure and flexibility means that the basic schedule is set, and everyone can depend on it. Yet the schedule can be changed or modified, depending on the day — the weather, moods and interests of the children..."

– *All About the ECERS-R* page 359

"For young children, curriculum is everything that happens, including the transitions, spills, spats and naps."

– *Curriculum That Matters* by Margie Carter

infants

Individualized infant schedules should take into account each infant's developmental progress and preferences. This means that two infants may be engaged in activities that look quite different. (See sample schedule in Appendix F). Physical activity opportunities are spread throughout the day. Ideas include:

- Include two or three opportunities for tummy time, so infants can practice lifting their heads and focusing on objects in front of them
- As you go through the motions of changing diapers, talk to infants about their movements
- As you transition for sleeping periods, move the infant's arms and legs up and down and across the midlines before swaddling. Talk to the infant all the time, describing movements
- To promote physical activity, try to reduce or even eliminate the use of restrictive equipment such as bouncy seats or swings

Think about ways to integrate other experiences that will help infants' future physical and gross motor development. For example, the sensory experiences integrated into the activity at right can transform tummy time into an opportunity for an infant to practice tracking the motion of an object. This will later help with hand-eye coordination and the manipulation of objects.

activity idea

Jazzed Up Tummy Time

During tummy time, place infants on their tummies on a soft blanket. With the lights dimmed softly, play *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Roll a light-up Mylar water ball between yourself and another child care provider or an older child. This adds sensory experiences and helps infants develop visual tracking skills during routine tummy time.

Equipment: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* music, a light-up Mylar water ball, a blanket

Time Frame: 5 to 10 minutes or until interest is lost

Adaptations: Adjust the speed at which you roll the ball so the infant is not overwhelmed, but remains interested

quick tip

Toddlers love to move! Allow lots of opportunities for movement throughout the day. Create cards with quick ideas to help you get them moving!

toddlers

Toddlers need 90 minutes of physical activity each day, including 30 minutes of teacher-led physical activity. Here are some ideas and considerations for incorporating opportunities for physical and gross motor development in daily routines into toddlers' daily routines:

- Focus your lesson planning around refining skills that toddlers have developed. For example, toddlers can run, but they are not yet agile or fast, so give them opportunities to practice this skill
- Make your schedule visible to toddlers and use symbols and pictures that let them know what is coming next
- Use larger blocks of time in your schedule to maintain flexibility throughout the day
- Plan for free playtimes with options for movement, as well as group times that keep children up and active
- Captivate children in physical activity by using songs and dances that are familiar to them
- Promote language and literacy development along with physical activity. For example, read a story that is based on a song such as *Five Little Ducks* or *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, and encourage the children to act out the motions with you
- Model activities and describe your movements so children can copy the movements you make
- Use words to describe your movements, for example say "shake your hands" and "twist your body back and forth"

activity ideas

Cooperative Musical Hoops

This has the same basic rules as the traditional game of musical chairs, except no one is ever "out." Spread hula-hoops on the floor (if you do not have hula-hoops, make rings out of yarn or ribbon). You should have one less hula hoop than number of children. Play fun music as children move from hoop to hoop. When the music stops, all players must get inside a hoop, so that no players are eliminated. Remove one hoop each round. As you remove the hoops, let the group know that no one is out. Part of the fun is seeing how many players can fit into one hoop. The game is over when everyone is in the last remaining hoop.

Active Cleanup!

Make cleanup times more exciting and fun for both you and your toddlers. Each day, focus on a different traveling skill, such as walking fast, hopping, or jumping. When it is time to clean up, ask your toddlers to use these traveling skills as they put away materials. Add sensory experiences by playing music or letting children ring a bell when they put an item away. Be sure to model your expectations for cleanup, too!

Equipment: A classroom that has been in use

Time Frame: Until cleanup is finished

Adaptations: Use different elements for sensory experiences, such as dimming lights

- Lead toddlers in active, simple transitions. For example, on Monday, instruct children to hop like bunnies from one space to another; on Tuesday, have them waddle like ducks, etc.

Don't worry if some children participate more actively than others. It is all right for toddlers to roam and explore on their own.

preschoolers

Best practices say preschool-age children need 120 minutes of physical activity each day, including at least 60 minutes of teacher-led physical activity. To achieve this standard, look at your current schedule and use your imagination to add physical activity wherever you can. Ideas include:

- To create opportunities for teacher-led activities, sneak physical activity into group times (both small and large), as well as transition times
- Make music and movement interest areas available during free-choice time. Play music that guides children in movement and dancing
- Preschoolers also can engage in child-initiated active play outdoors. Provide a variety of materials outdoors to foster development of traveling skills (running, jumping, climbing), manipulative skills (throwing, kicking) and balancing skills
- For group times, consider activities such as jumping out the date. If it is the 20th of the month, have children jump 20 times. Mix it up by encouraging the children to jump on one foot or two feet, or to take little jumps or big jumps

- Try an active story time where children act out a book as you read, or practice their recall skills by recreating the storyline later. (See *Books To Move To: Physical Activity and Literacy*, Appendix G)
- Activity and math go hand in hand. Children can learn numbers, shapes, directions and patterns through movement
- Science covers health and the human body. As you teach children how movement helps their heart, muscles and bones, they learn foundations of science

quick tip

Try a few teacher-led physical activities at the end of outdoor play as a way to make transitions smoother.

activity idea

A Wild Rumpus

Read the book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. After reading it, invite the children to join you in dancing the Wild Rumpus!

Equipment: The book *Where the Wild Things Are*

Time Frame: 15 minutes

multi-age groups

Working with a group of children of various ages and developmental stages requires great flexibility when planning schedules and lessons. You also will see differing physical activity and gross motor development needs. Here are some ideas for incorporating physical activity into your daily routines:

- Focus on one general category of skills and then think about how each child in your care is currently developing that skill. For example, create a relay race focused on traveling skills. Instead of breaking into teams, have all the children participate on the same team. Call out which developmentally appropriate traveling skills each child will use to begin his/her portion of the relay (e.g. preschool-age children can skip; toddlers can run)
- Keep activity cards on a ring, or have a pair of dice with illustrations of physical activity that quickly can be referenced when a new idea is needed. These tools may help with time management because they enable older children to help lead activities
- Throw a dance party! Children of all ages can be active on their own when there is music

activity idea

Group Shapes

Encourage children to work together as a group and to act individually to form different shapes and objects out of their bodies. You can create shapes, such as circles, triangles and rectangles, or letters, such as "C" and "Y," or even objects, such as tables or chairs. Older children can help younger children. Hold infants while you lead this activity so they can watch.

Equipment: Ideas of objects to create

Time Frame: 5 to 10 minutes or until interest is lost

Adaptations: Keep modeling how to make your body look like the different shapes

– From *Healthy Movement & Active Play*

quick tip

Use movement activities that actively involve all children, rather than activities in which some children just wait and watch. For example, modify games so no child is ever "out."

"We start our day with the bingo animal cards. I cut them up and put them in a bucket. They take turns drawing a card and acting it out. It's part of our 'get the day started routine.' "

– Nancy Storkel, Learning Ladder Daycare, Tomah

"Gross and fine motor activities build skills that children continue to expand upon. Movement can easily be incorporated into activities ranging from math to literacy to science and beyond."

– Jill Bodwin, CESA 7 Headstart, Manitowoc

inclusion

The best approach to inclusion and daily routines is to honor each child as an individual. If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), use this as a guide for thinking about scheduling, transitions and lesson plans as they relate to physical activity. These plans provide expertise and valuable guidance from each child's parents and can inform your physical activity daily routines.

Be mindful of time as you create schedules or lesson plans. Children with developmental delays or disabilities may need more time to complete tasks or they may need a shorter period of time to ensure they are not stressed or overwhelmed by the activity. Alternatively, children may need more breaks to rest. Think about the pace at which the activity is moving, and do not be afraid to slow things down or speed things up accordingly.

Build in flexibility when planning and implementing your lessons. Modify rules to games, prepare extra cues or prompts for children and ensure you have adaptive equipment for the activity. For example, a child with a hearing deficit may benefit from being strategically placed across from you in order to see your lips move and watch you model activities, or by being next to you to hear instructions better. Remember that there is variation in developmental delays and disabilities.

Not every child with a hearing deficit or every child with autism will react the same way to an activity. Make sure you know the children in your care and customize activities accordingly.

"I think that no matter what age they are or what kind of disability they may have, there is always some kind of physical activity they can do, so I encourage them to at least try and if they think it's too hard, then they can try something else."

– Maichao Lor, MC Care, Wausau

cultural competency

Just as your child care program has daily routines, children have daily routines at home, too. What children do at home carries over into your child care program and what you do carries over into their home lives. It is important to remember that different values guide families' daily routines. For example, one family might prioritize eating dinner together every night while another prioritizes community involvement in the evenings.

An understanding of daily home routines will help you understand how a child reacts to the daily routines in your early care and education program. Talk to parents about each child's life at home. Be open and respectful, and honor each family's values and priorities, as these are reflections of their culture. Eating, sleeping and physical activity patterns at home influence how active a child will be in your program. And a child's activity in your program will affect eating and sleeping overall. Communicate frequently with parents about the amount of physical activity their child is getting in your care and discuss the benefits of physical activity for their child. Ask parents "how" and "what" questions to encourage them to talk about their children's physical activity both at home and in care.

tools included

1. **Full Day Sample Schedule: Group Child Care, Family Child Care, and Infants and Toddlers.** This sample schedule provides an outline for how to demonstrate that children are physically active throughout the day. (Appendices E and F)
2. **Books to Move to: Physical Activity and Literacy.** Physical activity fits well with the school readiness goals of early care and education. One way to do this is to make story-times become active. Here is a list of books that can get kids moving as they are learning to read. (Appendix G)

engaging families

Plan weekly walks for families in your program. Designate a defined route. On the walk, try some of the games used for transitions during the day so parents can experience and enjoy them. Consider bringing pets for the walk, too. Make sure you bring plenty of water!

communities

Encourage your community to provide safe routes, such as sidewalks and bike trails, near child care centers so families and staff can walk or bike safely to your program!

"This month we encouraged family scavenger hunts: Start by making a list of common things found in your neighborhood, like the blue house or the tall oak tree. Then walk around your neighborhood with your child and search for the items on your list which can lead you to a fun destination, like the park!"

– Jill Bodwin, CESA 7 HeadStart, Manitowoc

"We get all the children together, 3 and up, and have a baseball game every Tuesday in the summer at the park across the street from our center."

– Karen Verhagen, Kinder Haus, Kaukauna

quick tip

Think about culture and gender roles. There are overall societal norms that in many ways encourage physical activity in boys but not girls. However, we know girls need just as much physical activity as boys to be healthy.

overview

Your classroom or home environment sets the stage for physical activity. You can encourage children to be more active by making times for physical activity visible on the schedule in a way that children know when to expect their next break. You can set out new and exciting active materials each week to keep children engaged and encourage them to select active options during their free-choice time. Additionally, you can create an active culture in your early care and education space by using everyday materials that promote physical activity, such as posters of active kids and books about physical activity in your reading area.

Children learn by exploring and children of all ages need time to be physically active both indoors and outdoors. Creating supportive indoor and outdoor environments will promote physical activity and greatly influence gross motor outcomes for children. Think about your classrooms, play spaces and outdoor areas, and where you can encourage more physical activity. Structure activities and environments so children of all ages can actively explore, learn and practice gross motor skills.

Child-Provider Interactions and Your Role as a Provider

- Familiarize yourself with developmentally-appropriate practices and the sequence of physical and motor development. Also, know which resources are available to you and seek out new resources
- Model and participate in physical activity, and dress to be active
- Observe and record children's development so you can help them expand their skill sets
- Set the pace for activity so all children in your program are included
- Understand that movement and physical activity overlap with social-emotional development. Your interactions with children regarding their physical and gross motor development will have an impact on other areas of their development

"Anything we introduce with enthusiasm and fun always excites the children. There is the occasional child who says they do not want to participate, but they always join in eventually."

– Maggie Smith, R.E.A.L. K.I.D.S, Menominee

special considerations for family child care providers

If you are a family child care provider, your physical activity environment will depend on whether your living space is used for child care or if you use a separate space for your program.

Indoors. If you care for children in your home, think about arranging furniture to define spaces, and identify an area for music and movement. There should be plenty of space for children to jump, skip, gallop, use push-and-pull toys, and throw soft objects. Think about how opportunities for physical activity occur naturally in your home, such as stairs for climbing, hallway spaces that can be used as "bowling alleys" and even chairs and couches that serve as support for children learning to stand and walk. Consider using portable equipment so you can rotate materials as the children's interests, abilities and developmental stages evolve. Use tubs and shelving to store materials so your home can serve as a supportive environment for children's physical development as well as a home for you and your own family.

Outdoors. Children need opportunities to explore nature, so consider landscaping that includes trees for shade, large rocks for climbing, hills for rolling down and climbing up, and gardens for digging and planting. Accompany these natural features with developmentally appropriate equipment, such as slides and swings, as well as push-pull toys and tricycles. This will present children with a variety of experiences in traveling skills, balancing skills and manipulating skills.

considerations for all ages

Here are some tips for setting up active indoor and outdoor spaces:

- Your space should be **safe, clean, neat and clutter free**
- Arrange your space so that it is **easy** for you to **supervise** all children. This way you will know if children are being active and if you need to encourage more movement
- Create a space that **purposefully promotes physical activity**. Set aside plenty of space to practice large muscle skills
- Provide **free access** to physical activity and movement materials. This will encourage children to initiate their own physical activity
- **Set clear expectations for behavior**. Model appropriate behaviors so children understand how to act and know how to use available materials and equipment
- Some materials and equipment will be more popular with children than others, so have more than one available. Store these items where children can gain access to them

Indoor Space

- Provide **clear traffic patterns**. Set up furniture in certain ways, or place footprints on the floor to demonstrate where to walk
- Choose **developmentally appropriate materials** to set out in your room. If children seem uninterested in a material, it may be too challenging or not challenging enough. Don't be afraid to try something else
- Hang up posters of diverse, active families, and keep books in your reading area that show children dancing, moving and playing games
- Make sure lighting is sufficient for children to see and that materials absorb sound to limit noise levels

Outdoor Space

- Make sure that there is lots of **variation in the materials and equipment** available outside. For example, make sure there are **different types of surfaces**, such as a paved bike path, a cushioned surface beneath climbing areas, and grassy spaces for running
- Provide **both portable and fixed materials**. For example, stationary and movable tunnels. This will encourage children to practice a variety of gross motor skills
- Ensure access to plenty of **natural materials**. For example, have rocks to climb on, hills to rolldown, and a garden to tend
- Ensure access to **drinking water**
- Provide a **shaded or covered area** to protect children from the sun, rain or snow

quick tip

Go outside in the winter or even in light rain! Fresh air—even in winter—benefits children. Licensing rules in Wisconsin define "inclement weather" as stormy or severe weather, including any of the following elements:

(a) Heavy rain

(b) Temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit

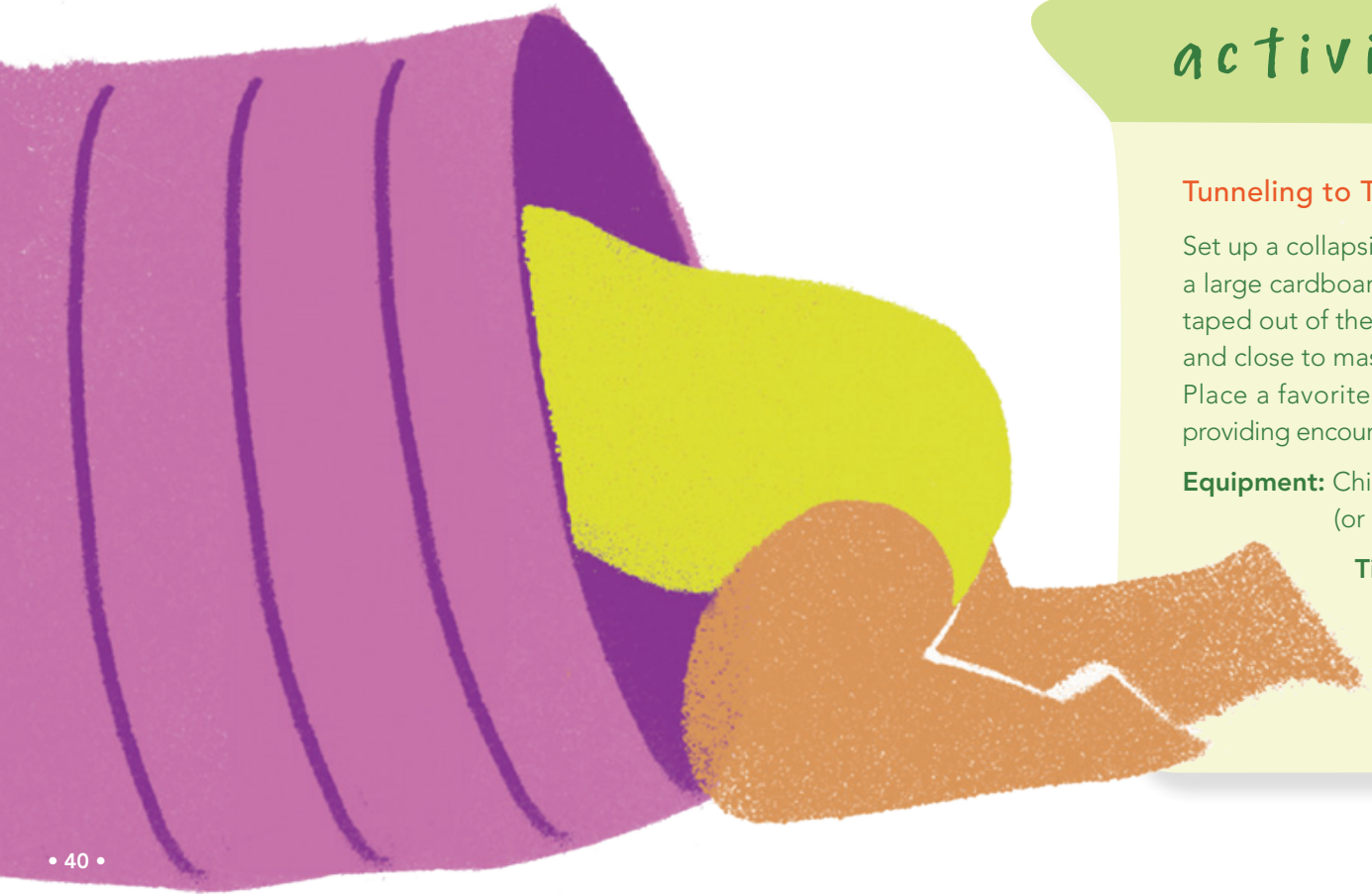
(c) Wind chills of 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children age 2 and above

(d) Wind chills of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children under age 2

infants

Provide space for infants who are mobile and younger infants who are not yet mobile. This provides a safe space for all infants to explore their environments in their own ways.

- Infants who are not yet walking should have space and time to move their arms and legs freely while awake
- Infants crawling and walking should have enough space and supports (e.g. furniture) to help them pull themselves up and balance
- Outfit your outdoor space with appropriately-scaled equipment, including equipment infants can use for support and push-pull toys for walking infants
- Provide a variety of surfaces for all infants to explore
- The outdoor environment should encourage infants to guide their own active exploration
- During tummy time, place attractive materials just out of reach to encourage young infants to practice reaching
- Structure more exploratory activities as infants grow, such as climbing in and out of low cardboard boxes or rolling beach balls for batting and kicking
- Have one-on-one time with all infants to encourage gross motor skills. Be sure the environment provides infants with opportunities to repeatedly practice their developing skills



activity idea

Tunneling to Toys

Set up a collapsible tunnel or create your own using a large cardboard box open on both ends with the flaps taped out of the way. Position an infant who is practicing and close to mastering crawling at one end of the tunnel. Place a favorite toy at the other end and wait there, providing encouragement all the way!

Equipment: Child's favorite toy, a collapsible tunnel (or cardboard box)

Time Frame: 5 to 10 minutes or until interest is lost

Adaptations: Try adjusting the length of the tunnel

toddlers

Make your indoor space for toddlers an area they want to actively explore. Bring materials into the space that promote gross motor skills while providing a variety of sensory experiences.

- Provide plenty of room for toddlers to practice their emerging traveling skills. A small climber with a wooden slide and stairs or a sit-and-spin make great additions to your indoor space. Not only does this equipment encourage exploration, but you can easily disinfect the nonporous surfaces
- Bring in balls that are of different textures, sizes, weights and colors. Balls, bean bags and scarves will encourage toddlers to practice skills such as throwing and tossing
- Introduce movement into other areas of your classroom by bringing in natural objects, such as pinecones and leaves, for your sensory table. You can link these objects to the outdoors by taking an afternoon hike through the neighborhood or to a nearby park

"One of my teachers came to me this week to tell me how wonderful the new climber is in her classroom. She told me that in the two weeks it has been in use, she has noticed a drastic difference in the amount of time she spends on redirecting her 2 ½-year-old children. She said they are all much calmer now that they have a designed active area in her classroom."

– Nancy Karn, Kids Depot, Madison

- Provide time for toddlers to actively explore the outdoor environment on their own
- Make sure there are a variety of surfaces for practicing different gross motor skills. Locate a solid surface for push-and-pull toys and a grassy area for running and hopping
- Provide plenty of size-appropriate materials and promote various gross motor skills, such as low-riding toys that toddlers can push with their feet and climbers that are not too high
- Store materials in a low space easily accessible to toddlers
- If you share an outdoor space with other age groups, try to secure some time for toddlers to explore on their own

quick tip

To ensure children get enough physical activity in the winter months, make getting dressed to go outdoors part of the physical activity. Sing songs or do stretches between putting on mittens. Get creative!

activity idea

Hop and Jump like Betsy

Read the book *Hop, Jump* by Ellen Walsh. The children jump forward in a variety of ways (short, quick jumps, long jumps and high jumps). Next, the children hop using one foot, then the other. Next, the children leap. Finally, the children do all of these movements in any order they choose!

Materials: The book *Hop, Jump*

Time Frame: 10 to 15 minutes

Adaptations: Switch up the order. Adjust the amount of space for children

"Children who did not have the confidence to participate in physical outdoor play enjoy the active indoor centers. The limited number of children and open-ended activities build their confidence, their strength, their activity levels. Teachers have noticed that children are more focused during group time and less classroom management seems to be needed. Indoor active centers allow children to release some of their energy in a positive manner."

– Linda Groom, Hudson Community Children's Center, Hudson

quick tip

How active you can make your dramatic play area? Provide materials for children to be active in their imaginative play. For example, they could pretend to be an aerobics or yoga teacher or act out a story such as the *Three Little Pigs*.

preschoolers

Preschool-age children need time indoors and outdoors for gross motor play. The environment of each of the spaces will influence gross motor outcomes. Take time to plan your environments so they incorporate physical activity and gross motor skills in every way possible.

- Consider art projects that encourage children to draw while kneeling on the ground. It will help them develop their low-level balancing skills on hands and knees
- Add books about physical activity to your reading library. Read books together and give children the opportunity to act out the story
- Bring physical activity to life in the dramatic play area
- Give children options to pretend they are athletes, yoga teachers or fictional characters
- Create a music and movement interest area. Locate the area close to an electrical outlet so music can be played. Provide instruments that make more music with more movement, such as tambourines and maracas
- Place pictures and names of materials on shelves to show children where materials belong
- Provide a variety of equipment outdoors to promote traveling skills, balancing skills and manipulative skills. Incorporate both natural and structural elements to give children a variety of experiences in learning gross motor skills
- Engage children in teacher-led activities indoors and outdoors, and plan challenging games and activities
- Join in activity as much as possible to model skills, such as shooting a basketball or running backward

activity idea

Balance Low, Balance High

As a group, explore balancing at both high and low levels. Challenge each other to balance as steadily as possible for as long as possible. High-level positions include standing on tiptoe, on one flat foot; on tiptoes with both feet and knees bent; on tiptoes with eyes closed; and on one foot on tiptoes. Low-level positions include balancing on two hands and one knee, one hand and two knees, one hand and one knee, bottom only, knees only and one knee only.

Equipment: Ideas for balancing!

Time Frame: 5 to 10 minutes

Adaptations: Offer the different variations to challenge children but also make the activity fun for everyone

– From *Healthy Movement & Active Play*

multi-age groups

Supportive indoor and outdoor environments for multi-age groups should accommodate children of different physical abilities. Promote positive interactions between children of all ages so they continue to learn from one another. Join children in physical activity whenever possible.

inclusion

To ensure that learning experiences are rich and beneficial to all children, including those with developmental disabilities, you may need to adapt the environment to suit individual needs. If a child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), use it as a helpful tool in making meaningful adaptations.

Carefully assess your environment through the eyes of each child in your class, including those with developmental disabilities. Position yourself at the children's height and carefully examine every feature of your environment. This will help you understand how to adapt your environment.

For example, make sure materials and equipment are within reach of all children. Place heavier objects lower to the ground and place lighter physical activity materials, such as scarves or bean bags, on higher shelves.

Think about how space is defined. Is there enough room for all children? If a child uses a walker or wheelchair, can the same traffic patterns in the classrooms be used as other children? Are the boundaries of the space clearly defined? If not, use tape or fixed features in the room to create a well-defined space for movement and physical activity. Remove obstacles both large and small.

Ensure that equipment and materials can be used by all children in your care. If you notice that a child is having trouble using a ball, think of ways to make it easier. Try textured balls. Try balls of different sizes or weights. Let children master rolling, throwing and catching with equipment that is easier to use and can help the child be successful.

Child-provider interactions are just as important for children with special needs. Take the time to make sure activities are understood and are accessible. This may mean positioning yourself so that a child can see your lips moving while you speak or that you close enough to help support their movement. This will create positive association with physical activity.

cultural competency

Creating accessible environments for the children in your care means considering their culture when selecting materials and equipment. Include games and activities that children play at home with their families. Make sure materials such as books and posters represent all children in your care.

How can you show honor and respect for your children's cultural backgrounds? Invite parents to lead physical activities and encourage children to share physical activity materials and books from their homes. This also will help children develop an awareness of diverse cultures while learning new and exciting activities.

engaging families

Take time to communicate how the home or classroom has been structured to promote physical activity. Relate these changes to ways parents could change their home environments to promote physical activity. It can be done in a newsletter, at a parent conference or even during daily drop-offs and pick-ups.

quick tip

Try pulling the plug on your home television and computer! Over time, observe the changes you see in children's behaviors!

engaging communities

Encourage your community to build neighborhood playgrounds to increase access for families. Look at the tools and resources provided by Kaboom!, an organization with a mission to create great play spaces within walking distance of every child in America through the participation and leadership of communities.

ADAPTING EQUIPMENT

- Provide a variety of balls, including different sizes, weights and textures
- Have scoops or EZ catches available
- Use Velcro to adapt materials so they are easier to handle
- Use larger equipment, such as bigger bean bags, or a wider balance beam or board

overview

Resources are essential in promoting physical activity. There are never too many ideas for engaging young children in active learning. These resources may range from physical activity curricula to books and CDs to hands-on physical activity equipment and materials. As you research and review the different resources available, you will find a wide range in quality and quantity. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you select resources.

Physical Activity Curriculum

A movement education and physical activity curriculum will emphasize meaningful content, which includes:

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills designed to enhance child development
- Fitness education and assessment that promotes an understanding of physical well-being
- Development of cognitive concepts related to motor skills and physical activity
- Opportunities to improve social and cooperative skills
- Opportunities to increase the value placed on physical activity for health, enjoyment, self-expression and confidence
- Sequencing to ensure that motor skills, physical activity and assessments are appropriate for age and developmental stage, with basic skills leading to more advanced skills; and that appropriately monitors, reinforces and plans for children's learning

Physical activity curriculum should cover the essential elements of physical development and activity. Will the curriculum:

- Match the philosophy, mission and policy statements you have in place
- Support the inclusion of all children, including ages, skill sets, developmental stages and cultural backgrounds
- Align with the *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards*
- Involve parents
- Provide specific instructions on how to implement the curriculum

Equipment and Materials

When searching for physical activity equipment and materials, you will want to test each item against a few standards. Use the following to chart to help you think about what to get out of your equipment and materials.

Equipment

- What kind of space is required?
  - o size of play area
  - o indoor needs
  - o outdoor needs
- Is the equipment portable or fixed?
- Is the equipment manmade or does it occur in the natural environment?
- How many children does the equipment support?
- What age range is recommended?
- Does the equipment support the skill sets that children are developing?
- Is the equipment safe?
- Does equipment follow licensing regulations?
- Does equipment follow quality improvement recommendations?
- Is the equipment inclusive?
- Is the equipment culturally competent?

Materials

- Do the materials fit with your program philosophy?
- Are the materials developmentally appropriate?
- Do the materials support the skill sets that children are developing?
- Are materials manmade or do they occur in the natural environment?
- Are the materials evidence based?
- Does the child or the teacher make the materials?
- Are materials safe?
- Do materials support individual child outcomes?
- Are the materials sustainable?
- Are the materials culturally competent?
- Are the materials inclusive?

Where can you find Physical Activity Equipment and Materials?

There are plenty of options. When you prepare to invest in physical activity, take time to compare prices, quality and features of equipment, materials and resources. Here are some suppliers and publishers to start with:

Suppliers

- Community Playthings
- Constructive Playthings
- Discount School Supply
- Early Childhood Manufacturers Direct
- Education Station
- Environments, Inc.
- Kaplan
- Lakeshore Learning
- Play with a Purpose
- School Specialty

Publishers

- Brookes Publishing
- Gryphon House
- Highscope Press
- Human Kinetics
- PE Central
- Redleaf Press

inclusion

Here are a few questions to ask when determining whether a resource is inclusive:

1. Is inclusive and child-focused language evident and are specific examples regarding individual outcomes included in the resource?
2. Does the resource include visuals and examples that include children with varying abilities?
3. Does the resource have suggestions for modifications and adaptations for varying levels of ability?
4. Does the resource include tips for leading activities in ways that embrace various learning styles?
5. If the resource suggests or requires equipment, does it provide examples of adaptive equipment or ideas to modify equipment?

cultural competency

Here are a few questions to ask when determining whether a resource is culturally competent:

1. Does the resource include visuals and examples that include children of diverse backgrounds?
2. Is the resource linguistically appropriate, for example is it available in various languages and does it address the linguistic needs of children and families?
3. Does the resource provide music and movement activity ideas that are inclusive of various cultures? This would include songs, instruments and dances that are culturally diverse?
4. Do examples of imaginative games and activities allow children define their own roles according to their culture, rather than using stereotypical roles?
5. Does the resources provide suggestions for culturally appropriate props and materials? For example, if using a hot potato is not culturally appropriate because there is a norm that food should never be used in play, does the resource give an alternative?

tools included

1. **Homemade Physical Activity Materials.** This tool provides instructions for creating homemade materials that promote physical activity in your early care and education program. (Appendix H)
2. **Physical Activity Materials & Equipment Ideas.** This list of materials and equipment will help you provide children with opportunities to develop a variety of gross motor skills. (Appendix I)

engaging families

Create take-home physical activity kits for families. Kits can include fact sheets and activity ideas for parents, as well as resources to be active at home!

engaging communities

Ask your local library to be supportive of active lifestyles for young children through active story times or by devoting sections of the library to physical development and activity for young children.

quick tip

To minimize costs, think about the different ways to access resources, such as Wisconsin's Child Care Information Center (CCIC) and your local libraries. Libraries often have inter-library loan arrangements that can help you find and check out materials your local library may not have on hand.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES FOR EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Curriculum & Books

	AGE GROUP					TOPIC											OTHER	
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School-Age	Multi-Age Groups	Obesity Prevention	PA Best Practices & Benefits	Development	Assessment	Daily Routines	Environment	Business Practices	Cultural Competency	Inclusion	Family Engagement	Community Engagement	Activity Examples	Cost (reflect lowest cost available new or used)
CURRICULUM																		
CATCH Early Childhood Kit			X			X	X	X		X	X			X	X		X	$$$$$
Color Me Healthy			X							X					X		X	$$$
Healthy Habits for Life			X			X	X			X	X				X		X	$
Healthy Movement Active Play			X				X	X		X					X		X	FREE
I Am Moving, I Am Learning		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	$$$$
SPARK Early Childhood Curriculum Manual			X							X							X	$$$$
BOOKS																		
Active Learning Series	X	X	X					X									X	$$
Active Start for Healthy Kids		X	X			X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	$
All About the ECERS-R			X					X		X	X				X		X	$$
All About the ITERS-R	X	X						X		X	X				X		X	$$
Big Body Play	X	X	X				X	X			X	X	X		X		X	$
Designing Preschool Movement Programs			X					X			X			X				$$
Dr. Craft's Active Play!	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X					X		X	$$
Focused Observations	X	X	X						X	X	X				X			$$
Focused Portfolios	X	X	X		X			X	X	X					X			$$
Inclusive Games														X			X	$
Let's Go Outside: Designing the Early Childhood Playground			X	X				X			X							$
Movement Activities for Early Childhood			X					X							X		X	$
Movement in Steady Beat			X	X														$
Moving and Learning Across the Curriculum			X	X														$
Moving and Learning Series		X	X	X				X									X	$$
Moving with a Purpose: Developing Programs for Preschoolers of All Abilities		X	X					X	X	X				X	X		X	$$
Natural Playscapes											X							$$$
Purposeful Play: Early Childhood Movement Activities on a Budget			X				X							X			X	$
Six Simple Ways to Assess Young Children	X	X	X	X				X	X					X	X			$$
The Creative Curriculum®	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X			$$$$
Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards	X	X	X		X			X					X	X	X	X		$

$ = $25 or less $$ = $25 to $49 $$$ = $50 to $99 $$$$ = $100 to $249 $$$$$ = $250+

Check with your local public library of the Child Care Information Center (CCIC) to find resources for loan.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES FOR EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Articles & Websites

	AGE GROUP					TOPIC											OTHER	
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School-Age	Multi-Age Groups	Obesity Prevention	PA Best Practices & Benefits	Development	Assessment	Daily Routines	Environment	Business Practices	Cultural Competency	Inclusion	Family Engagement	Community Engagement	Activity Examples	Cost (reflect lowest cost available new or used)
ARTICLES																		
Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children from Birth to Age 5	X	X	X				X	X	X		X			X				$
Alignment of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards with HighScope's Preschool Child Observation Record (COR), 2nd Edition	X	X	X					X	X									FREE
Alignment of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, 2nd edition with the Content and Objectives of The Creative Curriculum(R) System	X	X	X					X		X	X	X						FREE
Best Practices for Physical Activity: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy	X	X	X	X			X			X		X			X			FREE
Cultural Diversity and Play								X			X	X	X					FREE
How we play – Cultural determinants of play			X				X	X		X	X		X		X	X		FREE
Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs						X	X			X		X						FREE
SEARCH FOR THESE TOPICS ON THE WEB																		
Choosy Kids	X	X	X	X		X	X	X							X	X	X	FREE
Early Childhood Development: A Multicultural Perspective	X	X	X	X				X							X			FREE
Family Education	X	X	X	X				X						X	X		X	FREE
Head Start Body Start Toolbox	X	X	X				X			X	X				X		X	FREE
Keystone Kids Go Active!			X														X	FREE
Let's Move! Child Care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X			X	X	X	FREE
National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning, Early Childhood Knowledge and Learning Center	X	X	X					X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	FREE
National Network for Child Care	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X							FREE
PE Central			X	X						X				X			X	FREE
Physical Activity For Everyone							X							X	X		X	FREE
Physical Activity Space & Equipment Checklist		X	X	X	X			X	X		X						X	FREE

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESOURCES FOR EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Websites (*continued*), Assessment Tools & Materials

	AGE GROUP					TOPIC											OTHER	
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers	School-Age	Multi-Age Groups	Obesity Prevention	PA Best Practices & Benefits	Development	Assessment	Daily Routines	Environment	Business Practices	Cultural Competency	Inclusion	Family Engagement	Community Engagement	Activity Examples	Cost (reflect lowest cost available new or used)
Play Hard Your Way							X								X		X	FREE
Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children			X							X							X	FREE
Tips for Raising Heart Healthy, Active Children	X	X	X	X						X	X				X	X	X	FREE
99 Tips for Family Fitness Fun										X	X				X		X	FREE
ASSESSMENT TOOLS																		
Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, SACERS-R)	X	X	X						X	X	X	X		X	X			$
HighScope-COR	X	X	X						X	X	X							$$$$
Model Work Standards									X			X	X					$
Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC)			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			FREE
Preschool Outdoor Environment Measurement Scale (POEMS)			X			X	X		X		X				X	X	X	$
Teaching Strategies GOLD™	X	X	X					X	X									$$$$
The Portage Project	X	X	X					X	X									$$$$
Wisconsin Department of Health Services Worksite Wellness Resource Kit									X			X				X		FREE
MATERIALS																		
Be Choosy, Be Healthy™ Activity Kit			X			X		X		X	X						X	$$$$$
All Time Favorite Dances			X	X	X			X		X	X						X	$
Bean Bag Activities and Coordination Skills			X		X			X		X	X						X	$
Dr. Jean Feldman		X	X		X			X		X	X						X	$
Greg and Steve		X	X		X			X		X	X						X	$
Kimbo Educational Music and Movement CDs and DVDs for Children		X	X		X			X		X	X						X	$
The Learning Station		X	X		X			X		X	X						X	$

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overview

Business Practices are essential for success in promoting physical activity in early care and education settings. Program policies and worksite wellness express a program's commitment to physical activity and its overarching values and culture. If managed well, physical activity practices can result in a healthier environment for children in care and may improve children's physical activity behaviors.

what is a policy?

A policy is a rule to guide and determine decisions. Every early care and education (ECE) program should prepare its own set of physical activity policies with input from parents and staff.

Policies can help to:

- Create consistent messages for staff, parents and licensing officials explaining and reinforcing physical activity habits
- Provide clear guidelines for staff members and families
- Provide a basis for evaluation of your program and identify areas that may need improvement
- Educate new staff and parents on current nutrition and physical activity practices
- Guide decisions and choices your program makes every day
- Communicate the program's benefits to potential families
- Prevent problems and provide solutions

Policies may be included in:

- Parent handbook
- Personnel handbook or Standard Operating Procedures
- Fliers or newsletters
- Displayed around the center

Talk to staff and parents when developing policies. This important step assures that those involved understand their role and are prepared to put the policies into action. Make sure parents are aware of your physical activity policies when enrolling their children in your facility. Continually review your policies to provide ongoing quality care.

policy development

1. Look at your program's current policies and identify areas in need of improvement.
2. Refer to the physical activity recommendations and sample policies in this guide
3. Consult with those affected by the policy (staff members, parents) by conducting surveys, questionnaires, or by hosting meetings or discussions
4. Write the policies and have another staff member or parent review them
5. Set dates for when the policies will be implemented
6. Determine how staff members and parents will be made aware of the new policies (letter to staff/parents, revised handbook pages, newsletter article, meetings, etc.)

7. Train staff and/or parents on new policies
8. Assess effectiveness of policy
   a. Decide how you will know if the policy is effective
   b. Periodically review and re-evaluate

What to include in a physical activity policy

- A statement describing what is covered in the policy
- Goals or purpose of the policy
- Reasons for the policy

The policies in this guide are intended to be examples of what may be used in your program. They may be used as they are written or you may make changes to meet the needs of your program.

types of policies

A program that chooses to make physical activity a priority should include evidence-based policies and personnel practices. You will find general concepts related to physical activity in program and personnel policies below. For more specific examples, see the specific age groups and the Sample Policies Tool.

Program Policies for your Parent Handbook:

A. Education
   - Set a daily amount of time for active play
   - Set a required number of times children play outdoors each day
   - Limit the amount of screen time
   - Add policies that demonstrate how the child care environment supports physical activity
   - Add policies that demonstrate how staff support physical activity

B. Child guidance
   - Add physical activity to child guidance so that just as in meals, snacks and naps, physical activity is not withheld or forced for misbehavior
   - Parent involvement
   - Consider offering physical activity education or events to involve parents on a yearly basis, or more frequently
   - Include gross motor development and physical activity as a standard part of daily communications with parents

Personnel Policies for your Employee Handbook:

A. Dress code
   - Ensure staff members wear clothing and footwear that allow them to be active with children

B. Continuing education
   - Include physical development and physical activity as a mandatory part of staff continuing education hours
   - Include policies that ensure the program will provide staff with physical activity and development training

C. Job responsibilities or duties
   - Ensure staff members understand that their job entails being physically active with children and modeling gross motor skills, as well as using developmentally-appropriate language to talk about physical development and physical activity

"Parents are pleased with the comments from their children about exercising and 'happy' hearts. One mother said that even though they try to be active and eat healthy, Active Early has had an influence that they could not have done alone. Her son is generalizing healthy habits by asking about healthy foods and checking his heart rate. Another mother said we are helping to support the ground work for a healthy adult lifestyle."

– Linda Groom, Hudson Community Children's Center, Hudson

quick tip

Policies set the stage for best practices. But remember that a policy is only as good as its implementation!

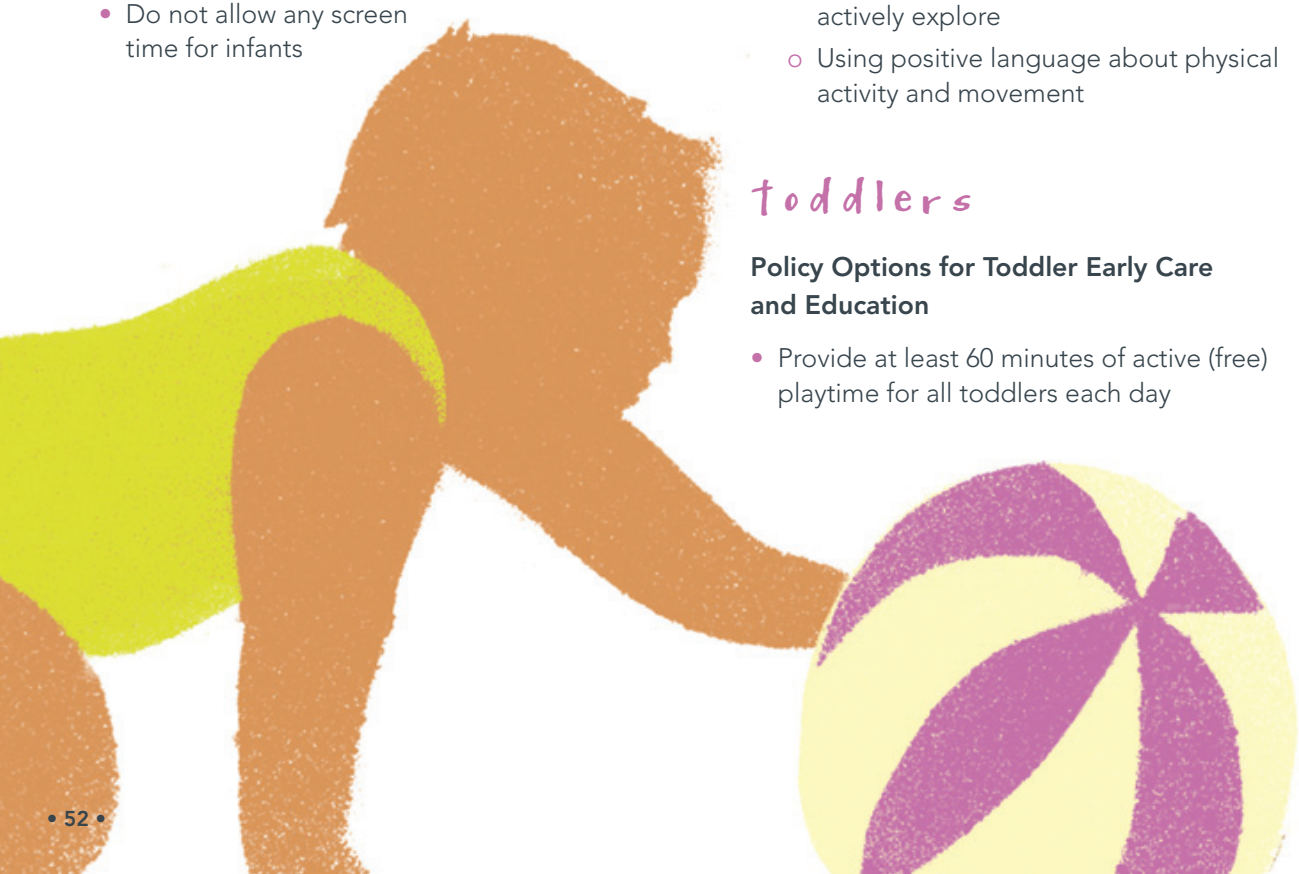
infants

Policy Options for Infant Early Care & Education

- Provide supervised tummy time for all infants several times each day
- Provide infants with opportunities to move around within the classroom throughout the day, excluding eating and sleeping times
- Provide outdoor active play for all infants for at least 60 minutes each day, except in cases of inclement weather
- Provide infants with opportunities for outdoor exploration, including rolling, scooting, crawling and walking
- Separate infant active playtime from older children
- Place infants in a bouncy seat, swing, or play pen no more than 15 minutes at a time
- Do not allow any screen time for infants
- Engage infants to encourage development of gross motor skills (reaching, sitting, standing, crawling or walking)
- Talk with infants about their activities and name the movements
- Offer parents active play education that is age-appropriate for infants
- Give parents daily written updates on their child's gross motor skills and physical activity

Options for Personnel Policies & Job Description Elements for Infant Teachers

- Offer training opportunities on promoting infant movement at least twice a year
- Job responsibilities or duties include:
  - Engaging infants in active playtime and structuring opportunities for infants to actively explore
  - Using positive language about physical activity and movement



toddlers

Policy Options for Toddler Early Care and Education

- Provide at least 60 minutes of active (free) playtime for all toddlers each day
- Separate toddler outdoor active playtime from older children
- Provide more than 60 minutes of outdoor active playtime for all toddlers each day, except in cases of inclement weather
- Do not keep toddlers seated for more than 30 minutes at a time
- Do not allow screen time for toddlers
- Set aside indoor space for active play for all toddlers
- Encourage toddlers to dance, clap and move around
- Join in active play and make positive statements about physical activity during toddlers' active (free) playtime
- Talk with toddlers about their activities and name the movements
- Offer parents active play education that is age-appropriate for their toddlers
- Give parents daily written updates on their child's gross motor skills and physical activity

Options for Personnel Policies and Job Description Elements for Toddler Teachers

- Offer training opportunities on promoting toddler movement at least twice a year
- Job responsibilities or duties include:
  - Engaging toddlers in teacher-led activities, modeling gross motor skills and structuring opportunities for free active play
  - Using and teaching positive language regarding physical activity and movement.

preschoolers

Policy Options for Preschooler Early Care and Education

- Provide at least 120 minutes of daily active playtime for all preschool-age children
- Provide teacher-led physical activity to all preschool-age children at least twice a day
- Provide outdoor active playtime for all preschool-age children at least twice a day
- Do not withhold active playtime as a punishment for misbehavior
- Do not keep preschool-age children seated for more than 30 minutes at a time, excluding nap and meal times
- Limit screen time to 30 minutes per week for preschool-age children. Any screen time should be educational or promote physical activity. (Screen time could be eliminated for this age group, too!)
- Encourage preschool-age children to be active during active free playtime and join children in active play
- Support physical activity in preschool classrooms by displaying posters, pictures and books
- Offer physical activity education through a standardized curriculum at least once weekly
- Offer parents active play education that is age-appropriate for preschoolers
- Give parents frequent updates on their child's gross motor skills and physical activity

Options for Personnel Policies & Job Description Elements for Preschool Teachers

- Offer training opportunities on promoting preschool movement at least twice a year
- ob responsibilities or duties include:
- Engaging preschoolers in teacher-led activities, modeling gross motor skills and structuring opportunities for free active play
  - Using and teaching positive language regarding physical activity and movement

multi-age groups

Review the program and personnel policies for each of the age groups above. You will see differences in policies that reflect best practices for each age group. However, you will also see many similarities that make it possible for policies to fit a multi-age group of children. It may take some creativity in intertwining the best practices for each age group, but here are some examples to get you going:

Policy Options for Family Child Care or Multi-Age Early Care and Education

- Engage all children in age-appropriate amounts of active playtime each day
- Encourage the development of gross motor skills by engaging and joining children in active play
- Provide at least 60 minutes of outdoor active playtime for all children, except in cases of inclement weather
- Make indoor space available for active play for all children
- Do not allow screen time
- Use healthy language and teach children about physical activity through program materials, such as books, posters, toys and curricula, as appropriate
- Offer age-appropriate active play education to parents
- Give parents frequent updates on each child's gross motor skills development and physical activity

Options for Personnel Policies & Job Description Elements for Family Providers or Teachers of Multi-age Groups

- Offer training opportunities on promoting physical activity and movement for all ages of children at least twice a year
- Job responsibilities or duties include:
  - Engaging children of all ages in teacher-led activities, modeling gross motor skills and structuring opportunities for free active play
  - Using and teaching positive language regarding physical activity and movement

staff & worksite wellness

What is Worksite Wellness?

Worksite wellness refers to education and activities that a worksite uses to promote healthy lifestyles to employees and their families. Examples of wellness programming include health education, subsidized fitness club memberships, internal policies geared toward health promotion, and any other activities or policy and environment changes that benefit health. For the purposes of these Action Tools, we will focus on how to promote physical activity as a primary part of worksite wellness.

Why is it important?

Worksite wellness emphasizes the health of employees. There are many benefits:

- Controlled costs
- Increased productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved morale
- Enhanced image for the organization

Here are the 5 basic steps in getting your worksite wellness program started

Worksite Wellness Resource Kit

Download the resources you'll need at:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/sites/worksitekit.htm

- Worksite Wellness Checklist
- Worksite Assessment Checklist

1. Assess your worksite

Use the Worksite Assessment Checklist and Worksite Wellness Survey to see where your program stands and what changes staff would like to see.

2. Consider your options

Use the Worksite Assessment Checklist to look at all options for changes at the individual level, the environmental or organizational level and the policy level.

3. Develop your program

Use your assessments to choose realistic options that will be valued by staff. As you choose options to promote wellness, think strategically about which options will most benefit staff and motivate all participants.

When analyzing an option, be sure to ask yourself:

- How important is it?
- How much will it cost to implement?
- How much time and effort will be needed to implement?
- How many staff will be affected?
- How well does it match the staff's interests and opinions?

When creating your plan, be specific and include:

- Overall measurable goals and objectives of the wellness program
- Specific strategies to implement
- Chosen activities
- Staff, resources and materials needed
- Time frame
- Evaluation Plan

4. Sustain the program

Maintain staff interest and motivation by keeping the program new and fresh, setting goals, using teams or buddy systems to accomplish goals, and communicating effectively. Remember that the following factors may help or hinder staff participation:

- Time
- Access
- Knowledge
- Cost

5. Evaluate

Make sure you track the effects of the program. If certain initiatives don't work, tweak them. If things are working, keep doing them!

inclusion

Write your policies to reflect inclusive practices. Physical activity can be adapted for anyone and everyone, so make sure your policies show that. Use the phrases "all children" or "regardless of ability." Include personnel policies that ensure staff members receive training in inclusive practices as they relate to physical development and physical activity. Ensure that job descriptions require staff to practice inclusion in their classrooms.

cultural competency

Be sure your business practices are respectful and competent of culture. Your policies should not only guard against discrimination in any form but also embrace the culture of the children and families in your program.

Shape your policies relating to physical activity and gross motor development in a way that demonstrates your program's commitment to understanding the culture of every family. Acknowledge of each family should be visible in the program's environment, daily routines and resources. Strive to invite families to share their culture and find ways to integrate the understanding you gain. To ensure that you have adequately addressed cultural competency in your policies, it is helpful to have an overarching philosophy and statement regarding cultural competence. Use specific language when outlining each of the policies, including those pertaining to physical activity.

Make this commitment to providing culturally competent early care and education explicit in your program's policies.

tools included

Child Care Physical Activity Policies. These sample policies outline best practices and cover topics such time, environment, training and education as each relates to physical activity. (Appendix B)

engaging families

Share your policies with current and prospective families in your program. Emphasize that physical activity has been integrated into every part of a child's day to encourage learning.

engaging communities

Contact your local YMCA and other community recreational centers to ask about membership discounts to early care and education providers in your area.

"The children love to be active. Our program numbers continue to grow. Increasingly we have surveyed families about physical activity, and it continues to be a key factor in why people are involved in our centers and programs."

– Jennie Melde,
La Crosse Family YMCA,
La Crosse

APPENDICES >

Let's Move! Child Care Checklist

Recommendations for Physical Activity for Preschoolers

1) Preschool children should receive be offered at least 120 minutes of active time each day

Active Play Time Provisions				
A. Active play time (indoor and outdoor) is provided to all preschool children, including children with special needs:	☐ 45 minutes or less each day	☐ 46-90 minutes each day	☐ 91-120 minutes each day	☐ More than 120 minutes each day
B. In preschool classrooms, structured (or teacher-led) activities are provided to all children, including children with special needs:	☐ 1 time per week or less	☐ 2-4 times per week	☐ 1 time per day	☐ 2 or more times per day
C. Outdoor active play time is provided to all preschool children, including children with special needs:	☐ 1 time a day for 30 minutes or less	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 30-45 minutes	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 45-60 minutes or more	☐ 2 or more times each day for a total of 60 minutes or more
D. During a typical day, excluding naps and meals, preschool children are expected to remain seated:	☐ More than 30 minutes at a time, or 15-30 minutes on 3 or more occasions	☐ 15-30 minutes on 2 occasions	☐ 15-30 minutes but only 1 occasion	☐ No more than 15 minutes at a time
Environment				
A. Indoor gross motor play area for preschool children, including those with special needs, consists of:	☐ Space only suitable for quiet play	☐ Space for limited movement (jumping and rolling)	☐ Ample space for some active play (jumping, rolling, and skipping)	☐ Space for all activities, including running
B. Outdoor play areas for preschool children including those with special needs, consists of:	☐ 1-2 different play areas (e.g., sandbox, swing set) but no open space for running or track/path for wheeled toys	☐ 2-3 different play areas, but limited space for running and use of wheeled toys	☐ Multiple play areas, and either an open space for running or a track/path for wheeled toys	☐ Multiple play areas, open space for running, and a track/path for wheeled toys
C. Portable play equipment (e.g., wheel toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) for preschool children consists of:	☐ Limited variety and children must take turns	☐ Some variety but children must take turns	☐ Good variety both indoors and outdoors but children must take turns	☐ Lots of variety both indoors and outdoors for children to use at the same time

Provider Behaviors				
A. In preschool classrooms, active play time is:	☐ Often withheld for misbehavior	☐ Sometimes withheld for misbehavior	☐ Never withheld for misbehavior	☐ Never withheld for misbehavior and we have a written policy
B. During preschool children's active play time, providers:	☐ Supervise play only (mostly sit or stand)	☐ Sometimes encourage children to be active	☐ Sometimes encourage children to be active and join children in active play	☐ Often encourage children to be active and join children in active play
Education				
A. Training opportunities in physical activity for preschool children (not including playground safety) are offered to providers:	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
B. Parents of preschool children are offered physical activity education (e.g., special programs, newsletters, information sheets):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
Policy				
A. At our child care facility, a policy on physical activity for preschool children addressing provider behaviors, education, and active play opportunities:	☐ Does not exist	☐ Is generally followed but is not written	☐ Is written, generally followed, and sometimes shared with parents	☐ Is written, available, followed, and always shared with parents

The Let's Move! Child Care Checklist is based on the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. Checklist development was led by Dr. Dianne S. Ward, with the assistance of her research team, including Temitope Erinosho, Christina McWilliams, Amber Vaughn, Chris Ford, and Phil Hanson; and in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and expert reviewers, including (in alphabetical order) the Carolina Global Breast Feeding Institute, Marsha Dowda, Sybille Kranz, Sara Switzer, Stewart Trost, and Heather Wasser.

Recommendations for Infant/Toddler Physical Activity

1) Toddlers should be offered at least 60 minutes of active time each day

Active Play Time Provisions				
A. Short supervised periods of tummy time are provided for all infants, including those with special needs:	☐ 45 minutes or less each day	☐ 46-90 minutes each day	☐ 91-120 minutes each day	☐ More than 120 minutes each day
B. Use of swings, infants seats (e.g., exersaucers, car seats, molded seats) is limited to 15 minutes (or less):	☐ 1 time per week or less	☐ 2-4 times per week	☐ 1 time per day	☐ 2 or more times per day
C. Infants, including those with special needs, are taken outside:	☐ 1 time a day for 30 minutes or less	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 30-45 minutes	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 45-60 minutes or more	☐ 2 or more times each day for a total of 60 minutes or more
D. When outdoors, infants are provided opportunities for exploration (e.g., rolling, scooting, crawling, walking):	☐ More than 30 minutes at a time, or 15-30 minutes on 3 or more occasions	☐ 15-30 minutes on 2 occasions	☐ 15-30 minutes but only 1 occasion	☐ No more than 15 minutes at a time
E. Active play time (indoor and outdoor) is provided to all *toddlers*, including children with special needs:	☐ 15-30 minutes each day	☐ 31-45 minutes each day	☐ 46-60 minutes each day	☐ 60-90 minutes each day
F. Outdoor active play time is provided to all *toddlers*, including children with special needs:	☐ 1 time a day for 30 minutes or less	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 30-45 minutes	☐ 1 or more times a day for a total of 45-60 minutes or more	☐ 2 or more times each day for a total of 60 minutes or more
Environment				
A. For infants, including those with special needs, indoor and outdoor play spaces consist of:	☐ Space only suitable for quiet play	☐ Space is available, but allows for only limited types of activities	☐ Areas separate from preschoolers that provides space for exploration and skill building	☐ Areas separate from preschooler with space available for all types of activities
B. Play equipment for infants (small push toys, balls, ramps for crawling, outdoor pad or blanket) are age appropriate and consist of:	☐ Limited variety and children must take turns	☐ Some variety but children must take turns	☐ Good variety both indoors and outdoors but children must take turns	☐ Lots of variety both indoors and outdoors for children to use at the same time

C. For *toddlers*, including those with special needs, indoor and outdoor play spaces consist of:	☐ Space only suitable for quiet play	☐ Space is available, but allows for only limited types of activities	☐ Areas separate from preschoolers that provides space for exploration and skill building	☐ Areas separate from preschooler with space available for all types of activities
D. For *toddlers*, portable play equipment (e.g., wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) are ageappropriate and consist of:	☐ Limited variety and children must take turns	☐ Some variety but children must take turns	☐ Good variety both indoors and outdoors but children must take turns	☐ Lots of variety both indoors and outdoors for children to use at the same time
Provider Behaviors				
A. Providers engage with infants to encourage development of gross motor skills (e.g., reaching, sitting, standing, crawling, walking):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Some of the time	☐ Most of the time	☐ All of the time
B. During toddlers' active play time, staff:	☐ Supervise play only (mostly sit or stand)	☐ Sometimes encourage children to be active	☐ Sometimes encourage children to be active and join children in active play	☐ Often encourage children to be active and join children in active play
Education				
A. Providers are provided training opportunities in physical activity for infants and toddlers (not including playground safety):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
B. Parents of infants and toddlers are offered physical activity education (e.g., special programs,newsletters, information sheets):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
Policy				
A. At our child care facility, a policy on physical activity for infant and toddlers addressing provider behaviors, education, and active play opportunities:	☐ Does not exist	☐ Is generally followed but is not written	☐ Is written, generally followed, and sometimes shared with parents	☐ Is written, available, followed, and always shared with parents

The Let's Move! Child Care Checklist is based on the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. Checklist development was led by Dr. Dianne S. Ward, with the assistance of her research team, including Temitope Erinosho, Christina McWilliams, Amber Vaughn, Chris Ford, and Phil Hanson; and in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and expert reviewers, including (in alphabetical order) the Carolina Global Breast Feeding Institute, Marsha Dowda, Sybille Kranz, Sara Switzer, Stewart Trost, and Heather Wasser.

Recommendations for Screen Time for Preschoolers

1) Screen time should be limited to 30 minutes a week for preschool children in child care
2) Screen time at home for preschool children should be limited to 1-2 hours of quality viewing

Screen Time Provisions				
A. In preschool classrooms, televisions are:	☐ Located in every classroom	☐ Located in most classrooms	☐ Located in some classrooms	☐ Stored outside of classrooms, except for occasional use
B. For preschool children, the amount of screen time allowed is:	☐ More than 2 hours per week of total screen time at child care.	☐ 2 hours or less per week of total screen time at child care.	☐ 1 hour or less per week for total screen time at child care.	☐ 30 minutes per week or less for total screen time at child care.
C. For preschool children, television/DVD viewing includes:	☐ All types of programming and videos; with limited coordination with the curriculum	☐ Educational and some commercial programming and videos, some of which are integrated with the curriculum	☐ Mostly educational, age-appropriate programming and videos, many of which are integrated with the curriculum	☐ Only commercial-free, age-appropriate, educational programming that is integrated with the curriculum
D. For preschool children, television/DVD viewing during meals or snack time occurs:	☐ All of the time	☐ Most of the time	☐ Some of the time	☐ Rarely or never
E. Television/video viewing is used as a reward in preschool children's classrooms:	☐ All of the time	☐ Most of the time	☐ Some of the time	☐ Rarely or never
F. Among preschool children, computers are:	☐ Available for use all of the time, and time allowed per child is unlimited	☐ Available several times during the day, and each child is allowed between 30 and 45 minutes per day	☐ Available only during a set time of day, and each child is allowed between 15 and 30 minutes per day	☐ Available only during a set time of day, and each child is limited to 15 minutes per day
Provider Behaviors				
A. During screen time activities with preschool children, providers supervise and watch with the children:	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Some of the time	☐ Most of the time	☐ All of the time

Education				
A. Providers are offered training opportunities on screen time reduction and/or media literacy for preschool children:	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
B. Parents of preschool children are offered screen time reduction and/or media literacy education (e.g., special programs, newsletters, or information sheets):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
Policy				
A. At our child care facility, a written policy on screen time in preschool classrooms that includes provider behaviors, education, and screen time use:	☐ Does not exist	☐ Is generally followed but is not written	☐ Is written, generally followed, and sometimes shared with parents	☐ Is written, available, followed, and always shared with parents

Recommendations for Screen Time for Infants and Toddlers

1) No screen time for 0-2 year olds

Screen Time Provisions				
A. Toddlers and infants are allowed to watch television/videos:	☐ 1 or more times each day	☐ 2-4 times per week	☐ 1 time per week or less	☐ Never
Education				
A. Training opportunities on screen time reduction and/or media literacy for infants and toddlers are offered to providers:	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
B. Parents of infants and toddlers are offered screen time reduction and/or media literacy (e.g., special programs, newsletters, or information sheets):	☐ Rarely or never	☐ Less than 1 time per year	☐ 1 time per year	☐ 2 times per year or more
Media Policy				
A. At our child care facility, a written policy on screen time for infants and toddlers that includes provider behaviors, education, and screen time use:	☐ Does not exist	☐ Is generally followed but is not written	☐ Is written, generally followed, and sometimes shared with parents	☐ Is written, available, followed, and always shared with parents

The Let's Move! Child Care Checklist is based on the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. Checklist development was led by Dr. Dianne S. Ward, with the assistance of her research team, including Temitope Erinosho, Christina McWilliams, Amber Vaughn, Chris Ford, and Phil Hanson; and in consultation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and expert reviewers, including (in alphabetical order) the Carolina Global Breast Feeding Institute, Marsha Dowda, Sybille Kranz, Sara Switzer, Stewart Trost, and Heather Wasser.

Child care physical activity policies

In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition and physical activity environment for the children in our facility, we have adopted the following policies. The administration and staff appreciate support from parents in promoting the health of our children.

Active Play and Inactive Time

- ❍ We provide at least 120 minutes of active playtime to all preschool-age children each day
- ❍ We provide toddlers with at least 90 minutes of physical activity each day, with at least 30 minutes of teacher-led activity
- ❍ We provide infants with tummy time two to three times a day while the child is awake
- ❍ We provide all children with opportunities for outdoor play two or more times per day
- ❍ We limit the use of confining equipment, such as swings and bouncy chairs, in order to support infant development
- ❍ We ensure that preschool-age children are rarely seated for periods of more than 30 minutes
- ❍ We do not withhold active playtime for children who misbehave. Instead, we provide additional active playtime for good behavior
- ❍ We rarely show television or videos. Children under age 2 are not allowed screen time

Play Environment

- ❍ We provide fixed play equipment (tunnels, climbing and balancing equipment) that is extensive and varied for all children
- ❍ We provide portable play equipment (wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) that is diverse and available for children to use at the same time
- ❍ We make outdoor portable play equipment freely available to all children all of the time
- ❍ Outdoor play space includes an open, grassy area and a track/path for wheeled toys
- ❍ Indoor play space is available for all activities, including running, when weather does not permit outdoor play
- ❍ Indoor play space that is large, open and safe is available for infants to move freely and be active
- ❍ Safe indoor equipment is accessible in classrooms at all times (soft balls, push-pull toys, low-carpeted blocks for climbing, tunnels)

Supporting Physical Activity

- ❍ Our staff provides planned daily physical activity for infants that is safe, engaging and appropriate and responds promptly to infant cues of frustration, boredom or fatigue
- ❍ Our staff often encourages children to be active and often join others in active play, both indoors and outdoors
- ❍ We provide visible support for physical activity in classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures and displayed books
- ❍ We provide fun and engaging physical activity daily in our lesson plans
- ❍ We re-direct children to safe physical activities and/or involve them in discussion about safety concerns
- ❍ We ask that all children are dressed for physical activity. Restrictive shoes are not allowed

Physical Activity Education

- ❍ We provide training opportunities for staff on physical activity (other than playground safety) two times a year or more
- ❍ We provide teacher-directed physical activity education for children, through a standardized curriculum, once a week or more
- ❍ We offer physical activity education to parents twice a year or more

Active Early quality improvement plan

Directions: Using the results of the self-assessment, prioritize the quality improvement area(s) to be completed within the plan. Not all physical activity areas need to be addressed immediately. Start with three to five aims/outcomes to work on at a time. More aims/outcomes can be overwhelming and too few will limit the success you experience in your program. Be sure to write your goals in a way that demonstrates how they are inclusive and culturally competent.

Original QIP Date: Date of QIP Review:

Quality Improve-ment Area	Aim/ Desired Outcome	Barriers	Task(s)	Responsible Party	Resources in-hand/ Resources Needed	Measurement	Timeline/ Benchmarks	Test of Plan
								Worth doing? *Y or N* Measurable? *Y or N* Outcomes? *Y or N* Inclusive? *Y or N* Culturally Competent? *Y or N*
								Worth doing? *Y or N* Measurable? *Y or N* Outcomes? *Y or N* Inclusive? *Y or N* Culturally Competent? *Y or N*
								Worth doing? *Y or N* Measurable? *Y or N* Outcomes? *Y or N* Inclusive? *Y or N* Culturally Competent? *Y or N*
								Worth doing? *Y or N* Measurable? *Y or N* Outcomes? *Y or N* Inclusive? *Y or N* Culturally Competent? *Y or N*

Language development word lists

Movement Awareness: What the Body Does

	TERM	MEANING
STABILITY MOVEMENTS	Swaying	Moving the top of your body from side to side without moving your feet
	Swinging	Moving back and forth with the lower part of your body
	Hanging	Holding on to or fastening to something above and leaving the bottom of your body free to move
	Turning	Changing the direction of your body
	Twisting	Turning one part of your body in one direction while leaving the other part of your body in the same position
	Balancing	Keeping your body steady, so you do not fall over
	Curling	Moving your body parts in wards, such as bringing your knees to your chest
	Standing	Being on your feet with your body upright, but without moving your feet
	Sitting	Resting on your bottom
	Squatting	Bending your knees and lowering your body
	Kneeling	Bending your legs and putting your knees on the ground
	Pulling	Moving something forward or toward you
	Pushing	Pressing on or against something
	Stretching	Spreading out your arms, legs or body and reaching as far as you can with each
	Bending	Moving at your joints, such as your waist, elbow or knee
	Shaking	Moving quickly back and forth or side to side
	Dodging	Avoiding something by moving quickly out of the way
	Landing	Coming down from the air
	Transferring Body Weight	Moving from one part of your body to another; balancing on one foot and then the other or moving from your hands to your feet

	TERM	MEANING
TRAINING MOVEMENTS	Walking	Moving along by placing one foot on the ground before lifting the other
	Climbing	Using hands and feet to move upwards on an object
	Crawling	Moving forward on your hands and knees
	Marching	Moving like you are walking, but lifting your knees higher
	Gliding	Moving smoothly and easily, as in a skating motion
	Running	Moving along by quickly placing one foot in front of the other
	Jumping	Pushing off with two feet and landing on two feet
	Hopping	Pushing off on one foot and landing on the same foot
	Leaping	Jumping from one foot and landing on the other foot
	Galloping	Moving forward quickly with both feet leaving the ground at the same time
	Sliding	Moving sideways, taking a step with one foot and then bringing the other foot from behind up next to it
	Skipping	Moving forward with a step and a hop on one foot and then a step and a hop on the other foot
MANIPULATING OBJECTS WITH MOVEMENTS	Throwing	Sending something through the air by pulling your hand back, bringing your arm forward and releasing the object as you pull your arm to the front
	Underhand throwing	Sending something through the air by pulling your hand back under your shoulder, bringing your arm forward under your shoulder and releasing the object as you pull your arm to the front
	Overhand throw-ing	Sending something through the air by pulling your hand back over your shoulder, bringing your arm forward over your shoulder and releasing the object as you pull your arm to the front
	Rolling	Moving something across the ground by pulling it back, pushing it forward and releasing it
	Catching	Grabbing hold of something moving through the air
	Kicking	Moving something forward by hitting it with your foot
	Punting	Dropping an object, such as a ball, from your hands and kicking it before it hits the ground
	Trapping	Stopping an object, such as a ball, with your foot
	Striking	To hit an object, such as a ball, away from the body with a hand or an object such as a bat or racket
	Volleying	To hit an object before it hits the ground
	Dribbling	To hit an object, such as a ball, downwards, so it hits the ground and bounces back up to your hand

Space Awareness: Where the Body Moves

Direction

Up	Left	Sideways
Down	Forward	Clockwise
Right	Backward	Counterclockwise

Levels

Low	High	Middle

Pathways

Straight	Curved	Zigzag

Extensions

Large	Small	Far	Near

Effort Awareness: How the Body Moves

Time & Speed

Slow	Speeding up	Quick
Medium	Slowing down	Sustained
Fast	Sudden	

Rhythm

Beats (Regular Rhythm)	Patterns (Repeated Order)	Cadence (Rhythmic Pattern)

Sound

Loud	Quiet	Soft

Force & Muscle Tension

Degree of:

Light	Strong	Heavy
Medium	Weak	

Creating:

Starting	Sustained	Explosive

Absorbing:

Stopping	Receiving

Controlling Effort

Weight Transfer:

Rocking	Rolling	Flight	Stepping

Dimensions:

Single Movement	Combination of Movements	Transitions

Relational Awareness: Awareness of Self, Others and Objects

Body Parts

Head	Foot	Shoulder
Hand	Arms	Neck
Ears	Fingers	Stomach
Eyes	Wrist	Back
Nose	Elbow	Bottom
Leg	Ankles	Hips
Knee	Toes	Chest

Shapes

Big	Narrow	Circle
Small	Thin	Rectangle
Curved	Twisted	Symmetrical
Straight	Triangle	Nonsymmetrical
Wide	Square	

Roles

Leading	Taking Turns	Between Groups
Following	Partner	Unison
Mirroring	Solo	Contrast
Matching	Groups	

Association

Letters	Colors	Pretense
Numbers	Hand Signs	

Locations

Near to	In front	Apart
Far from	Behind	Surrounding
Around	Meeting	Alongside
Through	Parting	Over
Facing	In	Under
Side by Side	Out	Top
On	Together	Bottom
Off		

Stanley, Shelia (Ed.). (1977). Physical education: A movement orientation. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Full day sample schedules: group child care & family child care

Full Day Sample Schedule: Group Child Care		
Arrival, preparation & choice activities	30 minutes (before and while children arrive)	Music & Movement interest area available
Group meeting	20 minutes	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Integrated into Content
Choice time	60 minutes	Music & Movement Interest area available
Cleanup, handwashing and snack	20 minutes	Activity related to transition
Small groups	20 minutes	Integration of Physical Activity into studies (i.e. math, literacy)
Outdoor choice time	40 minutes	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Included
Read-aloud	15 minutes	Acting out Story
Lunch & Meaningful Conversation	40 minutes	
Rest and quiet activities	45 minutes	
Outdoor choice time	30 minutes	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Included
Read-aloud	15 minutes	Acting out Story
Limited choices and small groups	30 minutes	Movement Interest Area available and/or Integration of Physical Activity into studies (i.e. math, literacy)
Group meeting and departures	20 minutes	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Integrated into Content
Teacher planning time		Intentionally include physical activity in tomorrow's plan

Full Day Sample Schedule: Family Child Care		
Early morning and arrival		
Morning circle	15 minutes	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Integrated into Content
Morning choice time and snack	1 hour	Music & Movement Interest area available
Outdoor play	1 hour	Teacher-Led Physical Activity Included
Transition indoors and to group read-aloud time	1/2 hour	Activity related to transition and acting out Story
Lunch & Meaningful Conversation	30-45 minutes	
Nap time and afternoon snack	1-2 hours	
Afternoon choice time and outdoor play	2 hours	Music & Movement Interest area available & Teacher-Led Physical Activity Included Outdoors
Transition and afternoon meeting	1/2 hour	Activity related to transition & Teacher-Led Physical Activity Integrated into Content
End of the day		Physical Activity Options available (i.e. Music & Movement Interest Area)

Infant and toddler schedule

List the child's name and times for care-giving routines, such as **physical activity**, sleeping, eating, etc. Using this information for the group, determine the following: **outdoor times**, planning times and cleaning times. **Highlight times for physical activity and outdoor play**. Think about times when more help may be needed to be prepared ahead of time.

Time	Child: *Infant*	Child: *Toddler*	Child:	Child:
7:00am	Arrives			
7:30am	Eat			
8:00am	Tummy Time			
8:30am	Free Movement			
9:00am	Free Movement	Arrives		
9:30am	Naptime	Group Time		
10:00am	Naptime	Snack		
10:30am	Eat	Choice Time		
11:00am	Outdoor Time	Outdoor Time		
11:30am	Engaged PA	Meal Time		
12:00pm	Free Movement	Naptime		
12:30pm	Tummy Time	Naptime		
1:00pm	Eat	Choice Time		
1:30pm	Naptime	Choice Time		
2:00pm	Naptime	Snack		
2:30pm	Naptime	Group Time		
3:00pm	Outdoor Time	Outdoor Time		
3:30pm	Outdoor Time	Outdoor Time		
4:00pm	Eat	Choice Time		
4:30pm	Tummy Time	Choice Time		
5:00pm	Departs	Late Snack		
5:30pm		Outdoor Time		
6:00pm		Departs		

Choice Time always includes options for physical activity and gross motor development **Group Time** always includes 10 minutes of planned teacher-led physical activity, but remains flexible

Books to move to: Physical activity and literacy

Amazon Sun, Amazon Rain
By Ximena de la Piedra

Anna Banana,
101 Jump Rope Rhymes
By Joanna Cole

The Ants Came Marching
By Martin Kelly

The Aunts Go Marching
By Maurie Jo Manning

Barnyard Dance
By Sandra Boynton

Boom Chicka Rock
By John Archambault

Bounce
By Doreen Cronin

Brown Bear, Brown Bear,
What Do You See
By Bill Martin, Jr.

The Busy Body Book:
A Kid's Guide to Fitness
By Lizzie Rockwell

Catch the Ball!
By Eric Carle

The Caterpillar Fight
By Sam McBratney

Clap Your Hands
By Lorinda Bryan Cavley

Down By the Bay
By Raffi

Five Green and Speckled Frogs
By Martin Kelly & Phil Legris

Five Little Ducks
By Raffi

Five Little Monkeys
Jumping on the Bed
By Eileen Christelow

From Head to Toe
By Eric Carle

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
By Annie Kubler

Hey! Wake Up!
By Sandra Boynton

The Hokey Pokey
By Larry La Prise

Hop! Hop! Hop!
By Ann Whitford Paul

Hop Jump
By Ellen Stoll Walsh

If You're Happy and Know It!
By Jane Cabrera

Jump, Kangaroo, Jump!
By Stuart J. Murphy

Just Like Josh Gibson
By Angela Johnson

Millions of Snowflakes
By Mary McKenna Siddals

Monkey See, Monkey Do
By Marc Graveg

Monster Musical Chairs
By Stuart J. Murphy

My Mama Had a Dancing Heart
By Libba Moore Gray

One, Two, Skip A Few!
By Roberta Arenson

Over in the Grasslands
By Anna Wilson and Alison Bartlett

Over, Under, Through
By Tana Hoban

Philadelphia Chickens:
A Too Illogical, Zoological
Musical Revue
*By Sandra Boynton and
Michael Ford*

Polar Bear, Polar Bear,
What Do You Hear
By Bill Martin, Jr.

Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—
Think of That!
By Leo and Diane Dillon

Shake My Sillies Out
By Raffi

Shape Space
By Cathryn Falwell

Sheep Wants to Jump
By Clive Batkin

The Snowy Day
By Ezra Jack Keats

Sometimes, I Like to Curl up in a Ball
By Vicki Churchill

Song and Dance Man
By Karen Ackerman

Stomp, Stomp!
By Bob Kolar

Stop Drop and Roll
By Margery Cuyler

Ten Flashing Fireflies
By Philemon Sturges

Ten Go Tango
By Arthur Dorros

Tessa's Tip-Tapping Toes
By Carolyn Crimi

Under the Sea
By Emma Lynch

Walking Through the Jungle
By Debbie Harter

We All Went on Safari
By Larie Krebs

We're Going on a Bear Hunt
By Michael Rosen

Where the Wild Things Are
By Maurice Sendak

Who Hops?
By Katie Davis

Who Jumps?
By Edwina Lewis and Ant Parker

The Wind Blew
By Pat Hutchins

Homemade physical activity materials

Item	Instructions
Balance Beam	Use a 4x4 beam of about 8 feet in length. Secure two stabilizing pieces of lumber to the bottom of the beam with screws. Smooth the edges with a router or apply carpeting or matting over the length of the beam. (Contact a local hardware store for assistance).
Balance Boards	Use a ½" or ¾" piece of plywood for top of the balance board. Use a piece of piping or any other strong material that is shaped in a cylinder for bottom. Wrap the piping in tape if its surface needs to be smoother.Try making different shapes (circle, rectangle, square) for the top of the balance board.
Beanbags	Cut a heavy, sturdy cloth material into a 4" x 8" rectangle or a 6" x 6" rectangle. Fold the piece of cloth over to make a square (make sure you are folding the sides you want on the outside of the beanbag inwards). Triple stitch two of the sides. Turn the cloth inside out to expose a smooth outside surface. Fill with dried beans or other seeds. Sew the last side. If you want to get really creative, try making bean bags in different shapes!
Bowling Pins	Use either empty ½ gallon plastic bleach bottles or potato chip canisters. Fill each with 2 to 3 inches of sand to weigh them down.
Climbing Rope	Select a rope with a diameter of 1½ inches. Put a few knots in the bottom half of the rope so children can be successful at climbing. Space knots about 9 inches apart. By leaving the top half without knots, it can serve as a challenge to more experienced climbers.
Jump Ropes	Use 3/8" to ½" sash cord or plow line (this can be purchased at a hardware store). Cut into 5 to 8 foot lengths for individual short ropes. To prevent unraveling, wrap rope ends with duct tape and cut through tape with a sharp knife. If you would like longer ropes, cut pieces into 10 to 16 foot lengths.
Ladder	Rails of the ladder can be made from 2" x 2" or 2" x 4" pieces of lumber. The rails should be between 7' and 12' long. Rungs should be between 12" and 16" inches long with a piece of wood either 1½" in diameter or a 2" x 2". Use screws and/or nails to fasten rungs securely with spacing of 12" to 14" apart. Sand and paint or varnish the ladder for safety. Also, consider using varied spacing between the rungs for a more challenging experience.
Cones	Ask government traffic and highway agencies if you can have discarded traffic cones. Otherwise, half gallon bleach bottles or milk containers that have been emptied and cleaned can be used for cones by filling them was 2 or 3 cups of sand to keep them from tipping.
Movement Mats	Purchase clear plastic carpet runners. Cut footprints, handprints and seatprints from contact paper. Apply them to the carpet runner. This can help guide children in their movements.
Parachute	Instead of purchasing a parachute, use a sheet from a queen size or king size set. Military supply depots also may have old, inexpensive parachutes.
Scoop	Cut the bottom from a cleaned ½ gallon plastic bottle with a handle. Tape along the cut edge for safety!
Tires	Ask a tire store if you can have discarded automobile rubber tires. Look for tires of different sizes for children to have different handling and lifting experiences. You can paint the tires various colors and with designs using lacquer or water-based paints.
Vaulting Box	Stack old newspapers and magazines in a cardboard box. Tape and tie the box securely. Now you have a vaulting box!
Wands	Saw off discarded broomsticks or dowels in lengths of 30 inches or less. Sand and paint each colorfully!

From *See How They Run: A Lesson Guide to Preschool Movement Education* by Joni Coe and Lee Allsbrook. 1978.

Physical activity materials & equipment ideas

The Materials and Equipment Ideas are broken down by the physical development or gross motor skill they promote the most. However, many materials can be used to develop multiple gross motor skills!

Travelling Skills

Movement CDs
Movement Cards
Cone Markers
Hurdles
Foam Dice
Streamers
Hopscotch Carpet
Relay Batons
Movement Mats
Jump Ropes
Dancing Wrist Bands
Tricycles
Tunnels
Spot Markers
Tumbling Mat
Movement Dice
Sleds
Wagon

Manipulating Skills

Parachute
Playground Balls
Whiffle Balls
Sports Balls
Foam Balls
Sensory Balls
Fleece Balls
Beach Balls
EZ Catch
Bean Bags
Scarves
Soft Flying Discs
Plastic Bat
Batting Tee
Paddles
Targets
Scoops
Basketball Hoop
Soccer Goal
Bowling Pins

Balancing Skills

Yoga for Kids
Hula Hoops
Stilts
Activity Rings
Teeter Totter
Balance Beam
Ladder
Stepping Stones
Stepping Logs

Storage & Upkeep

Storage Cart
Storage Shelves
Storage Tubs
Hooks
Inflator
Mesh Bag
Foot Pump

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Lead Author

Bridget Cullen, MSE, is the Program and Policy Analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families' YoungStar program.

Writing Team

Jill Hoiting, MSW, is the Prevention and Policy Manager for Supporting Families Together Association.

Amy Meinen, MPH, RD, CD, is the Nutrition Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program.

Jon Morgan, MS, is the Physical Activity Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity Program.

Karen Odegaard, MPH, is the Physical Activity Project Coordinator with Communities Putting Prevention to Work with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Contributors

Zach Bartel created the illustrations for *Active Early*.

Moryah Becker, MBA, RD, is a Nutrition Program Consultant with the Community Nutrition Team at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Jessica Cioci is a Training Specialist at 4-C Community Coordinated Child Care.

Leslie Clachrie is an Outreach Coordinator, Food Program Coordinator and YoungStar Technical Consultant at Family Connections of Southwest WI.

Laura Fischer is the Child Care Nutrition Educator and AmeriCorps Member with Communities Putting Prevention to Work in Wood County, Wisconsin.

Renee Fox is a Health Educator with Aspirus and Communities Putting Prevention to Work in Wood County, Wisconsin.

Linda Francis is a Resource & Referral Manager at Child Care Resource & Referral of Central Wisconsin, Inc.

Connie Frey is an Early Childhood Consultant at Child Care Resource & Referral, Inc.

Pattie Godsell is an Active Early Coordinator and YoungStar Specialist with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Whitney Hein collaborated on the design and lay out of *Active Early*.

Tracie Jarentowski is a Training Specialist at 4C-For Children.

Delechia Johnson is an Early Care and Education Manager at 4C-For Children.

Julee Katona is a Site Coordinator at The Parenting Place in Tomah, Wisconsin.

Tara LaRowe, PhD, is an Assistant Scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Family Medicine.

Julie Logue is the Physical Activity Coordinator for Communities Putting Prevention to Work with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

Michelle Messer, RN, is a Quality Improvement Specialist with the Western Dairyland Child Care Partnership.

Paula Naumann is a Technical Consultant at Western Dairyland Child Care Partnership.

Monica Owsichek, RD, CD, is a Nutrition Program Consultant with the Community Nutrition Team at the Department of Public Instruction.

Mark Lundey, copy edited *Active Early*.

Molle Polzin, RD, CD, is a Nutrition Program Consultant with the Community Nutrition Team at the Department of Public Instruction.

Paige Rauen is an Early Childhood Consultant at Family Connections, Inc.

Susie Reeck-Mathe is a Child Care Resource & Referral Specialist at The Parenting Place.

Courtney Saxler is a Research Specialist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Family Medicine.

Jamie Tramte Brassfield is a Quality Improvement Specialist with Family & Childcare Resources of N.E.W.

Mary Kay Warner is the owner of Sandhill Studio, LLC. She was the art director and designer for *Active Early*.

Patti Whyte is a Resource Specialist and Trainer and Technical Constulant for Pre-Licensing, YoungStar and Active Early at Northwest Connection Family Resources.

Kao Xiong is a Bilingual Aid and YoungStar Technical Consultant with Child Care Connection, Inc.

Marilyn Young is a Parent Educator at Northwest Connection Family Resources.

Former University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Dietetics Interns **Michaela Covelli, Suzanne Fuchs, Nicholle Oman, Christine Taylor**

Reviewers

Tanya Kirtz is the Child and Adult Care Food Program manager for 4-C Community Coordinated Child Care.

Sarah Mittermaier is a Program Assistant for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity Program.

Lana Nenide, MS, IMH-E® (IV) is the Professional Development Director and WI Pyramid Model State Coordinator with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health.

Jeanette Paulson is the Director of the Department of Workforce Initiatives with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

Teresa Storm is the owner and operator of Tender Times Child Care in Amery, WI, a family provider pilot site for *Active Early*.

OBESITY PREVENTION UNIT
Division of Public Health
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
P.O. Box 2659
Madison, WI 53701-2659
608.267.3694
http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/index.htm

BUREAU OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
Division of Early Care and Education
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
201 E. Washington Ave
Madison, WI 53707
608. 266.8880
www.dcf.wisconsin.gov

COMMUNITY NUTRITION TEAM
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster St.
Madison, WI 53707
608.267.9129
http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfp1.html

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