


Supporting Children's Physical Activity in ECE Settings

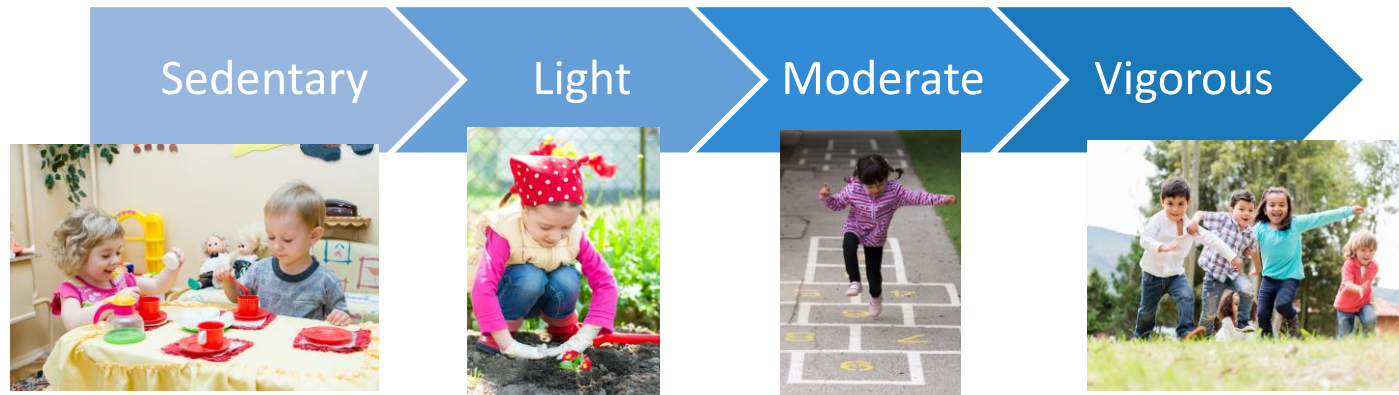


Learning Objectives

- By the end of this presentation, you will be able to:
 - List factors that influence children’s physical activity (PA)
 - Describe why PA in early care and education (ECE) settings is important
 - Describe how ECE can support children’s PA
 - Identify strategies to improve the PA environment in your classroom

What is physical activity?

- Any movement that causes our heart rates or breathing to go above resting
 - Includes ALL activities in a person's day, not just *exercise*



Benefits of physical activity



Physical

- Weight
- Gross motor development
- Sleep habits
- Decreased risk of
 - Diabetes
 - Heart disease
 - Cancer



Social/Emotional

- Self-esteem
- Emotion regulation
- Stress management
- Peer and role modeling



Academic

- School readiness
- Attention to task
- Executive function

PA benefits the whole child!

PA for young children

- Young children are naturally active
 - Short spurts of high energy throughout the day
- Children get activity in 2 main forms:

Structured PA

Caregiver directed



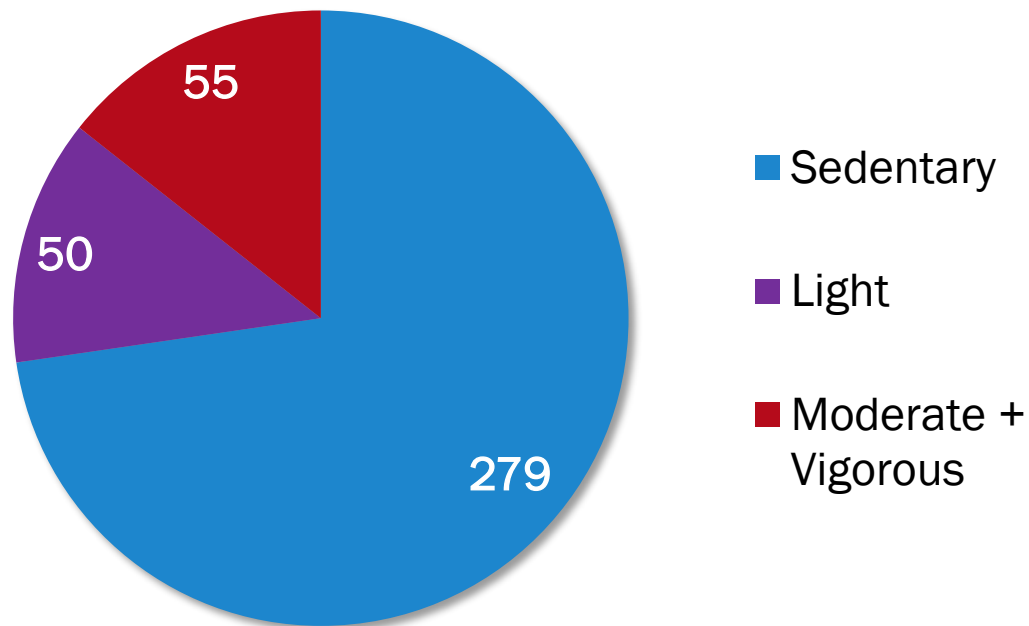
Unstructured PA

Child directed



Time in PA in Child Care

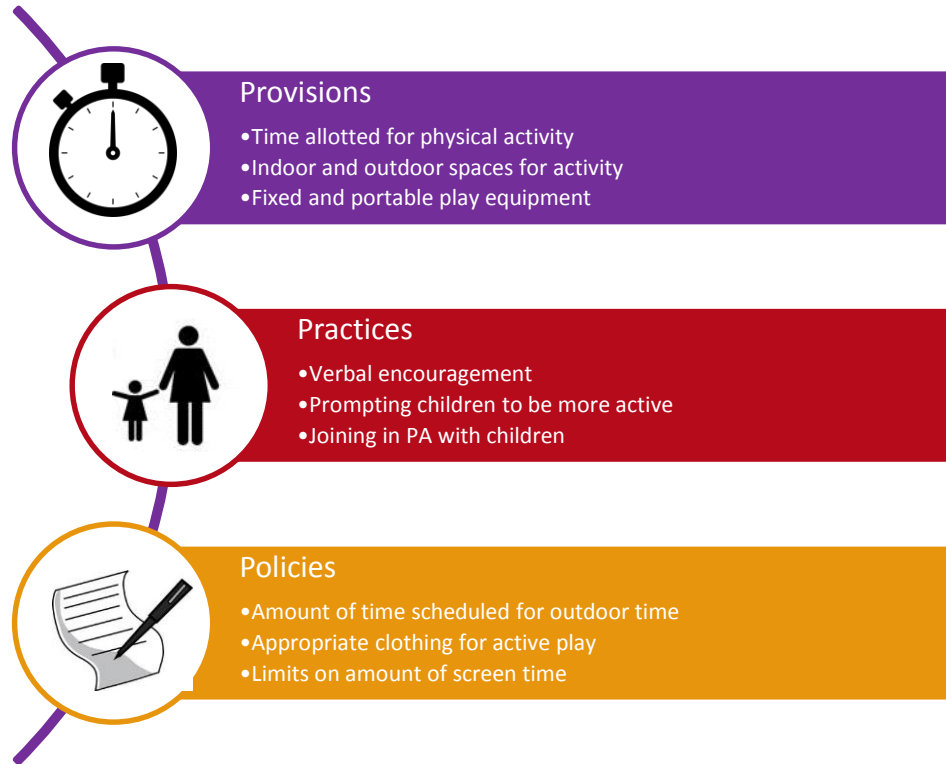
Minutes of activity at child care



Current Recommendations

- NC recommends 1 hour outside time/day
- National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends daily at ECE:
 - 2 hours of total PA
 - 1 hour of structured PA
 - Daily outdoor time
 - <1 hour of screen time

How does the ECE setting influence child PA?



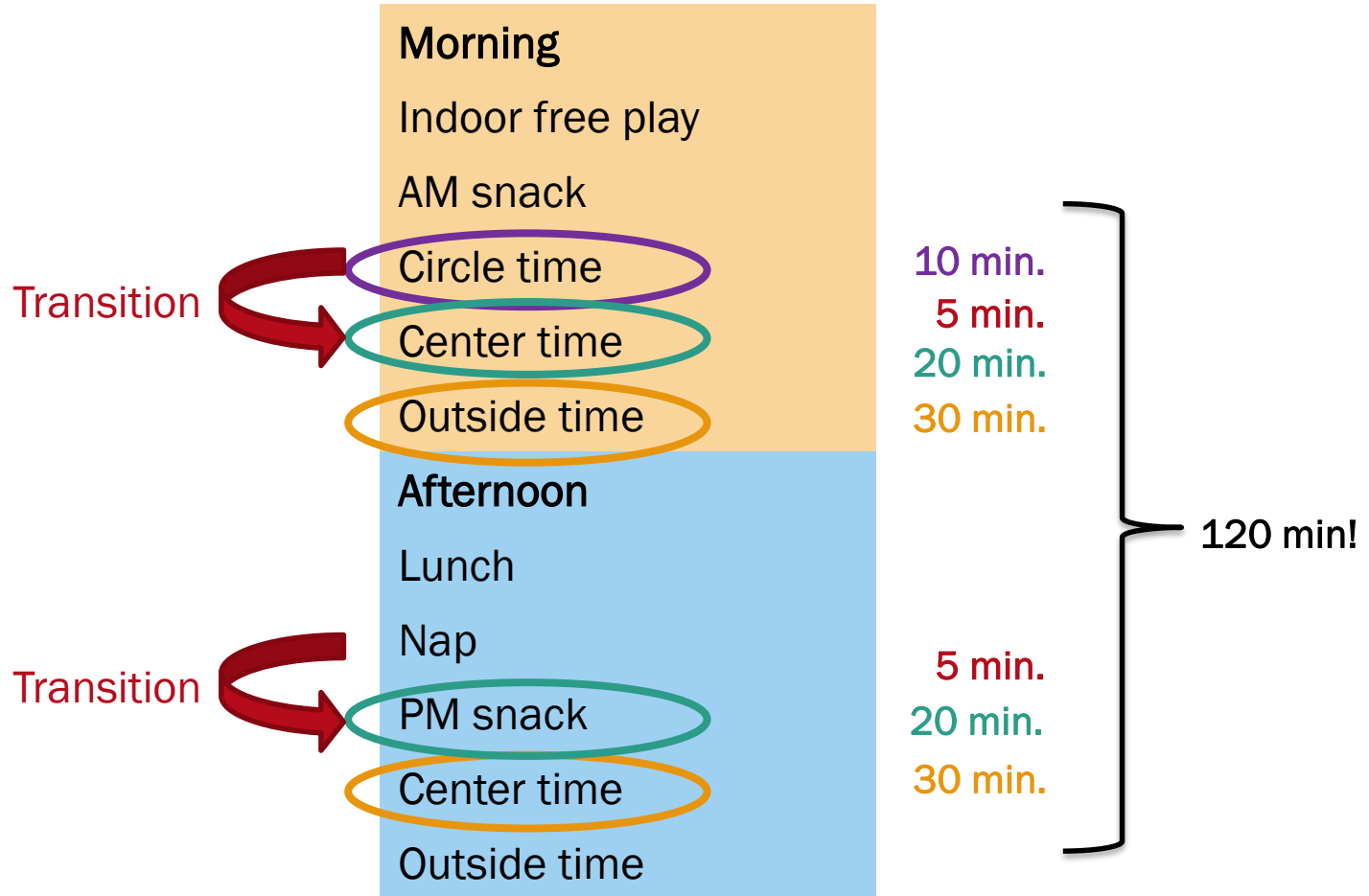
How do teachers influence children's PA?

- Teachers are the gatekeepers to children's PA
 - Not just through time and lesson planning, but through your attitude and the way you interact with children
- Some behaviors encourage PA
 - Engaging in co-activity, verbal praise, prompting children to use active play equipment, suggesting that children to be more active
- Others may result in children being less active
 - Withholding activity for punishment, asking children to decrease their activity

Structured PA in Child Care

- http://www.healthypreschoolers.com/?page_id=1648

PA happens across the day in child care!



Supporting PA isn't always easy

- Physical activity is one of many demands in ECE
- Space and equipment limitations
- Overall classroom management challenges
- It's sometimes hard to make this a priority with everything else going on in the child care day.
- Small steps can help to integrate PA across the day

Break Time!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZzCTVnPDIs>

CHALLENGES TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Child preference

“I just can’t find something that my kids like to do”

- Ask the children what kinds of things they like to do at home
- Try different activities multiple times before you “rule it out”

Having the resources

“I don’t have the right materials to do physical activity”

- PA doesn’t necessarily require fancy equipment!
- Try to imagine the things you have in your classroom in a different light, use those things for PA

Classroom Management

“If I do an active game with children, they’ll get all riled up, and I won’t be able to get them to calm down and listen afterwards.”

- Physical activity will help kids get out their energy to help them focus on tasks later!
- It will take time for them to get used to transitioning between activities – be patient!

Scheduling Time

“I don’t have time in my schedule to lead physical activity”

- Integrate PA into activities you’ve already planned
- Try for shorter PA breaks, about 10 minutes each

Space for Physical Activity

“There’s not enough room in our classroom for kids to be active.”

- Try breaking up the activity into smaller groups so it takes up less space
- See if you can move the furniture in the classroom to create more open space

Other Challenges



THANK YOU!