



Being active and physical experiences



Why this Is important

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development to ensure they lead happy, healthy and active lives. Young children love being active. Unrestricted floor-based play and water-based activities should be encouraged, with daily opportunities for babies to move freely on their tummies, (tummy time) and back, in a variety of stimulating, safe spaces, without being constrained by straps or clothing. This provides opportunities for babies to use large muscle groups to kick, roll, crawl or stand but also to practise specific skills, such as reaching, grasping, pulling, pushing and playing with other people and objects.

Physical activity is also important to help babies maintain a healthy weight, build social bonds, develop all their senses, support communication skills and keep their minds and bodies active.

There is evidence to suggest young children spend a large amount of time being sedentary and engaged in activities that tend to occur whilst seated or which require very low levels of energy expenditure. It is important to break up extended periods of sitting and replace them with more active options.

What to look out for - Observing

- Physically your baby changes so much in the first two years of their life. Tune in to how your baby communicates through movement and body language.
- As your baby moves they may be able to show you what interests them in their environment and what they want to explore further.
- Watch as your baby manipulates and grasps a range of objects. Provide a range of resources for them to grasp, tug, bang, squeeze and throw. Babies need opportunities to make small and big movements.



Resources to use

- Small sized garden tools; small brooms, rakes, brushes, pots, watering cans, buckets
- Mark making tools; chinks, crayons, paintbrushes of different sizes, sponges
- Resources to support pushing, pulling and transporting - wheelbarrows, prams, carts, baskets, buckets of different sizes, a laundry basket
- Range of different sized balls, beanbags, little hoops and cones, bottles to make homemade skittles
- Playdough, paint, cornflour to explore with fingers
- Cardboard boxes, tunnels, big sheets of materials and tables

What is your child learning?

Activities and experiences to offer to try



Movement

Providing opportunities for throwing and rolling eg [Make your own skittles](#) from drinking bottles to knock down with balls or beanbags.

Pushing and pulling-You can use wheelbarrows, carts, prams, laundry basket. This also provides opportunities to transport objects from one place to another.

Crawling/walking

Different terrains provide a range of experiences for your child. Explore surfaces indoors and outdoors eg barefoot on the beach, crawling through long grass or climbing over a pile of cushions.

Balance, body awareness and coordination



Show your baby different ways they can make marks in playdough or paint by swirling, poking or patting it.

Moving in, out and under helps your baby learn how big they are in relation to other objects. Providing cardboard boxes, tunnels, blankets over tables to crawl through supports this play.

Visit your local park where your baby can explore swinging, sliding and spinning.

[Tummy time](#) provides endless opportunities for developing physical skills. Try the [tummy time clock game](#) to encourage movement.



Handling objects

Cutlery/Utensils. Offering your child a spoon during mealtimes gives them the option to use if they want, however messy the experience!

Gardening with your child can be fun and rewarding. Giving your child buckets, spades and small watering cans could be used to imitate your actions.

More Ideas and further suggestions

[How babies build up to their first steps - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

[Schemas \(education.gov.scot\)](#)

[25 Creative Ways to use a Cardboard Box - The Imagination Tree](#)

[Movement and play ideas for babies | Raising Children Network](#)

[Activities for babies and toddlers - Active For Life](#)

[Play Activities for Birth to 12 Months • ZERO TO THREE](#)