

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## What is physical activity?

**In 2019 the Chief Medical Officer published guidelines for physical activity; referenced in a footnote in the EYFS. The report stated:**

‘Being active every day provides a foundation for a healthier and happier life... We want to underline the importance of regular strength and balance activities: being strong makes all movement easier and increases our ability to perform normal daily tasks... In children and young people, regular physical activity is associated with improved learning and attainment, better mental health and cardiovascular fitness, also contributing to healthy weight status.’

### Infants (less than 1 year):

- Infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity, e.g. crawling.
- For infants not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake (and other movements such as reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling themselves independently, or rolling over); more is better.

**NB:** Tummy time may be unfamiliar to babies at first, but can be increased gradually, starting from a minute or two at a time, as the baby becomes used to it. Babies should not sleep on their tummies.

### Toddlers (1-2 years):

- Toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including active and outdoor play, spread throughout the day; more is better.

### Pre-schoolers (3-4 years):

- Pre-schoolers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. More is better; the 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

## Physical Activity

Physical activity includes all forms of activity, such as walking, active play and active games. Children are more likely to maintain a healthy weight if they are physically active for at least 180 minutes (three hours) each day, as recommended for children aged under five years in the UK.

## Barriers To Physical Play

- Fear of injury or exacerbating a health issue - The risk of adverse events from physical activity is relatively low, and the health benefits accrued from such activity outweigh the risks.
- Access to outdoors – EYFS states providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis.
- Weather conditions – Unless weather conditions are dangerous, there are learning opportunities in all weather.



There's  
no such  
thing as  
bad weather,  
only bad  
clothes.







The EYFS Statutory Framework states:

Page 9 – Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives.

Page 36, 3.59 – Providers must provide access to an outdoor play area or, if that is not possible, ensure that outdoor activities are planned and taken on a daily basis


## Physical activity for early years (birth – 5 years)

Active children are healthy, happy,  
school ready and sleep better

 BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS & SOCIAL SKILLS	 MAINTAINS HEALTH & WEIGHT	 CONTRIBUTES TO BRAIN DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING
 IMPROVES SLEEP	 DEVELOPS MUSCLES & BONES	 ENCOURAGES MOVEMENT & CO-ORDINATION

### Every movement counts

Aim for at least **180** Minutes per day for children 1-5 years



**Under-1s** at least 30 minutes across the day

**Get Strong. Move More. Break up inactivity**

UK Chief Medical Officers’ Physical Activity Guidelines, 2019

### For more information

[UK Chief Medical Officers’ Physical Activity Guidelines \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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