

Physical Activity Guidelines



Infants should interact with parents in daily activities dedicated to promoting exploration. They are more active when placed in a safe environment that facilitates physical activity and does not restrict movement. Opportunities to play in open space, such as on a floor or blanket should be encouraged. Prolonged sitting in car seats and strollers should be avoided.

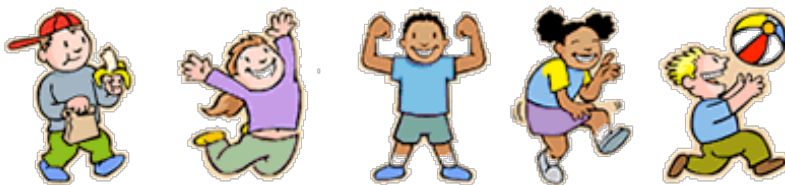
Toddlers should have at least **60 minutes a day of child-directed active play** and **30-60 minutes daily of adult-assisted play**. Preschool aged children should be encouraged to run, jump, throw and catch balls and play with age appropriate toys and bikes. They should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time.

Outdoor play is more energetic than indoor play. Toddlers have short energy spurts, so they should be offered frequent short opportunities to have active play, not long periods of prolonged exercise.

Children who live in communities with **parks, playgrounds, trails and recreation programs** located close to their homes tend to be more physically active. Traffic hazards, unsafe intersections, and unsafe parks with poor facilities such as deteriorated playgrounds, bathrooms and lighting are correlated with less physical activity. **Affordable recreational programs** at parks and community centers encourage more use of local facilities and more activity by children.

Policies, staff training and space in **childcare centers** are a strong predictor of the amount of physical activity that a child has in the center.

Parents who encourage, and participate in active play with their children will have more active children. Parents need to provide regular opportunities and safe space for indoor and outdoor play and provide appropriate clothing, shoes and hat or sunscreen for year-long play.



Nutrition And Physical Activity Self Assessment For Child Care

Plan 2 Play



Attitudes

- Plan at least one hour of active play daily, preferably two 30 minute periods outside
- Encourage children to play actively and participate in child-led and adult-led activities with them
- Provide appropriate clothing, shoes and hat or sunscreen for year long play
- Discourage stroller use, sedentary activities
- Adjust the hours of play and types of play according to the time of year and weather

Access and Exposure

Cities/ Local park districts:

- Parks and active play spaces should be located within ½ mile
- They should have bus and sidewalk access
- Parks and Community Centers should offer affordable programs for children and parents which encourage physical activity
- Parks should be toddler/family-friendly
 - Separated from the street with barriers to traffic
 - Have natural features for play, including shade
 - Have play equipment and surfaces appropriate for toddlers
 - Parks should have a food policy which is healthy for children
 - Playgrounds should have accessible bathrooms, water and lighting
 - They should be crime and hazard free

Child Care Centers/Homes/Workplaces:

- Homes and child care centers should be organized to offer and encourage active play in a safe place on a regular basis
- Toys, balls and wheeled equipment should be provided
- Parents and staff should not restrict playtime as a disciplinary tool.
- Parents and Staff should participate in physical activities with children.
- Workplaces should provide flexible hours so that parents can participate in outdoor activities with their children during daylight hours