

**HEALTHY START
FOR LIFE**



Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity During the Toddler and Preschool Years

Course for Parents and Child Care Providers
Topic 4: Active Preschoolers



At the end of this presentation, you will have a greater understanding of:

- **The benefits of regular physical activity for children.**
- **What active living means.**
- **The kinds of activities that are appropriate for preschoolers.**
- **The amount of activity appropriate for preschoolers.**
- **Exercises and activities (active play and games) for preschoolers.**
- **The importance of being active everyday (indoor and outdoor) at home or day care.**
- **The importance of families being active together and some strategies to make this happen.**
- **Reliable resources on active living for children.**

Use this quiz to test your knowledge about preschoolers and physical activity. Answers will be provided throughout the lesson. You'll have the opportunity to take the quiz again at the end of the lesson.

- 1. How much physical activity do preschoolers need?** a) 30 minutes - 3 or 4 times a week b) 30 minutes a day c) 90 minutes a day or more.
- 2. Why should preschoolers be active?** a) to grow and develop properly b) for good posture c) to reduce stress and help them sleep d) to improve fitness e) all the above
- 3. Preschoolers are active enough so I don't need to worry about planning to keep them active.** True/False
- 4. Swimming and skating are NOT appropriate activities for three year olds.** True/False
- 5. Games and sports for preschoolers should be competitive rather than cooperative.** True/False
- 6. Children who have active parents tend to be more active than children whose parents are not active.** True/False

Why do preschoolers need regular physical activity?

- For healthy growth and development
- To build strong bones and muscles
- To stay flexible
- To have a healthy weight
- For good posture and balance
- To improve fitness and strengthen their heart
- For confidence and to help them feel good about themselves
- To reduce stress and help them sleep.

Resource:

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/guide/index_e.html

Being active is fun, healthy and normal!

- Preschoolers are naturally active.
- Support their active lifestyle and help keep them active every day!
- Be active with your preschooler.
- Encourage more outdoor play and activities.
- Build healthy activity habits which will last a lifetime.



Your preschooler might be active now but...

- **One-half of Canadian children are NOT active enough for optimal growth and development.**
- **Children become less active as they get older.**
- **Children have less time for active play when they are in school.**
- **Girls tend to become less active than boys as they get older.**

Resource:

My preschooler is active enough – why do I need to worry about physical activity?

<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faq_5.asp>

Reference:

Active Healthy Kids Canada

<www.activehealthykids.ca>

Inactivity in childhood leads to...

- Increased risk of unnecessary weight gain and obesity.
- Increased risk of heart and bone disease and some cancers later in life.
- Increased risk of adult onset or type 2 diabetes (which has been observed in children with marked obesity).

Reference:

Healthy active living for children and youth - CPS

<www.cps.ca/english/statements/HAL/HAL02-01.htm>

How active should preschoolers be?

- Preschoolers should be active every day.
- Toddlers should get at least 30 minutes of structured¹ physical activity daily; preschoolers need at least 60 minutes.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should get at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of unstructured² physical activity daily and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

¹ Structured physical activity includes games and activities that you direct or do with your toddler/preschooler.

² Unstructured physical activity is supervised free time for children to play actively on their own or with other children.

Resource:

How much physical activity do toddlers and preschoolers need?

<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faq_6.asp>

Reference:

Physical Activity Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, National Association for Sport & Physical Education

<www.aahperd.org>

What kinds of activities should preschoolers do?



- Endurance activities **that strengthen the heart and lungs such as running, jumping and swimming.**
- Flexibility activities **that encourage children to bend, stretch and reach such as gymnastics and dancing.**
- Strength building activities **that build strong muscles and bones such as climbing.**

Resources:

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/guide/index_e.html

What kinds of physical activity are appropriate for preschoolers?

www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faq_7.asp

What can 2 to 3 year olds do?

Age	Movement Abilities (just beginning to or is able to)	Activities
2 to 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walks forward and backward, run and jump, climb up and down stairs -Walks along a balance beam or board with or without help -Throws a ball or bean bag using two hands -Kicks a large ball without losing balance, or runs after it and stops it with two hands before kicking again -Hits a suspended balloon or ball with a large bat -Crawls and climbs up and through play structures and household furniture -Sits with balance on a swing, while being gently pushed from behind by an adult -Sits on and skillfully move a riding toy, pushing with two feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stop and go walking and running games; tag -Balance Beam (not more than 25 cm off ground) -Follow the leader obstacle course -Ball play; throw and retrieve, ball kicking -Hitting and batting -Ice skating with assistance -Water play and swimming -Rhythm, music and dance -Marching band, rhythmical activities, hopping and singing games

What can 3 to 4 year olds do?

Age	Movement Abilities (just beginning to or is able to)	Activities
3 to 4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walks forward and backward with varying speed and in different directions -Walks balanced on tip toes -Jumps with increased skill over objects and in combination with walking or running -Catches a large ball -Kicks a ball with more accuracy and retrieves it with two hands while the ball is in motion -Hits a ball off batting tee with large bat -Climbs with coordination, balance and a firm grip on large play structure -Pedals and maneuvers a tricycle, big wheels, or small two-wheeled bicycle with or without training wheels -Swims moving arms and kicking feet, while firmly supported under hips and chest by adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walking and running games; tag -Jumping over a line -Balance beam - not more than 50 cm or waist height off the ground (hold hand or stand beside child for safety) -Throwing and Catching -Hitting and Batting -Kicking to a partner and retrieving -Ice skating -Play structure or obstacle course with ladders, tunnels, ropes, balance board -Swimming, parents and tot swimming classes -Rhythm, music and dance -Blanket and parachute games

What can 5 to 6 year olds do?

Age	Movement Abilities (just beginning to or is able to)	Activities
5 to 6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Walks, runs, and jumps well -Climbs big play structures to their own comfort level -Catches and throws large and small objects with improved accuracy -Developing hand-eye coordination -Developing spatial awareness – how the child judges movement in relations of objects and people -Game skills are not developed but concept of teamwork is developing -Responds readily to rhythm and music -Desires for vigorous activity may lead to carelessness, especially with others -Tires easily but recovers quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Running and skipping -Gymnastics and martial arts -Ropes, bars and climbers -Games with different size objects such as balls, beanbags, scoops, and bats. -Games with a minimum number of rules and instructions. -Small groups games emphasizing cooperation rather than competition -Rhythm movement including walking, marching, clapping and running. -Ice skating, swimming, cross country skiing -Strenuous activities with rest and water breaks.

How can you help develop active children?

- Make physical activity part of each and every day.
- Provide regular opportunities for children to exercise their muscles, through running, climbing, jumping, or swimming.
- Choose activities that are appropriate for the age and stage of your children.
- Praise children for participating in an activity - building confidence is more important than skill at this stage (e.g. I'm glad you enjoyed playing that game vs. you played that game really well).
- Find activities they enjoy and have fun.
- Be a good role model by being active yourself and with your children.

Resource:

How can I support and encourage my preschooler to keep physically active?

<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faq_8.asp>

- Walk to child care or nursery school, neighbourhood parks, and the shops.
- Put on some music and dance together.
- Walk the dog – or someone else's.
- Play hide and seek or go on a scavenger hunt.
- Go to the park and help your child climb and swing.
- Play actively outside with your preschooler.
- Teach children how to kick a soccer ball, ride a bike, or skate.
- Let your child help with the gardening, raking or shoveling.
- Go on active family outings – hiking, cycling, skating, or skiing.



Resource:

Healthy Start for Life – FAQs

www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faqs.asp

How can you keep your child safe?

- Introduce new activities carefully and with patience - preschoolers need time to practice and master new skills.
- Make sure indoor and outdoor play spaces are safe.
- Keep constant watch of children around water, in parks and public places.
- Wear protective equipment such as helmets for cycling, scooters, skate boards, roller skating, hockey and skiing, and lifejackets for paddling and water activities.

Resource:

Keeping Kids Safe

www.caringforkids.cps.ca/keepingkidssafe/index.htm

How can you support physical activity in your community?

- Encourage more outdoor activities, games and play.
- Organize physical activities such as a tricycle/bicycle parade, fun walks, scavenger hunts, and hikes.
- Advocate for more accessible times for public skating, swimming, and use of school gyms for play.
- Support community efforts to make available more safe places to play including playgrounds, parks and green spaces, walking and cycling trails, and safer neighbourhoods.

Make activity happen with a plan...

Use the Healthy Start for Life: Keeping Active Together Planner:

- To keep track of the activities you do with your children
- To see if you have reached your goal of keeping your preschoolers active each and every day.

Remember: Parents and child care providers share the responsibility of keeping children physically active and should all be involved in planning and doing activities with their children.

Resource:

Healthy Start for Life - Keeping Active Together Planner
<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/Active_Living_Planner.pdf>

Keeping active and eating well go hand-in-hand...



- Eating small meals or snacks can help preschoolers get in all the nutrients they need each day.
- Plan to take nutritious portable snacks (e.g. whole grain crackers, muffins, or bagels, bananas or apples, cheese or yogurt) and water for hikes or long trips to the park or other activities.
- To avoid choking make sure preschoolers sit down to eat and enjoy their snack.

Resources:

Healthy Start for Life: How can I help my active preschooler eat well on the run?

<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/faq_4.asp>

Healthy Start for Life: Topic 3: Meal Planning for Preschoolers

<www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/content/resources/lesson3.pdf>

Try this quiz again to see to if your knowledge about physical activity and preschoolers has improved. Check your answers on the following slide.

1. **How much physical activity do preschoolers need?** a) 30 minutes - 3 or 4 times a week b) 30 minutes a day c) 90 minutes a day or more.
2. **Why should preschoolers be active?** a) to grow and develop properly b) for good posture c) to reduce stress and help them sleep d) to improve fitness e) all of the above
3. **Preschoolers are active enough so I don't need to worry about planning to keep them active.** True/False
4. **Swimming and skating are NOT appropriate activities for three year olds.** True/False
5. **Games and sports for preschoolers should be competitive rather than cooperative.** True/False
6. **Children who have active parents tend to be more active than children whose parents are not active.** True/False

How did you score?

1. **How much physical activity do preschoolers need?** c) 90 minutes a day or more.
2. **Why should preschoolers be active?** e) all of these are benefits of keeping preschoolers active
3. **Preschoolers are active enough so I don't need to worry about planning to keep them active.** False – preschoolers in general are an active group but activity declines with age and after they start school
4. **Swimming and skating are NOT appropriate activities for three year olds.** False – with guidance and support from parents these activities are appropriate for preschoolers.
5. **Games and sports for preschoolers should be competitive rather than cooperative.** True/False – Games and sports should be encourage cooperation and skill building rather than competitiveness
6. **Children who have active parents tend to be more active than children whose parents are not active.** True

For more information

- For more resources to promote healthy eating and active living among preschoolers visit the Healthy Start For Life partnership website at www.dietitians.ca/healthystart
- You can also search for resources using the Online Interactive Resource Inventory at www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/frm_resource/frm_resource.asp?fn=searchform

Acknowledgements

- Michele Grant, Canadian Child Care Federation www.cccf-fcsge.ca/
- Dr. Budimka Oroz, Canadian Institute of Child Health www.cich.ca
- Michèle Matte, Canadian Institute of Child Health www.cich.ca
- Dr. Panagiota Klentrou, Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology www.csep.ca
- Carol Harrison/Amy Farrier, Dairy Farmers of Canada - Ontario www.nutritionthatworks.org/
- Lynda Corby, Dietitians of Canada www.dietitians.ca
- Janet Schlenker, DC Pediatric Nutrition Network www.dietitians.ca
- Lee Rysdale, NutriSTEP Project – Sudbury & District Health Unit www.sdhu.com/
- Colleen Logue, Nutrition Resource Centre – Ontario Public Health Association www.nutritionrc.ca
- Dr. Bill Mackie, The College of Family Physicians of Canada www.cfpc.ca/
- Lorrie Huggins, YMCA of Greater Toronto www.ymcatoronto.org
- Solange Lamont, RD – French Content Advisor
- Lynn Roblin, Healthy Start for Life Project Coordinator, Marketlink Solutions www.marketlinksolutions.com

Healthy Start for Life is sponsored by Dietitians of Canada. This project was established through funding provided by Health Canada's Population Health Fund. The views expressed in this course are not necessarily those of Health Canada.

Certificate Of Achievement

Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity During the Toddler and Preschool Years Course.

This certificate recognizes that _____ has completed
Topic 4: Active Preschoolers.



This course has been designed to help parents, caregivers, child care workers and health intermediaries learn more about the nutrition and physical activity needs of preschoolers. It also provides activities and strategies, which will help encourage preschoolers to eat well and keep active.

