

## Physical activity and active play in early years: top tips

**Children in the early years should be encouraged to be active from birth in order to develop essential muscles, learn new skills and become independent.**

- Encourage active play and minimise sedentary time with a mix of indoor and outdoor activities to allow access to fresh air and vitamin D from the sun
- Ensure all children have access to the outdoor environment every day (in suitable clothing and footwear)
- Remember the outdoors is a learning environment, so do not just take indoor activities outside - use the uniqueness of the outdoors to provide a range of physical activities for children's interests and needs
- Invite parents in to take part in some fun physical activities or set up obstacle courses for the children to enjoy with them
- If it is particularly warm or cold you will need to plan activities outside of the hottest time of the day, risk assess the environment when icy or snow-covered, ensure children drink plenty of water and wear suitable clothing
- Some children have real difficulty in judging how much space they have around them and the amount of space they need to execute activities safely:
  - Encourage children who seem to have problems with coordination and balance to play Simon Says, play balance games, kick balls and guess how much space is needed and how big things are
  - Remember practice will help to strengthen them and give them confidence. The more they try an activity the better they will get, but small sharp bursts may be needed to avoid frustration
- Ensure children have access to water to remain hydrated
- Have an area in which children can sit and have calm downtime should they need it
- In an ideal world, children should have free flow access to the outdoors to enable them to access the activities in the area that suits their needs best.

