ACTIVE PLAY
FOR TODDLERS:
12-24 MONTHS
Toddlers need to be active too

The NSW Ministry of Health wishes to acknowledge the following sources: South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts Healthy Eating and Active Play at Playgroup manual and case studies, and the NSW Ministry of Health Munch and Move program and Local Health District resources.

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
Toddlers need to be active too

Children will learn to walk on their own between approximately 10-15 months of age. This is new and exciting for them. They will spend a lot of time walking and need time to practise this new skill.

Toddlers will experiment with:

- Moving from the floor to standing and back down again
- Moving from sitting on a chair to standing and back again
- Walking and then squatting to pick up a toy from the ground
- Squatting to play for a short time
- Walking in different directions and on different surfaces
- Carrying toys around
- Hand and foot preference when throwing and kicking.

All of these activities help to strengthen muscles and develop necessary balance skills.

Toddlers should be involved in short bursts of physical activity throughout the day. This can occur through:

- Unstructured, free play (child initiated, spontaneous)
- Structured, planned play (action activities/songs, teaching experiences)
- Everyday physical tasks (helping in the garden, setting up activities, tidying play spaces)
- Active transport (families walking to destinations such as parks, shops and playgroup).

Note

- Give toddlers lots of time to practise activities and praise their efforts
- Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activities with their children.

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CRAWLING

OBSTACLE COURSE

Set up a small obstacle course that a baby can climb through and over to help develop crawling skills. Where possible set the course up so the baby has to crawl over different surfaces such as carpets, soft mats and grass.

**Equipment**

- Cushions
- Low, soft foam wedges
- Crawling tunnel and/or boxes
- Toys, balls and bubbles
- Variety of appropriate and interesting equipment to inspire movement and climbing such as balls, boxes, bean bags, hula hoops, low balance beams or floor markers to walk along and low foam shapes

**Making it happen**

- Demonstrate the activity to children, parents and carers
- Support parents and carers while they practise the activity with their children
- Give toddlers lots of time to practise the activity and praise their efforts
- Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activity with their children
- Use factsheets to encourage parents and carers to try a new activity at home.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**FACT SHEETS**

- Active Play Every Day
- Active Play at Home
- Be Active Together

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CRUISING CIRCUIT

Set up a cruising circuit to help toddlers move while holding onto low furniture. This will help toddlers develop the control and balance needed for walking.

**Equipment**

- Low stable furniture for toddlers to walk around such as coffee tables, chairs and foam blocks
- Variety of equipment to inspire movement and climbing such as balls, boxes, bean bags, hula hoops, low balance beams or floor markers to walk along
- Range of nursery rhymes, children’s songs and music. You could use music that you know the children respond positively to or you could try the Munch & Move ‘Songs to sing and groove to’ music CD. This CD is great for children and contains 15 catchy songs written to promote active movements.

The words to the songs can be downloaded from the Healthy Kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au.

**Making it happen**

- Demonstrate the activity to children, parents and carers
- Support parents and carers while they practise the activity with their children
- Give toddlers lots of time to practise the activity and praise their efforts
- Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activity with their children
- Use factsheets to encourage parents and carers to try a new activity at home

**Time:** 15 minutes

**FACT SHEETS**

- Active Play Every Day
- Be Active together
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INDEPENDENT WALKING

This activity will help toddlers develop their control and balance they need for independent walking. You can set up activity stations where toddlers:

• Walk with a large toy and increase the distance as they master the skill
• Use pulling toys
• Use pushing toys

You can also set up a walking obstacle course similar to the one used for crawling.

Equipment
✓ Large toys (e.g. balls, teddy bear)
✓ Pushing and pulling toys (e.g. trolley, toy pram)
✓ Variety of appropriate and interesting equipment to walk around such as boxes, bean bags, balance beams or floor markers to walk along, low foam shapes and pillows
✓ Props to inspire movement (e.g. ribbons, bubbles, hobby horse)

Making it happen
• Set up an area for the walking activity that is clear and uncluttered
• Demonstrate the activity to the children, parents and carers
• Support parents and carers while they practise the activity with their children
• Give toddlers lots of time to practise the activity and praise their efforts
• Direct the toddlers’ attention to where they are placing their feet when trying to walk
• Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activity with their children
• Use factsheets to encourage parents and carers to try a new activity at home

Time: 15 minutes

FACT SHEETS
• Active Play Every Day
• Active Kids are Happy Kids

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DANCING

Dancing is a great way for children to participate in active play. Props to inspire movement such as scarves and ribbons are a great way to get toddlers involved. You can play music using CDs or musical instruments to promote movement (e.g. tambourine).

**Equipment**

✓ Variety of nursery rhymes, children’s songs and music
✓ CD player or equivalent to play music
✓ *Munch & Move* Music Pack or equivalent music to promote movement
✓ Simple percussion instruments to promote movement (e.g. tambourine, small drum)
✓ Props to inspire movement

**Making it happen**

- Set up an area for the dancing activity that is clear and uncluttered
- Demonstrate the activity to the children, parents and carers
- Support parents and carers while they practise the activity with their children
- Give toddlers lots of time to practise the activity and praise their efforts
- Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activity with their children
- Use factsheets to encourage parents and carers to dance with their children at home.

**Time: 15 minutes**

**FACT SHEETS**

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UNSTRUCTURED FREE PLAY

Toddlers should be encouraged to initiate their own active play. Providing the space and equipment for children to make their own decisions about play and create activities that are responsive to their interests and abilities can support physical activity participation.

**Equipment**
- Balls
- Ride-on toys, scooters, bikes
- Climbing equipment
- Bubbles

**Making it happen**
- Set up an area that is clear and uncluttered to encourage free play
- Provide equipment that encourages physical activity i.e. balls, ride-on toys, climbing equipment
- Give toddlers lots of time to practise any activities and praise their efforts
- Encourage parents and carers to participate in the activities with their children
- Use factsheets to encourage parents and carers to provide free play opportunities for their children **every day** at home.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**FACT SHEETS**
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MUNCH & MOVE MUSIC PACK

The Munch & Move ‘songs to sing and groove to’ music CD is a resource developed to support the NSW Munch & Move program which is delivered in early childhood education and care services, for example preschools, long day care, across NSW.

The CD contains 15 catchy songs written by Jingle Jams with lyrics that promote active movements.

Using the Munch & Move music CD

Children love to sing, move and dance. A number of songs on the CD promote physical activity that can be used as warm up, cool down action songs and/or group sing-a-longs. The Munch & Move music pack includes lyrics of the songs and suggested actions. In addition, the songs that promote healthy eating and drinking are great for playing at snack times (i.e. morning tea)

Download the Munch & Move songs and the words to the Munch & Move CD songs on the Healthy Kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au