

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR INFANTS



# EARLY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

- YOUNG CHILDREN WHO ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT HAVE A GREATER NUMBER OF SYNAPTIC CONNECTIONS IN THEIR BRAINS.
- EARLY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT INCREASES CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE CEREBELLUM AND THE BRAIN'S PLEASURE CENTERS.
- EARLY MOTOR DEVELOPMENT SETS THE STAGE FOR BRAIN PROCESSES FOR DECODING AND PROBLEM SOLVING THROUGHOUT LIFE.




# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS



**MOVEMENT** – IS NAVIGATION OF ONE'S ENVIRONMENT

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** – IS VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT THAT EXPENDS ENERGY


**EXERCISE** – IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (AEROBIC ACTIVITY) THAT INCREASES HEART AND RESPIRATORY RATES



**Guideline 1:** Infants should interact with caregivers in physical activities that promote exploration of movement and the environment. Physical activity should be encouraged when infants are awake and interested.

**Guideline 2:** Large, open, safe play surfaces and appropriate equipment should be provided to promote free movement and physical activity (i.e. place infant on a blanket on the floor with favorite toys nearby).

**Guideline 3:** Until infants are creeping or crawling, provide at least 30 minutes of tummy time daily. Tummy time is recommended at least 2 – 3 times per day for short intervals or as tolerated by the infant.



# PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT THE 0-3 MONTH OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

## **MILESTONES**

- CAN FOCUS ON AND FOLLOW OBJECTS
- WAVES ARMS AND KICKS LEGS
- RAISES HEAD WHILE ON TUMMY
- SWIPES AT DANGLING OBJECTS
- HOLDS A RATTLE PLACED IN HAND
- SMILES AND COOS

## **APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

- TUMMY TIME
- INFANT GYM WITH DANGLING OBJECTS
- PUT RATTLE IN BABY'S HAND

# **PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT THE 3-6 MONTH OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES**

## **MILESTONES**

- CAN LIFT HEAD
- PROP SELF UP FROM TUMMY
- ROLLS OVER
- REACHES FOR AND GRASPS OBJECTS
- HOLDS HEAD STEADY WHILE SITTING
- SITS WITH SUPPORT
- LAUGHS

## **APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

- TUMMY TIME
- LET BABY SIT SUPPORTED ON YOUR LAP
- LET BABY REACH FOR FAVORITE TOYS AND OBJECTS

# **PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT THE 6-9 MONTH OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES**

## **MILESTONES**

- SITS WITHOUT SUPPORT
- SITS AND PIVOTS
- STANDS WITH SUPPORT
- STARTS TO USE FINGER AND FOREFINGER TO GRASP OBJECTS
- WAVES BYE-BYE
- BABBLES

## **APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

- KEEP A VARIETY OF TOYS WITHIN BABY'S REACH IN A SAFE PLAY AREA
- HELP BABY PULL TO A STAND
- PLAY PEEK-A-BOO

# **PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT THE 9-12 MONTH OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES**

## **MILESTONES**

- GETS ON HANDS AND KNEES
- CRAWLS, SCOOTS, OR CREEPS
- PULLS TO STAND
- CRUISES ALONG FURNITURE
- STANDS ALONE
- MAY TAKE FIRST STEPS
- SAYS MAMA AND DADA

## **APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES**

- HELP BABY PULL TO A STAND
- HOLD BABY'S HANDS AND PRACTICE WALKING
- LET BABY CLIMB STAIRS WITH SUPERVISION
- OFFER PUSH-UP AND PULL-UP TOYS
- SING ACTIONS SONGS (I.E. ITSY BITSY SPIDER)



# OTHER GUIDELINES FOR INFANTS

1. DAILY OUTDOOR TIME IN A SAFE SETTING SUPERVISED BY AN ADULT.
2. LIMIT TIME SPENT IN SWINGS, BOUNCY CHAIRS, CAR SEATS, AND STROLLERS.
3. **NOT RECOMMENDED FOR INFANTS:**
  - SCREEN TIME
  - INFANT WALKERS
  - EXERCISE SAUCERS



**DID YOU FIND THIS  
EDUCATIONAL  
HANDOUT HELPFUL?**

**PLEASE TAKE A MINUTE TO TELL  
THE STAFF AT POSITIVE PATTERNS  
FOR LIFE, LLC WHAT YOU LIKED  
ABOUT THIS EDUCATIONAL  
HANDOUT. GO TO THE CONTACT  
PAGE ON OUR WEBSITE AND  
SEND A MESSAGE TO THE STAFF.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

