

National ECELC Newsletter

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Active Families, Active Children:

Family Focused Active Play Makes a Difference in the Early Years

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Families and early care and education providers have one thing in common - the children! By sharing opportunities to actively play together, families and providers create the valuable relationships that support lifetime healthy habits for their children.

Early childhood provides a window of opportunity for the promotion of physical activity. Young children are more active when their family members and caregivers are active. By providing an example of actively playing and being actively engaged, children are more likely to join the fun!

Typically developing children experience and learn through their senses and each of the senses is linked to their ability to move! The capacity to move increases through interactive relationships and guidance, allowing young children to develop their motor skills with ease and with confidence.

References

Early Movers: Helping Under-5s Live Active & Healthy Lives www.bhf.org.uk/teachers

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The National ECELC

Welcome to the National Early Care and Education Collaboratives Project (ECELC) Newsletter! We hope this newsletter is helpful as we offer supplemental information to help you prepare for the Learning Sessions and provide technical assistance to early care and education (ECE) providers. Topics within each newsletter will emphasize areas outlined in the *Lets Move!* Child Care goals including healthy eating, physical activity, screen time, and breastfeeding support. We hope you enjoy it!

-The National ECELC Team

Tips for Encouraging Activity:

During parent events, suggest ways to encourage active play with and by children:

- Play at home in the morning, with toys, moving around from one activity to another.
- Walk (or bike, trike, scooter) to your setting.
- Play at the center before the day formally begins. (Encourage parents to come a little early, if possible, to stay and encourage their children to be active in the play area (if one is available).
- Take part in two structured or adult-led activity sessions, such as action rhymes, music and movement, play with small equipment.
- Walk (bike, trike, scooter) home with parents, perhaps playing on the way home at a neighborhood park or playground;
- Meet and play with friends before dinner.
- Encourage imaginative play alone, providing old clothes for dressing up/play acting, play with toys.
- Meet up and play with friends/siblings at their home or at a park or indoor play area.
- Walk to the shops, local library, place of worship, community event, run an errand, with parents.
- Take part in organized activity sessions, community events
- Help with everyday tasks at home, sorting washing, tidying and sorting toys, setting the table for meals.
- Reinforce the importance of recognizing and appreciating children's efforts

Questions?

Please contact your
State/Local Project Coordinator or ECELC
at Nemours
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Family Focused Active Play Events

Center-based Workshops and Themed Events

- Food Event: While sharing a meal or a snack together, share information that will support parents actively playing with their children. Encourage involvement with their children and ask about their own experiences to understand their attitudes toward physical activity.
- Talk about the benefits of movement for babies and physical activity for young children and for themselves.
- Provide details of your center's physical activity policy, and how you promote active play throughout the day and in the context of daily routines.
- Share information about the daily physical activities their children enjoy with you.
- Show photos of their child participating in physically active play.
- Discuss what their child has liked, so they can do similar activities at home.
- Play Jam! Invite families to join you simply to play together. Model interactive examples that families can relate to and enjoy! Children are born imitators. Have you seen the video clip of Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, pediatrician and founder of Touchpoints Institute slowly stick out his tongue while holding an infant who is facing him? He pauses just a second or two and then, lo and behold, the infant's tongue slowly emerges! This simple demonstration shows parents how they can playfully engage with their baby and how intently their baby is watching and responding actively.
- Freely explore with your baby: Set up the environment with blankets and mats on the floor. Allow each child to explore and move, without interruption. Observe together and allow the child to initiate contact with parents rather than parents entertaining or imposing an activity. Let the various stages of gross-motor development happen on their own without urging, propping or walking. Infant seats, walkers, swings or other contraptions are confining and limit the baby's ability to explore physically.
- Freely explore with your toddler: Set up the environment with a variety of manipulative materials

Community based workshops

- Connect families with local resources and organizations like Cooking Matters, I am Moving, I am Learning, Agricultural Extension Agencies and other community resources that offer free workshops for parents and families.
- Giveaways: Rewarding participation in physical activity Parental encouragement and support of a young child's physical activity is key to them participating. For this event, welcome parents with a surprise box to take home. Invite them to open the box and play together with their children. They can repeat the activities later at home.
- Give them ideas and activities that they can do with their children at home, simple activity cards to take home and try out (i.e. balls, skipping rope, bean bags, bubbles and scarves)

Additional resources can be found on the Let's Move! Child Care website:

www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org



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