

Physical Activity

for Babies and Toddlers



This resource was adapted from work done by the
Central Coast Local Health District Health Promotion Team, 2013

Useful equipment

- ✓ Mini trampoline
- ✓ Skittles (or milk bottles)
- ✓ Carpet squares
- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Crash mat
- ✓ Buckets and baskets
- ✓ Skipping ropes
- ✓ Various sized and textured balls
- ✓ Hurdles (or cones and rods)
- ✓ Bean bags
- ✓ Chalk bats (or noodles)
- ✓ Galloping horses
- ✓ Balls in the end of stockings
- ✓ Hopscotch
- ✓ Balloons
- ✓ Hoops
- ✓ Cones or coloured discs
- ✓ Cardboard boxes
- ✓ Streamers
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ T-Ball stand



Encouraging children to practise

A good way to encourage children to practise the fundamental movement skills is to have equipment out when they are engaged in free, active play. For example:

- Place hoops around the yard for children to hop or jump through
- Set up hurdles for children to leap over
- Place different sized balls in one part of the yard where children can throw, catch and kick with each other
- Set up a T-ball stand with a short pool noodle for practising striking a ball.

Floor-Based Play

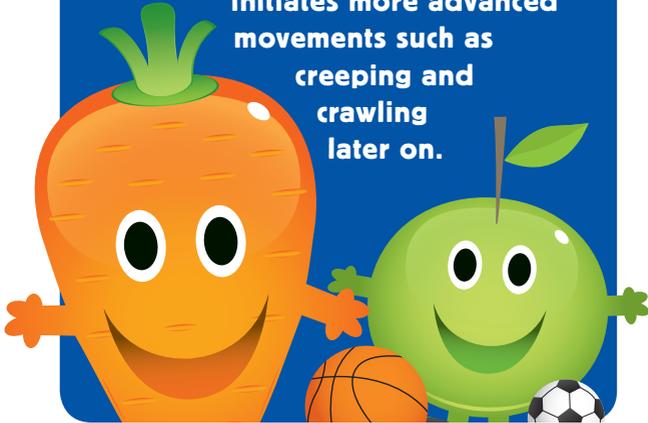
Tummy Time



What to do:

- Lie baby on stomach with arms out in front
- You can use a rolled up towel or something similar to put under baby's arms to prop them up until they are strong enough to do it on their own.

'Tummy Time' is very important for head, neck and back control and strength. Reaching for objects initiates more advanced movements such as creeping and crawling later on.



Some things to consider during tummy time:

- Try to spend as much time with baby on the floor lying next to them
- Use (unbreakable) mirrors so that baby can see themselves – this encourages them to get their head up
- Use a ball to get their attention
- Utilise different flooring – rugs, carpet, hard floor
- Place interesting objects on the floor – scarves, tissue paper, baking tray, cardboard box
- Use various toys to attract attention – different colours, shapes and sizes (ensure size of toy is too big to fit in the baby's mouth)
- Use bubbles to get baby's attention
- Once baby has mastered tummy time, gradually move toys out of reach to encourage movement
- Encourage grasping, reaching, pulling and pushing
- Try the wheelbarrow – support legs and place object out of arms reach, encourage child to walk on their hands to reach object
- Tummy turn – ensure surface is slippery (not carpet) – place object outside of arms reach and shake toys to gain attention, baby pivots on tummy to reach toy
- For something different, lie baby on trampoline and lightly bounce
- For additional movement, try 'heel to bottom touches' and 'cross over heel to bottom touches'.

Floor-Based Play

Lying on Back • Sitting • Carrying



Lying on back

Movement activities you could do with baby lying on their back:

- Hold different objects above baby to encourage reaching and grasping. Hanging toys can also be used to encourage this
- Blowing bubbles – stimulates eye movement as baby tries to reach for them
- Try head, shoulders, knees and toes squeezes with verbal cues
- Counting individual fingers and toes
- Place hand bells or rattles where baby can kick them – this is good preparation for manipulative skills
- Lying on side is also good to learn how to reach for items (both sides)
- Upside down hang – lie baby on back, lift baby up by the feet and then return baby to back.

For additional movement try:

- Bending and straightening legs together and individually
- Cycling movements with legs
- Move arms in and out, up and down.

Stimulating different sides of the brain:

- Touch right arm with left leg, left arm with right leg meeting in the middle
- Alternate hand to knee meeting in the middle
- Right hand/left foot touches beyond midline
- Hand to touch opposite ear.

Sitting

Movement activities you could do while baby is sitting:

- Encourage baby to clap hands
- Assisted circular movements with arms and legs
- Assisted shaking hands/random movements
- Tug a war with a hula hoop
- Clapping sticks
- Rolling a ball between you and the baby and show how to roll the ball back – this forms the basis for catching.

While carrying baby

- Try rocking and swaying
- Dance to music and spinning can help to develop balance
- Try different carrying positions – facing you on hip (both sides), facing away from you, over your shoulder, cradle.

Starting to Move

Rolling • Crawling • Standing • Walking



Rolling

Activities to encourage rolling:

- Crossover leg
- Crossover leg and roll from back to front
- Set up a cushioned slope and assist baby to roll down
- Place baby on top of a large ball and help them roll to pick up.



Crawling

Activities you could do to encourage crawling:

- Place objects out of reach to encourage crawling
- When just starting out, place baby on all fours and place your thumbs behind their knees to prompt bending
- Encourage crawling on different surfaces such as grass, carpet and sand
- Use tunnels for baby to crawl through
- Obstacle course – crawl under, over, through boxes, chairs, cushions
- Crawl under outstretched arm
- Pretend to be different animals that crawl on the ground
- Allow baby to chase you when crawling and be chased.

Standing

Encouraging baby to stand:

- Encourage baby to pull themselves up to stand using stable low lying furniture (balance beam, table, lounge, soft foam shapes)
- Encourage standing to play – table with toys on it e.g. cars with a car track print or elevated sand pit.

Walking

Getting baby to walk:

- Provide different objects to walk with such as wagons, block carts, boxes and balls
- Attempts to walk/walking independently encouraged
- Encourage by various toys set up around play area
- Try having them walk with bare feet on different surfaces – grass, concrete, sand, pillows, soft blocks.

Fundamental Movement Skills

Stability Activities • Manipulative Activities



Stability activities for toddlers

Stability skills include stretching, bending, twisting and balancing. These could be used as a morning stretch routine or post sleep routine.

- Balance
 - Single leg
 - Eyes open/closed
 - Knee taps
- Stretching/Bending
 - Good morning stretch
 - Cat stretch
 - Toe touch & sky reach
 - Windmills
 - Shoulder shrugs
- Twisting
 - Belly button circles.



Manipulative activities for toddlers

Toddlers are not at the developmental stage to be able to learn fundamental movement skills like catching and throwing properly.

They can start to be introduced to the concepts through manipulative activities such as throwing, catching, kicking, underarm rolling, stationary dribbling, striking.

These activities can assist in the development of these skills later on.

- Parachute games – balls in the middle – popcorn
- Skittles/ten pin bowling
- Stacking objects
- Initial exploration of throwing, kicking and jumping
- Trampoline jumping
- Bean bag throwing targets e.g. land inside hula hoops
- Catching games with beach balls
- Tunnel ball
- Mini golf
- Kicking games.



Fundamental Movement Skills

Locomotor Activities



Locomotor activities for toddlers

It is quite easy to introduce children to the fundamental movement skills through games they already play and enjoy. The following games can be altered to include one or more locomotor movements such as crawling, walking, running, galloping, hopping, side sliding, jumping.

- Hide and seek
- Follow the leader
- Stuck in the mud
- Tip/tag games
- Duck, duck, goose
- What's the time Mr Wolf?
- Bull rush
- Stuck in the mud.



Other game ideas include:

- Egg hunt – collect eggs (balls) and put them in your nest (bucket). You can use various locomotor movements
- Monster mash freeze game – dance to the music, when it stops, children must freeze
- Potato sack races
- Red light / green light (kids move when you say 'green light'; kids stop when you say 'red light')
- Jungle safari – children move around to music (hopping, walking, crawling etc). When the music stops you call out the name of an animal and children have to pretend to be that animal (e.g. bear, monkey, snake)
- Obstacle courses
- Dancing to music.