

Active Play Best Practices (Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers)

As a parent who works outside of the home and utilizes child care, it can be helpful to know about physical activity (or active play) best practices for child care settings. **Best practices often exceed licensing requirements or other regulations, and are intended to be a resource for child care professionals and parents.** The following is not an exhaustive list of best practices, but instead are those that are the focus of the ChildcareAlive! program. See the resources listed at the bottom of this page for more best practices.

REMEMBER TO THANK YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER FOR PROMOTING ACTIVE PLAY!

- Short supervised periods of tummy time are provided for non-crawling infants several times each day.
- Toddlers are provided with 60-90 minutes or more of active play time every day, including both indoors and outdoors.
- Preschoolers are provided with 120 minutes or more of active play time every day, including both indoor AND outdoor play.
- At least 45-60 minutes per day of adult-led physical activity is offered (examples including dancing, music and movement, and physically active games).
- Total screen time (including TV, DVD/movie viewing, computer use) is limited to no more than 30 minutes per week for preschoolers.
- A written active play policy is included in parent handbooks, staff manuals, or other documents, and includes a variety of active play best practices, including:
 - Amount of time provided each day for physical activity or active play
 - Amount of outdoor play time provided each day
 - Limiting long periods of seated time for children
 - Shoes and clothes that allow children to play outdoors in all seasons
 - Provider/Teacher practices that encourage physical activity (participates, leads, plans into lessons or transitions, etc.)
 - Not intentionally withholding physical activity for long periods of time (more than 5 minutes) to manage challenging behaviors
 - Professional development on children's physical activity
 - Planned and informal physical activity education
 - Amount of screen time allowed
 - Type of programming allowed during screen time use (if applicable)

Active Play Time =
Any movement of the body that increases heart rate and breathing above what it would be if a child was sitting or resting. Examples include walking, running, crawling, climbing, jumping, and dancing.



Sources:

Caring For Our Children 3rd Edition (www.cfoc.nrckids.org)

Let's Move! Child Care Checklist (www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)

Go NAP SACC (www.qonapsacc.org)