

ACTIVE KIDS ARE HAPPY KIDS

Being active is important for all children as they grow and develop. Young children should be given plenty of opportunity to move throughout the day.

The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years) says that active play is the best form of physical activity. It involves:

- Indoor and outdoor play
- Active transport (such as walking) and everyday activities
- Tidying up toys and helping to put the groceries away.

The benefits of being active for young children include:

- Builds strong bones and muscles
- Improve balance
- Is a good way to make friends and develop socially
- Helps children maintain a healthy weight
- Develops new skills.

Birth to 1 year

Physical activity should be encouraged from birth. The best way for babies to be active is through supervised interactive floor-based play in safe environments eg, time on the tummy to play. This helps babies to practice movements such as reaching, pulling, pushing, grasping and playing with objects.

1-5 years

The skills developed from the ages of 1 to 5 years range from crawling to learning to walk, through to running and throwing and catching a ball. At no other time throughout a child's life will they ever learn as many physical skills. Children need to be encouraged to be active whenever possible.

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Getting kids active at home

Being physically active with your child at home is a great way to help them practice new skills that will allow them to live healthy and active lifestyles.

- Use old milk bottles as skittles and play ten pin bowling
- Keep a balloon off the floor using your hands and feet
- Make balls with scrunched up newspaper and throw them into a bucket
- Draw lines on the concrete with chalk and see how far your child can jump or leap
- Draw targets on an outside wall with chalk and practice target throwing
- Kick a ball around in the backyard or walk to your local park
- Put some music on and dance! When the music stops freeze in a stalk position
- Play hide and seek in the backyard or in the park
- Play catch with your child - smaller balls are harder to catch so start off with a larger ball for younger children



Other ways to get kids active

- Walk or ride instead of driving - if you live close to the shops, to the park or to preschool, why not walk or ride your bike?
- Get your child to help you do the housework. Dusting, vacuuming and folding the washing are great ways to keep your child active.