

Let's Get Little Ones Moving!



Positive experiences and physical literacy to shape healthy and active futures.

Young children can benefit from being active in so many ways!

- **Physical literacy:**
 - Feeling more confident
 - Finding movement easier
- **Improved fitness levels**
- **Motor development:**
 - Locomotor skills (crawling, walking, skipping)
 - Object control (throwing, catching)
 - Coordination
 - Balance
- **Cognitive development:**
 - Language development
 - Creativity
- **Psychosocial health:**
 - Social skills and peer relationships
 - Emotional and behavioural control
- **Bone and skeletal health:**
 - Improved vitamin D levels
 - Stronger bones
- **Healthy blood pressure**

What are the physical activity recommendations for under 5s in the UK?



Infants: (Under 1's)

Infants should be active in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity such as crawling.

Infants not yet mobile should spend at least 30 minutes in tummy time during the day while awake. Reaching, grasping and rolling over – this all counts too!



Toddlers: (1-2 yrs)

Toddlers should engage in a variety of physical activity of any intensity for at least 3 hours per day.



Pre-school aged children: (3-4 yrs)

Pre-school aged children should engage in a variety of physical activities for at least 3 hours per day. At least 1 hour of this time should be moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

How can young children be active? Let's play!



Young children can gain much of their physical activity through **active play**.

Tummy time, for infants, is playing with different objects whilst lying on their tummy, engaging in **interactive floor-based activities and play**.

Infants engage in all kinds of other movements such as reaching, grasping and rolling over – this all counts too!



Infants



Toddlers and pre-schoolers

For toddlers and pre-school aged children, this can include: **free play or unstructured activity** - children creating their own play and engaging in activities at their own will- on their own, with siblings, or with friends. There is no limitation on what this may be, but it may include activities like messy play or running around.



Guided play - children playing with parents or other adults can help to explore new opportunities for activity.

Structured play or organised activities - children engaging in sessions that are built with a specific purpose in mind, such as: football or dance classes, swimming or motor development activity sessions.



Children can also be active by walking, cycling or using a scooter for transport or for fun. This may include when going to school, the shops, to see relatives, or to the park.

Let's get outdoors! Outdoor play is particularly encouraged for young children wherever possible.



References:

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Whitehead, M. Ed., 2010. *Physical literacy: Throughout the lifecourse*. Routledge.

This infographic was based on a literature review by [Sophie Phillips](#), whose PhD research in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at Durham University explores ways of measuring physical activity and related behaviour of young children. The infographic was produced during a secondment at County Durham Sport, funded by Durham University, and aligns with research in the [Healthy Communities](#) theme in the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences.