

Healthy Body, Happy Me 2023

Movement



Movement

Physical activity helps children develop coordination and control of their large and small movements. Our understanding of its importance has increased in recent years, alongside increased evidence that sedentary lifestyles and time spent watching screens has an adverse effect on well-being. This is particularly the case with the very young. Screen viewing before the age of 18 months has lasting negative effects on language development, short-term memory and reading skills. It also contributes to problems with sleep and attention. The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) 2016, recommends no screen time at all for babies and children under the age of 18 months.

Physical activity early in life helps to develop: essential movement skills, children's core strength and stability, spatial awareness, coordination and control, strong bones and muscles, a positive lifelong attitude to exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, a strong heart. It helps children to feel good and is also lots of fun.

A focus on helping all children to be physically active will help them develop their gross and fine motor skills. For example, helping babies develop a strong core through providing opportunities for them to roll, squirm and be on their tummy or back will aid them to develop a properly aligned spine and good posture.

The Chief Medical Officers of all four UK nations published physical activity guidelines in 2011 which, for the first time, included specific guidelines for under-fives. These were updated in September 2019. In short these are:

- Physical activity should be encouraged from birth (including non-mobile babies)
- Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active for at least three hours a day. That means they should take part in active play spread across the day
- The amount of time children are sedentary should be minimised.

The World Health Organisation also published guidelines in 2019 echoing these points and also highlighted the importance of adequate sleep across a 24-hour period. They published a Welsh language version in 2020. You can read the recommendations here: <https://bit.ly/3QJizrk>

The activities for today are focussed on physical activity for all age groups. They are enjoyable and provide a range of moderate to vigorous activities with opportunities for language and communication.



Activity 1 Large scale memory game

Playing games on a large scale can encourage children to be physically active. During this activity children can move around the game area as they search for matching numbers. Where possible take the activity outdoors so children can benefit from spending time in the natural environment.

Encourage children to reach and stretch and to follow other players' movements around the game area.

Large scale memory game

Activity outline

- Support children to add numerals onto the plates, making pairs (two with zero, two with one, etc.). Talk about the numbers and sequence them
- Arrange the plates on the floor, numeral side down
- Explain the purpose of the game is to find two plates with matching numerals
- Model choosing two plates. Ask children if the numerals match. If they don't return the plates face down
- Once a pair is found, remove them from the game
- Invite children to take turns to choose two plates. With each turn, encourage them to remember where the numbers are. Talk about the numbers and whether they match
- Encourage thinking by asking "Can you remember where we saw a number three?" "Was it on the top, middle or bottom row?"
- Support them to encourage their peers to keep on trying
- When all the pairs have been found, mix up the plates and start again.

Learning opportunities include:

- Mathematical language
- Number comparisons
- Work collaboratively
- Make predictions
- Take turns.

Top tip

Repetition helps children develop their memory and build their vocabulary.



Resources

- 12 paper plates, (use card or plastic bowls if you do not have paper plates)
- Materials to draw, paint or stick numbers to the plates.

Extension ideas

You could choose to add different objects to match such as matching animals, letters or photographs of the children and staff

Add spots to five for children to match.

Change the numbers to match children's stage of development, e.g. use numbers beyond 10.

As children become more proficient add some more plates with numbers for them to test their memory skills.

Activity 1 Continued...

Key vocabulary might include:

- Highest, lowest, smallest, largest
- Same, different, more, less
- Top, middle, bottom row
- Numbers pairs
- Reach, stretch
- Match.

Ideas for different ages

Support babies' physical development by creating your own Ribbon Box.

- Source an empty cardboard box (with a lid or seal the top of the box)
- Use a sharp tool to punch a range of holes across the box
- Thread a range of material, ribbons or string into one hole and out through another hole (at the opposite side of the box) and securely tie each end with a knot
- Ensure the ribbon is long enough so the babies can pull the ribbon through the box
- Place the box on the floor next to babies and model pulling at the ribbons to move them through the box.



Activity 2 Keep fit fun game

Getting children up and moving supports healthy development. Providing fun ways to do this can include creating your own keep fit fun fitness classes. Children will have opportunities to control their body movements, follow instructions, work collaboratively with their peers and get their hearts pumping. In this activity children can get creative by making up their own body movements and exercises, give instructions to others on how to move and create an exciting name for their exercise.

Keep fit fun class

Activity outline

- Ensure that the children have appropriate, loose clothing and that you have lots of space to move, whether indoors or outside
- Begin by asking children to feel their heart beat
- Warm up, e.g. walk on the spot, lift knees up high, move arms up and around
- Give clear instructions for children to follow
- Move on to more vigorous exercises, e.g. jumping jacks, star jumps, burpees, lunges, squats
- Invite children to create movements for others to follow. Encourage them to describe what they are doing and give their own instructions
- Ask children to feel their heart beat again. What do they notice? Is it beating faster or slower than before the exercise?
- Talk about the benefits of getting their heart to beat fast
- Finish with warm down exercises then lie down to regulate breathing and relax the body.

Extension ideas and top tip

Let children take turns to be the leader, giving their own instructions.



Get moving



Resources

- A space for children to move around freely and safely
- Music (optional).

Learning opportunities include:

- Begin to understand and choose different ways of moving
- Assert their own ideas and preferences
- Follow simple instructions
- Describe actions to others
- Support physical activity
- Move with confidence.

Activity 2 Continued...

Ideas for non-mobile babies



- Lie babies on their tummies or backs on rugs or blankets on the floor to encourage babies to roll, kick and wave
- Provide items for babies to reach out for, grasp or transfer from hand to hand and explore items such as shells, wooden pegs, old keys, wooden spoons, loofahs, smooth pebbles, fir cones, small whisks, bean bags, different textured fabrics, etc
- Include items with contrasting colours, dots or stripes to help babies' emerging ability to focus their eyes
- Baby 'gyms' can help provide stimulation.

Practitioners should support babies' communication by using eye contact, facial expressions and touch to create shared moments of interaction.

Ideas for mobile babies

Sit the babies together with adults and encourage babies to copy the movements adults make.

These could include:

- Touching their nose
- Lifting their arms up above their head
- Crawling around the room
- Patting the top of their head
- Reaching to touch parts of their body
- Clapping hands
- Put bean bags on a baby's head and model gently leaning forward until the bag slips off
- Stand up and dance to the music.

Put on some lively music to support the activity.

Practitioners should tune into babies' reactions to see what they are enjoying and responding to with encouragement, smiles, touch, gestures, songs and talk.



Encourage babies to roll

Key vocabulary might include:

- Touch your... names for body parts (toes, knees, shoulders, elbows, etc.)
- Up, down, round, high, low
- Fast, slow, faster, slower
- Heart beat.



Clap and dance

Activity 3 Animal charades

Using children's favourite animals is a great way to get them thinking creatively about all the different ways they can use their bodies to move, such as walk, run, sprint, swim, climb, crawl, slither, slide, hop, jump, etc. This activity will support children to develop coordination and control of their large and small movements. By linking these to familiar and favourite animals, it will support children's interests.



Resources

- A space for children to move freely.



Animal charades

Activity outline

- Prior to this activity, look for opportunities for children to watch how different animals behave. If children don't have experience of animals, you could visit a local animal sanctuary
- Talk about how an animal moves – does it walk, run or crawl? Can children name other animals? Encourage descriptive language to describe the animals' movements, e.g. hop, slither, crawl, fly, swim, jump, run. Which part of their body do they use to move around?
- Compare the way animals move to the way humans move. How many different ways can they move?
- Explain that we can imitate lots of animal movements (walk, run, crawl, slither, hop, jump, swim, climb, etc.). Find a space big enough for children to move about freely
- Encourage the children to move like different animals, such as running like a monkey, jumping like a bunny, flap like a bird or jumping like a kangaroo. Encourage children to name animals and describe how they move.



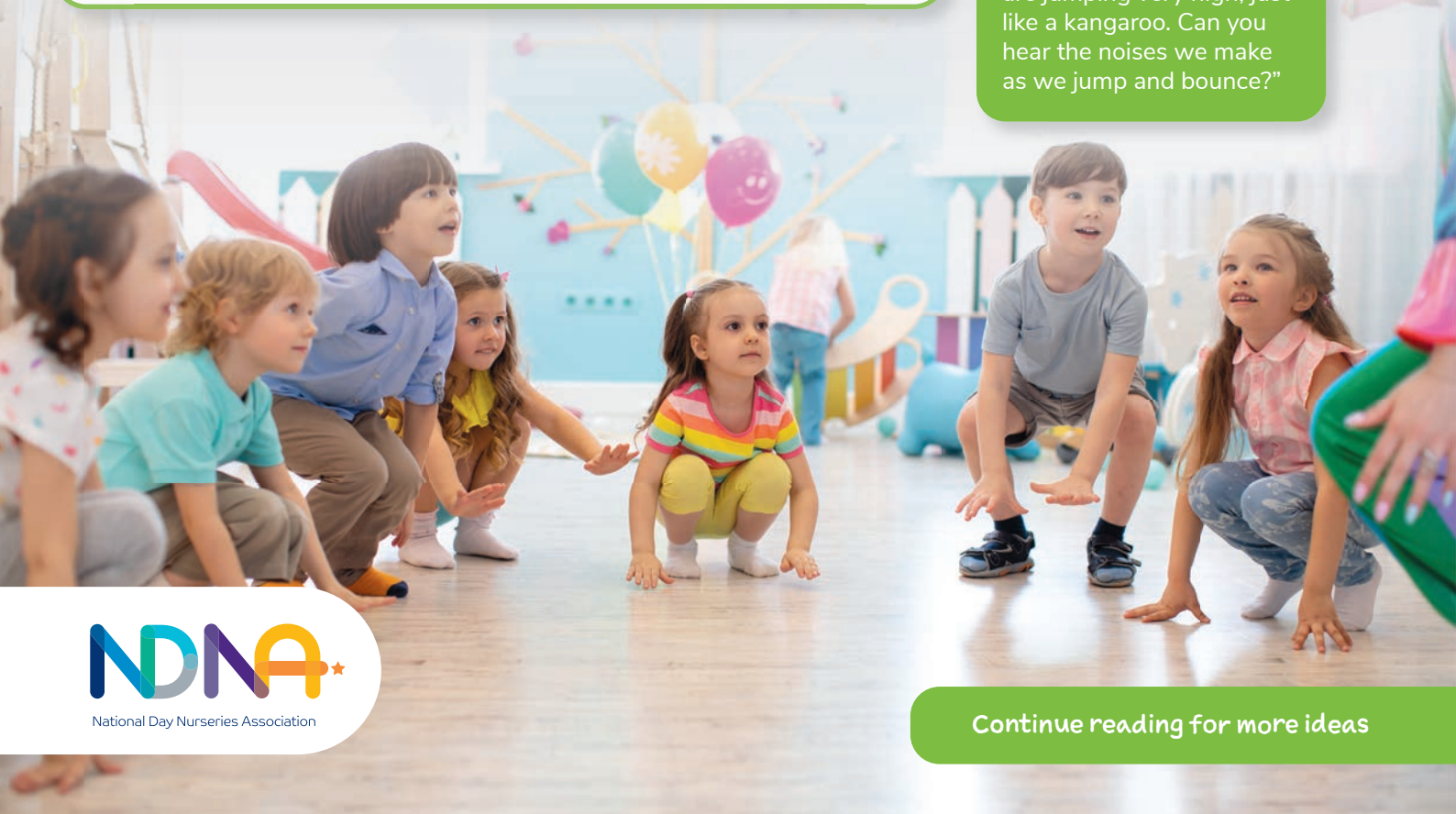
Learning opportunities include:

- Begin to understand and choose different ways of moving
- Name familiar animals and describe how they move
- Move freely with confidence
- Imitate movement of others!



Top tip

Provide a running commentary, describing their movements, e.g. "You are jumping very high, just like a kangaroo. Can you hear the noises we make as we jump and bounce?"



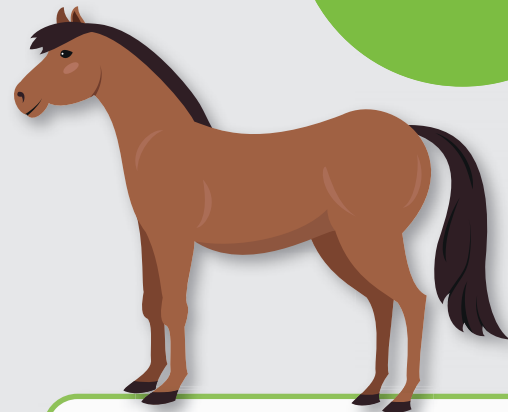
Activity 3 Continued...

Extension ideas

Who am I or what am I? When they are used to doing this, invite a child to move like their favourite animal. Ask the other children to guess what animal it is from their movements.

Include different ways of moving within your daily routines such as flapping like a bird to your outdoor area, jumping or skipping to the bikes to encourage physical activity.

Try asking children to stop and hold their pose and see who can do this for longest.'



Key vocabulary might include:

- Run, gallop, skip, march, dart, dodge
- Jump, bounce, leap, hop, tiptoe
- Turn, twist, balance, wriggle
- Walk, stamp, stride, stand
- Crawl, roll, creep, kneel
- Dance, prance, climb
- Fly, swim, glide
- Slither, slide.



Activity 4 Clue hunt

Encourage children to explore their environment by playing a game of 'Can you find me?' This activity will encourage children to listen carefully to the practitioners 'clues' to see if they can identify which objects are being described. Children will have to physically search their environment to locate the item being described.

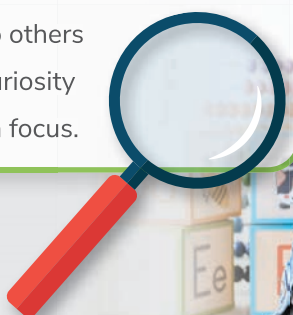
Clue hunt

Activity outline

- Create your 'clue cards' for a range of items, both inside and outdoors
- On each clue card write a few descriptive statements, e.g. to find a daisy you could write:
I have a long green, furry stem and soft white petals
I have a yellow centre as bright as the sun
My natural home is the grass
What am I? Can you find me?
- Add images on the back or under a flap to support children
- Read the clues one at a time and ask the children if they know what it is. Give them time to think about the clues and formulate their answers
- Once children have guessed the clue, ask them to go and find the item. Compare the item to the description and discuss how else it could be described
- Adapt the clues and your language to support children of all development stages to succeed.

Learning opportunities include:

- Develop language for thinking
- Visualise and imagine options
- Explore and build on ideas
- Listen to others
- Show curiosity
- Maintain focus.



Find the clues



Resources

- Paper or card
- Pens, pencils
- Photos of the images children will be searching for.

Top tip

Adapt the language in your clues to support children's understanding and build their communication skills.

Activity 4 Continued...

Extension ideas

Invite children to be the clue giver. Ask them to describe an item in the environment for others to guess, without saying what it is.

Make a set of outdoor clue cards for children to explore.



Let's feel

Key vocabulary might include:

- Descriptive language to describe individual items
- Describe
- Look
- Search
- Find
- Clue.



Ideas for different ages

Ball bonanza (babies)

- Gather a range of different sized balls - large, medium and small, and include a range of textures and patterns, from soft material to tennis balls
- Encourage babies to reach out to grasp the balls
- Roll balls to babies and encourage them to roll them back
- Gently throw a soft ball to babies to catch and encourage them to throw it back to you (where developmentally appropriate)
- Add balls to your water tray and encourage babies to explore
- Fill a muffin cake tin with plastic balls and encourage babies to fill and empty the balls from the round slots
- Put a hole in a shoe box for babies to drop balls into the box. Add a hole at one side so the balls can roll back out.

Practitioners should get down on the floor with babies and engage in their play. Model pushing, rolling, throwing, kicking balls or posting balls. Engage in back and forth communication with babies, narrate what is happening and what babies are doing. Respond to babies gestures and provide names for the objects they are pointing to. Use descriptive language to describe the different texture and size of the balls.



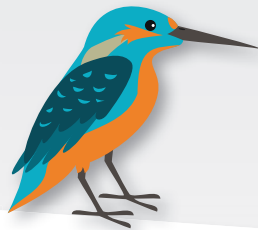
Further resources, links and stories:

Vocabulary and Early Language Skills - NDNA training

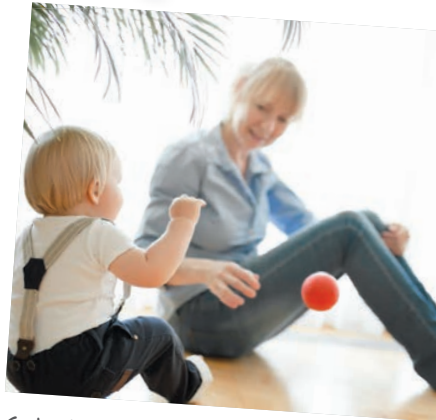
<https://bit.ly/3GZlfxP>

Physical Activity in Early Years - NDNA training

<https://bit.ly/3ZJwbXy>



Up and moving



Catch!

National Day Nurseries Association

At NDNA, we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours. We enhance, support, nurture, cherish and challenge.

Every year we run an annual Healthy Body, Happy Me campaign to encourage better health and happiness by giving nurseries FREE resources for play, learning and fun.

Get involved with our 2023 campaign and help keep your children happy and healthy.

Important: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.



National Day Nurseries Association

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