

Active Play Every Day

For 0- to 2-year-olds

Why is active play important?

Active play helps babies and toddlers grow up strong, smart and healthy. Babies and toddlers build motor skills and learn about the world by playing. Like reading to your child, active play helps the brain grow. Active play is a time families can have fun together. It's one of the most important gifts you can give your child.

How can I help my baby or toddler have active play every day?

At home:

- Give your baby plenty of “tummy time” throughout the day. This helps their muscles get stronger to sit up and crawl.*
- Find toys that help your baby or toddler play, like floor mirrors, play mats, low climbing platforms, push and pull toys, cars, animals on wheels, bean bags, activity tables, wagons, tot tunnels, large and lightweight rubber balls.*
- Babies and toddlers need time to stretch, roll, crawl, sit up and stand every day. Limit time in devices that don't let them move (like car seats, bouncy seats, swings and strollers).
- Outside time is a great way to let them move.
- No screen time, like TV, computers, video games, tablets (like an iPad) or smart phones (like an iPhone).

At the babysitter and daycare:

- Babysitters and daycares should provide play time. Remind your babysitter or daycare about making time for indoor and outdoor active play every day.



At your local playground:

- Play with your child at a playground near you. It's great to walk there if you can!
- During summer, you can also visit a wading pool (outdoor, shallow pool) near you.

At your local community center:

- Many community centers have drop-in indoor play gyms that charge a small fee each visit and many have toddler classes.

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- Check with your local community center to learn more about indoor play gyms and classes, fees, registration and scholarships.

At your local YMCA:

- YMCAs have indoor play gyms. The YMCA requires a paid membership, but scholarships are available.
- To find the YMCA nearest you and information about membership, program fees, registration and scholarships, visit: <http://ymca.net>.

At your local pool:

- Many pools have classes for babies and toddlers that teach water movement. They also have family swim time where you can play with your child.
- Check with your local pool for fees, registration and scholarships.

*Adapted from Let's Go (www.letsgo.org) and The American Academy of Pediatrics' Healthy Children (www.healthychildren.org).

WA-PLAY (Washington Physical Activity for the Young) is a Healthy Active Living Initiative supported by a grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics with generous funding from MetLife Foundation. WA-PLAY helps promote physical activity for 0- to 5-year-olds from diverse communities in Seattle and King County.

Where will your family go for active play?

Playground: _____

Community center: _____

YMCA: _____

Pool: _____

To Learn More

- www.seattlechildrens.org
- Your child's healthcare provider

Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call Marketing Communications at 206-987-5205 or 206-987-2280 (TTY).

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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