

WATERMELON and WIGGLES



Dakota County Public Health Department • 651-554-6100

Encouraging Physical Activity in Childcare

Preschoolers need two or more hours of active play time every day. Toddlers should have at least an hour of active play time each day.

[Healthy Kids, Healthy Future](#), part of Michelle Obama's initiative to prevent childhood obesity, tells us that physical activity helps children stay at a healthy weight and reduces their risk of developing obesity-related illnesses, such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. It also has been shown to help relieve feelings of stress and depression and reduce behavioral problems.

Providers' Professional Development Video

- Dr. Darren Robert describes the importance of physical activity for development.
- Offers several ways to physically engage preschoolers through yoga and other activities, and how to involve parents in the home setting.
- Watch the [VIDEO](#) here.

Babies should have short periods of "[tummy time](#)" every day.

Tummy time for infants has many benefits, such as promoting motor skill and cognitive development. Tummy time helps infants build strength, particularly in their neck and shoulder muscles. This, in turn, helps infants reach early movement milestones like rolling over, sitting up, and crawling.



Teachers can use [GoSmart](#) to plan intentional physical learning experiences for children ages zero to five. GoSmart can also be shared with parents to give them helpful ideas on how to support physical play with their children every day!

There are many fun ways to incorporate yoga into the classroom and you do not need to be certified in a particular curriculum. Helping children learn to stabilize and regulate their bodies is an important part of their development. Here are [five ideas that can get you started with breathing activities](#). The hot air balloon breath is great because when their hands are on their heads, they are not on their friends.

Ensure all activities are safe and developmentally appropriate.

- The Minnesota Department of Education has a document that can help you know the appropriate expectations for children and how to best support in their Physical and Movement Development Domain. Review the [Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress \(ECIPs\)](#) for Physical Development and Movement.



The Centers for Disease Control has a [Developmental Milestone Tracker](#) that can help both parents and providers recognize if children are meeting their milestones. It also provides activities to help support children's development in multiple domains.

Try this [Monthly Physical Activity Calendar](#) that can be sent home in either English or Spanish

August 						
Get Moving Today!						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Walk or run in a big circle, after the first one jump into the air. Jump up to five times.	Using rolled up socks, put them on your tummy as you crawl walk them across the house.	Draw a big circle using sidewalk chalk. Toss a sock or a bean bag into the circle. How far away can you get and still toss into the circle?	What are your favorite animals? Can you move like them and see if someone can guess what you are?	Hit a balloon high into the sky and chase it as it floats all over the place. Hit it again before it touches the ground.	Ask someone to pitch you some soft balls as you try to hit the balls with a soft bat.	Play hide and seek with a friend or family member.
Find a hill to run up and roll down. Go up in a different way and come down in a different way.	Get your feet wet and make tracks on the sidewalk. Try taking big steps and then small steps.	Practice your toss and catch skills. Can you clap before you catch?	Reach with your front foot as you push off of your back foot. Pretend to leap over puddles.	Play catch with someone. Follow the ball with your eyes and then move your hands to meet the ball.	How far can you kick a ball? Kick it hard, chase it, run back and kick it again.	Set up a track in your yard. How many steps does it take to run the entire track?
Pretend to be a butterfly that is flying around your yard from flower to flower.	Make up a new game. Give it a name and have fun playing it.	How many different ways can you move your body? How about shiver, tumble, and waddle?	Make up a movement pattern - try jump, jump, veegee, jump, jump, veegee. Your turn!	Go on a color walk. Find every color of the rainbow. Do five big jumps for every color.	Take two minutes before going to bed tonight to stretch and relax as a family.	Pretend to move like different foods - melt like a popsicle or pop like popcorn.
Work on spelling your name (or other words) - but use your body to make each letter.	Practice bouncing a ball. Can you bounce it really high? Can you bounce really low? Can you bounce it so it travels behind you?	Practice your hopping skills. Take off and land on the same foot. How many times can you hop in a row? Can you hop with both feet?	A day to stretch your body in all different shapes and directions. Try to hold each stretch until you count to five.	Make up a yoga pose for your favorite animals. Do each pose as you relax and breathe.	Sweep the sidewalk or driveway for your family. Work hard and use those muscles.	Using paper plates try to see how far you can make them fly. What is the best way to toss it to make it go far?
Use your fine motor skills today - clean some vegetables and enjoy a treat.	Plan an afternoon of physical activity. Let everyone decide one thing that they would like to do with the rest of the family.	Spread out a beach towel, move around it, beside it, on it, then under it.	Play "Kick Golf". Pick a towel, move around it, over it, beside it, on it, and then pick a new goal.	Put a water hose on a target, take turns kicking until you hit the target and then pick a new goal.	Using stuff from around the house create a tunnel - have fun slipping, sliding and jumping through it in different ways.	Go back and find your favorite activity and do it again.



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