

Physical Activity Policy for Children Under 5

Purpose

This policy promotes regular physical activity among children under the age of five. Physical activity is essential for the health, development, and well-being of young children, supporting motor skills, social interactions, and overall physical health. This policy outlines the guidelines for ensuring a supportive and active environment that encourages safe and stage-appropriate physical activities.

Scope

This policy applies to all children under five years old in our care, staff, and families.

1. Daily Physical Activity Requirements

- Children under one year of age should engage in supervised floor-based play and "tummy and back time" several times a day.
- Children aged 1-2 should be physically active for at least 180 minutes daily through various activities, including light to energetic play.
- Children aged 3-5 should have at least 180 minutes of physical activity, including at least 60 minutes of energetic play such as running, jumping, or climbing.
- Activities should be spread throughout the day and fit into a daily routine.
(Physical activity = Whole body movement of varying intensities that requires more energy than resting, often gained through play)

2. Structured and Unstructured Play

- **Structured Physical Activities:** Staff will provide age-appropriate, structured physical activities throughout the day. These may include simple games, obstacle courses, and guided movement.
- Children should be afforded the opportunity to access the following movements: slide, swing, crawl, climb, run, roll, spin, push, pull, jump, hang, tug, dig, lift, sweep, balance, rough and tumble play, and be upside down

- Unstructured Play: Children will have regular opportunities for free play in safe and engaging environments both indoors and outdoors, with opportunities to explore risky play

3. Outdoor Play

- Children should have access to all weather outdoor play daily, as fresh air and natural environments are beneficial for physical development.
- Outdoor areas will be well-maintained and offer opportunities for a variety of physical activities, such as climbing, running, and balancing.

4. Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

- Minimise sedentary behaviour (e.g., sitting or restrained in a stroller or highchair) to no more than one hour at a time.
- Reduce chair usage at stations and promote 'no chair days'
- Screen time is discouraged for children under two years. For children aged 2-5, screen time should be limited to no more than one hour per day, with content that is educational and interactive.

5. Safety and Supervision

- All physical activities will be supervised by trained staff to ensure safety and prevent injuries.
- Staff will conduct regular risk assessments of indoor and outdoor play areas to maintain a safe environment.
- Appropriate protective gear, like helmets, will be provided when necessary, and age-appropriate equipment will be used.

6. Encouraging Physical Activity in All Abilities

- Physical activities will be inclusive and adaptable to meet the needs of children of all abilities.
- Staff will work closely with families and health professionals to accommodate any specific needs and support physical development for all children.

7. Family Engagement and Education

- Families will be informed about the importance of physical activity for young children and encouraged to engage in active play at home.
- Regular updates will be provided to families about their child's participation and progress in physical activities.

8. Staff Training

- Staff members will receive training on the developmental benefits of physical activity for young children.
- Staff will also be educated on age-appropriate physical activities, safety protocols, and ways to foster an inclusive and active environment for children.
- Staff will be aware of the role of early reflexes and the 8 sensory systems on physical development
- Staff will monitor children who may have difficulties with sensory integration and other aspects of physical development, seeking advice and guidance as appropriate

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with best practices and guidelines from early childhood development authorities. Feedback from families, staff, and children's health professionals will be considered to continuously improve the physical activity environment for young children.

Policy Effective Date: [Insert Date]

Next Review Date: [Insert Date]

This policy is in place to help children develop healthy habits, stay physically active, and enjoy an environment that promotes movement, exploration, and development.