

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is not an SFSP requirement, sponsors are encouraged to provide opportunities for children to be physically active. Encourage children to take part in vigorous activities and join them whenever possible. Children need at least 60 minutes per day of moderate physical activity. It's important to encourage children to get in the habit of being physically active at a young age.

Physical activity helps children have fun and:

- Maintain a healthy weight;
- Develop strong muscles, a healthy heart and lungs;
- Strengthen bones;
- Develop motor skills, balance, and coordination;
- Develop positive attitudes; and
- Improve self-esteem.

Physical activity burns calories, helps with weight control, and reduces the risk of certain chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, stroke, coronary artery disease, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis later in life. An inactive lifestyle increases the risk of overweight and obesity as well as many chronic diseases. Include activities that keep children moving at your summer site.

Children can be physically active by:

- Turning up the music and dancing;
- Lifting and throwing balls;
- Taking the stairs, both up and down; or
- Swimming or playing basketball.

Tips for Promoting Physical Activity

How can I help children be physically active every day?

- Be a good role model. Participate with children in activities and show them that you enjoy active play every day.
- Create opportunities for safe, active play indoors and outdoors. Use toys and equipment that are the right size for the ages of the children.

- Keep children moving. Encourage all children to participate.
- Help everyone be active. Plan activities that allow all children the opportunity to play, including those with special needs.
- Include movement and physical action in children's indoor play and learning activities.
- Be weather-ready. When weather is too severe for outdoor play, dance to music indoors and tell or read stories that children act out physically.
- Use space wisely. Many games and activities meant for outdoors and large spaces can be changed for use in limited, indoor spaces. For example, use colored masking tape to create pathways for children to follow as they jump or walk.

What are some activities or games I can incorporate at my summer site?

- Allow kids to roll, pass, or kick balls to each other.
- Create an obstacle course.
- Set up relay races or jumping games.
- Play Octopus Tag! Draw two lines at least 20 feet apart. When the "octopus" in the middle says "Hungry!" the other children (the "fish") should try to cross to the other side while the octopus tries to tag them. When a fish is tagged, he or she becomes the octopus's arm and has to hold hands with the octopus, working with him or her to try to tag the other fish. The last fish left wins!
- Set up a hula-hoop game. With all the children standing in a single file line, give the first child in the line one hula-hoop to hold

over his or her head. The child will pull the hula-hoop down over his or her body to the floor, step out of it, and give the hoop to the next person in line.

- Act out different animals – hop like a rabbit, jump like a kangaroo, or waddle like a duck!
- Teach children math, science, and language concepts through games involving movement. For example, children can learn to count by tossing bean bags into a bowl.
- Plan a “movement parade.” March around the room or outside, while calling out different movements children can do: hop, skip, leap, twirl, twist, jump, stomp, and more.
- Provide two or more 5 to 10 minute periods of adult- led active play or games to promote physical activity every day. Try “follow-the-leader” or musical movement games, such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” “Hokey Pokey,” and “If You’re Happy and You Know It.”

Check out FNS’ Summer Food, Summer Moves Operator’s Guide for over 30 fun games and activities to do at a Summer site:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/summer-food-summer-moves-accessible-materials>.

