

Movement Activities and Programs for Preschoolers

Active children are healthier and can concentrate better. Here are some research-based resources to get young children moving. Some were developed for school-agers but can be adapted for younger children.

Programs requiring training and/or purchased curriculum

I Am Moving I Am Learning

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/Health/Nutrition/Nutrition%20Program%20Staff/IMIL/IamMovingIamLearning.htm>

I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity in Head Start children by increasing moderate to vigorous physical activity, improving the quality of movement activities intentionally planned and facilitated by adults, and promoting healthy food choices.

SPARK Early Childhood Curriculum <http://www.sparkpe.org/early-childhood/>

An effective preschool physical education program, “designed to provide children ages 3-5 with high activity, academically integrated, enjoyable movement opportunities that foster social and motor development and enhance school readiness skills”. Curriculum, training, equipment and follow-up support are available for purchase.

S.M.A.R.T. Boost Up program <http://www.themlrc.org>

Developed in Minnesota for kindergarten and primary students, the multi-sensory group activities are aimed at stimulating “high levels of pre-academic and early academic development skills”. Studies show that the program has a positive effect on school readiness and social-emotional development. Curriculum and materials are available from the Minnesota Learning Resource Center (website above).

CATCH Early Childhood (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) www.catchinfo.org/

CATCH is an evidence-based, coordinated school health program designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices, and prevent tobacco use in children from preschool through grade 8. CATCH Early Childhood employs a holistic approach to child health by targeting teachers, children and parents in a wide range of health promoting activities including fun, physical education/activities, specifically aimed at increasing moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. The CATCH Early Childhood Kit and its individual components are available at <http://catchinfo.org/pdf/cec%20flier.pdf>.

Animal Trackers (TAKE 10 Pre-K) <http://www.take10.net/whatistake10.programs.asp>

Designed for pre-school children ages 3-6, Animal Trackers is a developmentally appropriate physical activity program that integrates movement with pre-school learning objectives. The materials consist of 10 chapters that focus on specific gross motor skills. Each chapter has six lessons centered around a particular animal character. Animal Trackers materials (workbook, music CD, posters and take-home activities) are available for sale at www.healthy-start.com.

Activities and curricula available online (free)

Just-a-Minute (JAM) School Program <http://www.jamschoolprogram.com/>

A free wellness resource for schools. Go to the website for more information and to sign up to receive a JAMmin' Minute each week, a one-minute fitness routine that includes 5 simple exercises that kids of all ages and adults can do while standing or sitting. Click here <http://www.healthetips.com/jamlibrary.php> for the JAM Library of past JAMmin' Minutes.

Brain Breaks <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/BrainBreaks/>

Developed for classroom teachers by the Michigan Department of Education.

Divided by classroom subject areas, but some in the language arts, math and music categories are appropriate for PreK or kindergarten ages.

Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings

(<http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=eatwell&page=overview>)

The program is aimed at increasing physical activity and improving nutrition of preschool age kids along with their parents, by improving the food and activity environments of child care centers. Intervention materials, including a 303-page curriculum manual, can be downloaded free from the website:

(<http://www.center-trt.org/index.cfm?fa=opinterventions.intervention&intervention=eatwell&page=materials>)

Energizers <http://www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html>

10 minute energizers are classroom based physical activities that integrate physical activity with academic concepts. Energizers can be downloaded for free or ordered as a laminated booklet from the website.

Visit the Let's Move website's physical activity pages for more ideas about keeping kids active:

<http://www.letsmove.gov/activity/index.html>

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