PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD

9 to 18 months
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

for a healthy development

You are probably fully aware of the fact that your child needs exercise to stay in good health. Children who get adequate physical activity are more even-tempered, sleep better and have a healthier appetite. Play and physical activity boost their self-confidence and help them express their emotions and build relationships. Research has shown that children who engage in physical activity are more skilful and sustain fewer injuries. Regular physical activity is good for their bones, heart and body weight and promotes learning (e.g. during language acquisition).

Children need exercise

Children seldom sit still for very long, and you might think that that’s enough physical activity. In point of fact, children’s physical condition has deteriorated in recent years. This is largely inadvertent and mainly a result of our modern lifestyle: Our days are busy, we walk and cycle less, we sit for long periods, surrounding ourselves with screens (TVs, smartphones, etc.), and our environment is less suited to physical activity (parks that are far away, dangerous roads, neighbours who are sensitive to noise). But children have a natural urge to move, and even simple activities are beneficial.

How can you support your child?

The suggestions on the following pages are intended to help you support the development of your child’s motor skills in day-to-day life. Use your – and your child’s – imagination to supplement these ideas.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HELPS ME TO...

- communicate using gestures
- learn how to crawl, stand and walk
- discover my ever-expanding surroundings
- discover things and become independent

My parents can help me by:

- providing me with a safe space to move around in freely
- demonstrating a movement so I can copy it
- giving me time to develop at my own pace
- encouraging and supporting me when necessary
- learn how to control my posture and movements
A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Creeping and crawling
Allow your child to discover new things outdoors with their bare feet and hands:
What does this feel like? What about that?

Crawling across the carpet
Place objects on the carpet out of reach of your child and encourage them to crawl over and grab them.

Variation
Allow your child to explore the objects themselves while you supervise closely.

First steps...
Remove any unstable objects so your child can take their first steps by holding on to the furniture and guiding themselves across the room.

Variation
Lie down on the floor so your child can crawl over or around you.
BAD-WEATHER ACTIVITIES

**Boat ride**
Rock your child on your lap and sing, “Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily. Life is but a dream.”

**variation**
Rock your child more gently or more rapidly. Change the rhythm of the song.

**Racing car**
Let your child push a stuffed animal around the room in a laundry basket.

**variation**
Hold on to the laundry basket and let your child climb in. Once they are sitting down, they can pretend to be in a racing car.

**fun in the rain**
Push your child through the rain in a covered buggy so they can listen to the patter of the rain drops.

**variation**
Allow your child to get out of the buggy, and take a few steps with them in the rain.
CRUNCHED FOR TIME?

**Little chef**

When you are cooking, your child wants to imitate you in their play kitchen or with their own cooking utensils (wooden spoon, plastic boxes, etc.).

**Bath-time fun**

Show your child how to make waves, blow soap bubbles and more in the bathtub.

**Variation**

Give your child a plastic bottle or cup so they can fill it with water, pour the water into another cup and empty it out.

**Children’s songs**

Use the time spent changing nappies to sing to your child or play songs they can imitate.

**Variation**

Name body parts and let your child point to them (their own or yours).
CRUNCHED FOR SPACE?

**Cardboard house**

Turn a large cardboard box into a house that your child can snuggle up in.

**variation**

Play hide-and-seek all around your child’s house.

**Making music**

Make home-made musical instruments: a plastic bottle filled with pebbles and sealed with adhesive tape turns into a rattle; a biscuit tin turns into a drum.

**The Leaning Tower of Pisa**

Let your child play with building blocks.

**variation**

Help your child build a castle or a tower that they can have fun toppling.
FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find informational material such as brochures, videos and more with additional suggestions, ideas for games and advice at www.paprica.ch (website in German and French only).

RECOMMENDATIONS

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Young children should get at least three hours of physical activity every day (playing outside, crawling, walking, etc.).

LESS SITTING

Try to minimise the amount of time your child spends sitting still (don’t needlessly leave your child in a child car seat or baby rocker when they are awake). Babies do not belong in front of a screen (TV, computer, video games, etc.).

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

9 Months

- sits up unassisted
- waves bye-bye
- crawls on all fours
- hands objects to adults
- uses furniture to pull up to a standing position
- walks unassisted
- uses a spoon to eat independently

18 Months

- belly-crawls
- grabs objects with thumb and index finger
- says mama and dada
- points at things
- places smaller things inside larger ones
- climbs the stairs on all fours
- walks unassisted
- uses a spoon to eat independently

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