

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PREPARES THE BRAIN FOR OPTIMAL LEARNING

1. IT INCREASES BLOOD FLOW:
  - INCREASING OXYGEN LEVELS
  - INCREASES NUTRIENT DELIVERY
  - CARRYING AWAY WASTE PRODUCTS
2. IT STIMULATES A CHILD'S FRONTAL LOBE WHICH IS PRIMARY AREA OF THE BRAIN FOR CONCENTRATION, PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING





# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BOOSTS BRAIN FUNCTION

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TRIGGERS THE RELEASE OF:

1. BRAIN-DERIVED-NEUROTROPIC-FACTOR (BDNF)
  - FACTOR THAT ENABLES NEURONS TO COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER
  - SITTING FOR MORE THAN 20 MINUTES AT A TIME CAUSES LEVELS OF BDNF TO DECLINE
2. ENDORPHINS (BETTER CONCENTRATION AND ALERTNESS, RAISES SELF-ESTEEM)
3. SEROTONIN (CALMS BEHAVIOR)
4. DOPAMINE (PLEASURE RESPONSE)
5. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTES BRAIN REGENERATION AND GROWTH OF NEW BRAIN CELLS

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACILITATES LEARNING

1. MOVEMENT ACTIVATES THE RETICULAR ACTIVATION SYSTEM (RAS) AND VESTIBULAR SYSTEMS FOR READING, MATH AND LANGUAGE
2. RAS IS CRITICAL FOR ATTENTION SPAN
3. GOOD BALANCE IMPROVES SKILLS NEEDED TO READ LETTERS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
4. PHYSICALLY NAVIGATING THE ENVIRONMENT, PROMOTES EYE MUSCLE COORDINATION NEEDED FOR READING
5. INFORMATION STORED AND RETRIEVED BETTER WHEN LEARNED THROUGH MOVEMENT

# 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:** Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity each day.

**Guideline 2:** Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity each day.

**Guideline 3:** Daily outdoor time in a safe setting supervised by an adult.



## PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT A 3 YEAR OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MOTOR SKILLS

- RIDES TRICYCLE
- JUMPS OFF BOTTOM STEP
- STANDS ON ONE FOOT
- GOES UP STAIRS WITH ALTERNATE FEET, BUT MAY STILL COME DOWN STAIRS WITH A LEADING FOOT
- BROAD JUMPS
- MAY TRY TO DANCE BUT BALANCE MAY BE INADEQUATE



# PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT A 4 YEAR OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MOTOR SKILLS

- SKIPS
- HOPS ON 1 FOOT
- CATCHES BALL RELIABLY
- THROWS BALL OVERHEAD
- WALKS DOWN STAIRS USING ALTERNATE FOOTING





## PLAN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES THAT SAFELY SUPPORT A 5 YEAR OLD'S DEVELOPMENTAL MOTOR SKILLS

- HOPS ON ALTERNATE FEET
- THROWS AND CATCHES BALL WELL
- JUMPS ROPE
- WALKS BACKWARD WITH HEEL TO TOE
- JUMPS FROM A HEIGHT OF 12 INCHES AND LANDS ON TOES
- BALANCES ON ALTERNATE FEET WITH EYES CLOSED



# PROVIDE FREE SPACE WITH DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE TOYS



- VARIETY OF BALLS
- PLASTIC BATS
- LOW BASKET BALL HOOP
- ROCKING BOATS
- HULA HOOPS
- JUMP ROPES
- RIDING TOYS
- TRICYCLES
- PARACHUTE
- SCARVES



# PROVIDE FREE SPACE WITH DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENT AND GAMES

- TOSSING GAMES
- LOW BALANCE BEAM
- TUMBLING MATS
- RAMPS & STEPS
- LOW CLIMBERS
- OBSTACLE COURSES
- HOPSCOTCH
- MUSIC WITH ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS
- MUSIC FOR DANCING





CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS

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THEY LOVE TO LEARN

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THEY ENJOY MOVING  
THEIR BODIES





# ADULTS SHOULD MODEL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

CHILDREN LOVE TO IMITATE  
ADULTS

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BE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT BEING  
ACTIVE

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ENTHUSIASM IS CONTAGIOUS!

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INFECT YOUNG CHILDREN WITH  
ENTHUSIASM FOR PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY



# INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS



1. RIDING A 2-WHEELED BIKE
2. ROLLER SKATING OR BLADING
3. ELIMINATION GAMES



# OTHER GUIDELINES FOR PRESCHOOLERS

- 1. LIMIT SEDENTARY ACTIVITY TO 60 MINUTES PER DAY FOR PRESCHOOLERS. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE TIME SPENT EATING AND SLEEPING.**
- 2. LIMIT SEDENTARY TIME INTERVALS TO 15 - 20 MINUTES AT A TIME.**
- 3. LIMIT SCREEN TIME TO 1 HOUR OF QUALITY, COMMERCIAL FREE SCREEN TIME FOR PRESCHOOLERS.**



**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!

