

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD

4 to 6
 years



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...



... control my movements and improve my sense of equilibrium

My parents can help me by:

- » making sure I spend enough time playing with other children indoors and outdoors
- » providing me opportunities to run, climb, jump, etc.
- » giving me time to get dressed on my own
- » providing me opportunities to draw, paint, do handicrafts, etc.
- » including me in the conversation
- » encouraging me to wait and listen



... improve my fine motor skills



... get oriented in space and time



... pay attention in school



... play in a group

CRUNCHED FOR TIME?



Balloons

Blow up a balloon. Let your child tap the balloon to keep it in the air without touching the ground.

variation

Play the game outside with a balloon or catching soap bubbles.

Helping to cook or bake

Ask your child to help you prepare a snack or meal. For example, they can mix baking ingredients or cut up fruit for a salad.



Pirouettes and somersaults

Place a mattress on the floor where your child can do pirouettes and somersaults.

caution: Make sure your child tucks their chin into their chest when doing a somersault.

CRUNCHED FOR SPACE?

stacking and building

Let your child build the highest tower they can using any suitable objects (plastic boxes, empty milk containers, etc.).

variation

Let your child build a doll's house or a garage for their toy cars.



Without touching the floor

Walk around the house with your child without touching the floor, e.g. from one rug to another, over chairs, the sofa, etc.

variation

Walk around outside without stepping on any lines on the ground.

Musical statues

Use plastic boxes and wooden spoons as drums. Play on them while your child dances. When the music stops, your child must freeze and stand as still as a statue.

Switch roles.

variation

Play more loudly or more softly, more quickly or more slowly. Dance silently.



BAD-WEATHER ACTIVITIES

What doesn't belong?

Put various items in the wrong rooms around the house (shampoo in the kitchen, pepper mill in the bathroom, etc.). Let your child look for the things that don't belong and return them to their proper place.

variation

Switch roles.



Playing dress-up and pretend

Let your child play dress-up with clothes, scarves and other items and make up stories about kings, princesses and knights.

Beware of the wolf!

Mark an area on the floor with adhesive tape. The wolf (you) tries to get into this house. Your child stops you.

variation

Switch roles.



WEARING THEM OUT

Skipping

Use a rope to make waves or wavy lines while your child tries to skip over it.

variation

Your child can try to catch the rope with their feet.



Piggy in the middle

This is a ball game for three (or more) players. Two players throw the ball back and forth. The third one stands between them and tries to catch it. If they catch the ball, the person who threw it now has to be the piggy in the middle.



Tag

One child tries to catch the others. If they tag another child, that child is then "it". To avoid getting tagged, children have to run away or go to the "den".

variation

The players have to hold on to part of their body, e.g. a knee, shoulder, etc., while running.



Tip: Your child is now old enough to understand the situations (or conditions) in which they are allowed to play, romp and move about – and when they are not. You can set limits and conditions (e.g. no jumping on the mattress unless it's on the floor).

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 French only).



RECOMMENDATIONS



ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children of primary school age should get well over one hour of physical activity every day and do things that get them out of breath (ride a bicycle or a scooter, play ball, go for a walk in the woods, etc.). For more information: www.hepa.ch



LESS SITTING

Limit the time they spend sitting while travelling (in a motor vehicle) and reduce the time they spend sitting indoors during the day. Screen time (TV, smartphone, computer, tablet, etc.) should be limited and supervised by an adult. For more information: www.jeunesetmedias.ch

BASIC PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- » climbing, pulling up, standing tall, scaling something
- » maintaining balance
- » throwing and catching
- » jumping (up and down)
- » sliding (playground), moving on wheels
- » swinging, moving forwards and backwards rhythmically
- » rolling over and spinning around
- » using their strength
- » floating in the water, stopping a fall, tolerating the feeling of a free fall
- » seeking out and mastering dangerous situations
- » running and testing their limits (to the point of healthy exhaustion)
- » practising and demonstrating routines

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