



## Physically active play

When children participate in physically active play they are developing their large and small muscles and gaining increasing control over their bodies. As they play indoors and outdoors, children develop increasing agility, coordination and balance. They will develop abilities and interests in a wide range of domains including spatial, visual, logical, and mathematical. A realistic perception of what they can do and what they cannot yet do contributes to their growing self-confidence.

### Some ways for adults to support children's learning

- Ensure the play environment is safe, supportive of children's development and able to provide challenges for infants, toddlers and younger children
- Provide play equipment that is versatile and able to be used in a range of ways
- Join in or initiate activities with children where appropriate
- Give children many opportunities to practise existing skills and try new ones.

### Physically active play helps children to:

- Develop large muscles, strength and balance
- Develop agility and coordination throughout the body, including hand-eye coordination
- Develop skills such as throwing, catching, hopping, jumping, skipping, climbing, and balancing
- Develop spatial awareness (awareness of where their body parts are in space) and avert clumsiness
- Release tension
- Gain confidence in and control of their bodies, enhancing their self-esteem
- Learn to cooperate and share with others
- Understand that physical activity is fun. Enjoyment and participation at this age can lead to a lifetime of fitness and participation in sporting activities.



### Providing for physically active play

Children need equipment and activities that give them opportunities to practise and extend their skills in running, balancing, swinging, crawling, stepping, climbing, catching, throwing, pushing and pulling, hopping, skipping, jumping, rolling, and crouching.

### Children may participate in physically active play by

- Observing other children
- Trying out simple activities, e.g. crawling through a tunnel when encouraged by a parent
- Pushing and pulling
- Exploring equipment with increasing dexterity, e.g. climbing ladders, using the slide
- Incorporating physical activities and equipment into dramatic play.



### Adults can help

- Provide space and suitable equipment
- Ensure the play area is safe, well-maintained and positioned safely
- Allow children to explore equipment at their own pace and ability level
- Be ready to join in and, if appropriate, assist with skills development, e.g. demonstrate the best ways to land, roll, throw, etc.
- Encourage turn-taking
- On wet days, ensure some physically active play is provided for inside.