

Prescription for Active Play

The FITT Principle

Frequency – daily

Intensity – heart rate measurement

Time – short bursts of activity throughout the day

Type – any fun activity to emphasize fundamental movement skills

A Happy Heart: Teaching Heart Rate

Place hand over heart. Be very quiet. Close eyes, if needed.

Ask, “What do you feel?”

Explain that the heart is not working hard so it beats slowly.

Do a short activity to elevate heart rate and repeat the measurement.

Ask again, “What do you feel? Is this the same as before? What’s different?”

Explain that when the body is busy/active, the heart beats faster; it’s a Happy Heart.

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)

FMS are the building blocks of all movement:

Locomotor - moving through space, i.e. walk, run

Manipulative - control of an object, i.e. catch, throw

Stability - control of one’s body, i.e. balance

Some simple FMS can be done in small spaces, for example:

- Balance – one foot
- Bounce – bend and straighten legs rhythmically
- Squat- feet apart lower body as in sitting
- Walk
- Run
- Jump – two feet
- Hop – one foot
- Catch – one or two hands
- Throw - over and underhand

Make time for Active Play every day!

Turner, A. C. (2013). Active play every day: A manual for facilitating active play with young children.

Simple Activities for Infants and Toddlers

- Unrestrained/unrestricted tummy time or roaming time
- Clap hands- bring hands together in front of or over torso
- Criss cross arms- open and close arms across the chest
- Cycling legs- alternately move legs as in a cycling motion
- Jumping legs- bend and straighten both legs as in a jump
- Opposites- reach left arm to right leg. Repeat other side
- Sit ups- offer hands to allow infant to raise up from lying down
- Stand up- offer hands to allow infant to stand from sitting position
- Dance - play music to encourage free movement

Simple Activities for Preschoolers

- Good morning and good night stretching- reach arms overhead and stretch out legs.
- A pair of socks rolled up can be used for catching and throwing indoors.
- Pillows placed on the floor can be used for jumping on and off.
- Play tug of war with a towel for strong tummy muscles.
- Use medium size beach balls outdoors for kicking practice. A small beach ball can be used for catching and tossing.
- Blow bubbles and have child chase and pop when outdoors.
- Walk and take stairs whenever possible.
- Have child help with household activities, like carrying items, sweeping, pushing carts while shopping
- Encourage movements like balance, reach, or toe touch while waiting in lines.

Active Play Should Be FUN!

Be willing to play. "May I play with you?" "Let's play."

Be enthusiastic. "Show me how you.....!"

Praise effort. "I see you're trying to hop. Nice try."

Talk about Active Play. "Tell me about how you played today (at school, at childcare, with friends, etc.)."

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