

Did you know...

Toddlers need physical activity to grow up healthy?

Toddlers learn through movement? When they move, they build strength, brain connections and knowledge about our world and the people in it. As their skills increase, so does their confidence.

You do not need to “teach” toddlers to walk? Just provide support and many opportunities for them to practice their developing skills.

That 68% of children under two watch over two hours of screen time a day, even though screen time is not recommended for this age group?

HELP YOUR TODDLER BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE EVERY DAY.

Toddlers should get at least 60 - 90 minutes of physical activity daily. A toddler (1 through 2 years old) uses energy by walking, running, climbing and throwing. Toddlers need a safe environment and good supervision to keep them safe. They are curious, mobile and sometimes fearless, and they may not always understand the result of their actions. Toddlers often love to participate in daily activities with the family, so if they are interested, encourage them to help with sorting laundry, setting the table, and putting away toys. The options are endless for working physical activity into your toddler’s day!

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR TODDLERS...

- Develops their brains and increases their ability to learn.
- Builds and maintains healthy bones, muscles and joints.
- Promotes good sleep.
- Helps them stay at a healthy weight.
- Develops a healthy heart and mind.
- Develops their independence.
- Develops movement skills such as walking, running and throwing.
- Develops social skills such as sharing, communicating, problem-solving, and decision making.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND YOUR FAMILY

Most of us don’t get enough activity daily, but physical activity is fun and something you can enjoy together as a family. Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle for people of all ages. You can begin to help your toddler develop healthy habits by including physical activity in your daily routine. Your whole family will be healthier and you will be supporting learning at the same time.

TIPS FOR BEING ACTIVE WITH YOUR TODDLER

- Make it fun! When physical activity is enjoyable, both you and your children will WANT to play!
- Toddlers are naturally very active and curious about the world. They are often fearless because they do not always expect the results of their actions. Encourage your toddler to explore in safe environments with your caring supervision and involvement.
- Be active together! Use physical activity as family bonding time. When you play together, she has the opportunity and support to try and master new skills such as: walking, running, climbing, kicking, throwing and catching.
- Be a great role model for healthy habits. Add physical activity to the things you do already. Park farther away from the door when you go shopping. Walk to get your mail instead of driving up to the mailbox. Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Offer a wide range of equipment or opportunities to support physical development and active play:
 - Objects to roll, throw and kick, such as bean bags and large, soft balls
 - Push toys like sturdy shopping carts, lawn mowers or doll carriages
 - Wagons to fill up with objects and pull
 - Riding toys
 - Low climbers
- Limit the use of strollers. Encourage young children to walk short distances.
- Involve your family in household tasks: setting the table, sorting laundry, folding clothes, washing the car, putting away toys, etc.
- Give your toddler plenty of opportunities to play outdoors in a safe, supervised environment. Bad weather is no excuse for not being active – just make sure that he/she is dressed appropriately for the weather conditions.
- Schedule a daily time for physical activity—maybe an hour before or after dinner go for a family walk or play a game outdoors.

- You don't have to do the same physical activity for a whole hour or even do it all at one time. You and your family can do as many different activities as you want throughout the day in blocks of at least ten minutes. Then, add up the minutes to meet your goal of at least 60-90 minutes of physical activity a day.
- Set your weekend in motion by planning active family fun. Try a hike, a walk to a nearby playground, or a dip in the pool.
- Put on different kinds of music and dance together. To add variety, try "jamming" together by drumming with your hands on a sturdy bench or table. Children of all ages love music and will get a kick out of dancing and drumming with the family.
- Try rolling a ball back and forth. As she becomes more comfortable with this activity, see if she would like to play "catch." Have her throw you a ball and then you throw it back to her. She may chase after the ball at first, but before you know it she will catch it!
- Try kicking a large, soft ball around. As she becomes more comfortable with this activity, see if she would like to play "Kick ball." Have her kick a ball to you and then you kick it back. Try kicking the ball different ways: hard and soft, and notice where the ball goes.

SCREEN TIME

What is screen time? It's any time spent in front of a screen, for example, watching television or DVDs, using the computer, smart phones, and/or playing video games. The American Academy of Pediatrics, an organization of children's doctors, recommends no screen time for children under two years of age and no more than 1-2 hours a day for children two and older.

Too much screen time isn't good for your toddler's health or her physical and mental development. It puts children at an increased risk for obesity. The more time she spends in front of a screen, the less time she is being active, using energy and developing important physical skills. Also, the more TV your child watches, the more likely she is to snack even though she is not hungry, which may lead to weight gain.

TIPS FOR TUNING OUT AND TURNING OFF

Your child may be used to watching TV, so establishing some "media rules" may take time, but it will work. This doesn't mean you can never watch TV again! But setting limits will help her grow up healthy and give you more opportunities to spend quality time together. Children will find something fun to do if you make it easy and support them with ideas. Try these to start:

- Put special toys or materials that she enjoys on a shelf or cupboard in your kitchen: blocks, board books or a craft box with safe items for them to use (crayons, markers, stickers, tape, and blank paper). She can "work" in the kitchen with you while you make dinner.
- Turn off the TV during dinner and enjoy each other. This is a great time to talk with her.
- Move the TVs in your house out of the bedrooms and to a central location like the family room so you can easily watch with her and monitor use by older children.
- Have one specific time during the day with age-appropriate, educational programming, during which TV viewing is okay for your two year old. An even better approach is to steer her to activities that do not involve screen time. If you do allow your two year old to watch television, always watch the program with her, so you can talk about it together.
- Wait to watch adult-only shows until after your children have gone to bed.
- Create a quiet corner. Have picture books available and easy puzzles so she can entertain herself.
- Create a safe area for supervised physical activity where your toddler can walk, run, and play and use push or pull toys. Always provide close supervision for toddlers.

“You are your child’s guide and teacher – the best person to help her learn how to live a healthy life! Instead of screen time, focus on positive activities like physical activity to help your child grow up healthy.”