

Physical Activity Prescription for Preschoolers, (Ages 2 to 5 years)

Physical activity is important for young children’s growth and good health. It helps them develop a healthy heart, lungs, and immune system to fight off illness, as well as strong bones and muscles, and balance and coordination. Physical activity also helps relieve stress and provides an opportunity to have fun.

If kids are not physically active, as adults they may lack physical endurance, strength, coordination and the ability to do physical tasks. These problems can increase the risk of chronic illnesses and lower self-esteem.

Types of Activities

To help be healthy and fit, it is important to regularly do three different types of activities: aerobic; strengthening; and balance and coordination. Each type of activity provides particular benefits, but it is important to do all three types.

Not doing all three types is like trying to run a car without an engine. Just by keeping active, kids also will improve their flexibility.

Aerobic

- Promotes endurance and heart health
- Improves cardiovascular fitness
- Helps control weight
- Lowers blood pressure and cholesterol

Strengthening

- Strengthens bones and muscle
- Promoted stability for movement
- Reduces risk of injury

Balance and Coordination

- Helps to move around more efficiently
- Improves awareness of body
- Promotes self-confidence

*For examples of activities within each type, see other side of this sheet

Amount of Physical Activity

Target Goal: An hour and a half to two hours of movement and active play throughout every day.

- Do not allow your preschooler to sit for more than one hour without getting up and moving around (except when sleeping).
- Begin with goals that are easy to achieve and boost confidence with the success. For example, if your preschooler is active for 30 minutes a day now, each week increase activity for 10 minutes.

Tips for Making Physical Activity Fun

To help young children enjoy being physically active and make it a lifetime habit, let them choose the activity. It may take them time to find what they like and will keep at. But there are many choices to try and they will discover activities that are fun for them. Follow these tips to help keep your child motivated to move:

Providing our communities with quality, affordable & accessible healthcare

Bonnors Ferry

6615 Comanche Street
Bonnors Ferry, ID
83805
208.267.1718

Priest River

6509 Hwy. 2
Priest River, ID
83856
208.448.2321

Sandpoint

420 N. 2nd Ave.
Sandpoint, ID
83864
208.263.7101

Administration

301 Cedar St. Suite 206
Sandpoint, ID
83864
208.263.7101

- Make sure the activity is age appropriate
- Involve the whole family
- Take a class or join a team
- Encourage free play with an activity to do alone or with a friend anytime
- Incorporate music into the activity

Examples of Physical Activities for Youth (Ages 2-5 years)

<p>Aerobic At Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dancing • Jumping jacks • Playing red light, green light • Galloping or skipping 	<p>Aerobic Outside of Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing tag games • Indoor play park centers • Relay races • Jumping and bouncing on large inflatable structures at play centers
<p>Strengthening At Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing, pulling and carrying an object such as a laundry basket • Jumping games such a leapfrog, or jumping over object or tape on the floor • Using small climbing and slide structures such as those by Little Tykes or Step2 • Playing Tug-of-war 	<p>Strengthening Outside of Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing equipment at the playground • Pedaling a tricycle or bicycle • Swimming • Karate
<p>Balance and Coordination At Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crawling over and under objects such as pillows, tables, and chairs in an obstacle course • Doing the crab walk • Imitation games such as standing on one leg, touching toes or raising arms in the air • Walking up and down stairs instead of being carried 	<p>Balance and Coordination Outside of Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing hopscotch • Ice skating • Gymnastics • Walking at the mall instead of using a stroller