
Encouraging Physical Activity in Preschoolers

INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the video “Encouraging Physical Activity in Preschoolers,” from the Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern Connecticut State University. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Discuss ways preschoolers can engage in physical activities throughout the day.
- ◆ Plan to support preschoolers’ development of healthy movement habits.
- ◆ Identify ways educators can support families in engaging preschoolers in physical activities at home.

Activity

- ◆ Watch the video.
- ◆ Use the questions below to reflect on effective ways to support preschoolers’ physical activities, both at school and at home.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support preschoolers’ gross motor skills.

What we're trying to get at is instilling these healthy movement habits early on. We know that young children develop most of their habits by the age of five. If choosing movement activity is instilled in these children by age five, we're all set.

Dr. Darren Robert

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the video? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?

- ◆ In the video, Dr. Robert mentioned, “We know that early childhood specialists have a full plate, they have many things they must get done each day. We're not asking you to put any of those aside and make room for physical activity; what we are asking is to infuse physical activity into your existing curriculum.”
 - Consider the children in your classroom, as well as their abilities, preferences, and strengths. What are some ways you can infuse movement activities into your existing curriculum?
 - What challenges may arise with infusing movement activities into your existing curriculum? How can you overcome such challenges?
 - Think about the challenges families may experience when trying to infuse physical activity into their daily routines. How might you support them to overcome these challenges?

- ◆ Some families may need support in encouraging preschoolers to be physically active at home, while others may have ideas to share with educators and other families. Consider the unique needs of the families in your care. How can you be a resource to families and share strategies that support healthy movement skills while respecting their unique situations and values? In what ways can you partner with families to bring their ideas to life in the classroom?

- ◆ In the video, the narrator mentions that “Managing physical activity within the classroom does take planning and preparation.”
 - What are some specific steps you should take as you plan to engage preschoolers in movement activities?
 - Think about your classroom environment. What modifications do you need to make to the physical space to ensure that preschoolers can safely engage in movement activities throughout the day?
 - How might these considerations inform how you encourage families to support gross motor skills in the home?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about encouraging preschoolers' gross motor skills:

- ◆ **Source:** Shape America
- ◆ **Handout:** Give Kids an Active Start-Building Healthy Habits
- ◆ **Link:** https://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/upload/Give_Kids_an_Active_Start.pdf
- ◆ **Description:** This handout describes the importance of physical activities and encourages home, school, and community collaboration.

- ◆ **Source:** Edutopia
- ◆ **Video:** Activating the Brain with Movement Breaks
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsKLihqkcd0>
- ◆ **Description:** This video explains how movement activities prepares the brain for learning and supports self-regulation.

- ◆ **Source:** The Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern Connecticut State University
- ◆ **Video:** Incorporating Motor Play in the Preschool Classroom
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NeWX6HOBzyl>
- ◆ **Description:** This video describes how movement activities can be integrated into classroom activities to support engagement and learning.