

Setting the stage for a healthy childhood

Raising an active child – birth to 12 months

Babies love to move, play and explore; that's how they learn new skills like grasping, rolling, crawling and walking. All babies will develop at their own pace. You are giving them the best start possible by giving them plenty of space and time to move and play.



What does physical activity look like for your baby?

Reaching for mom, grasping at toys, crawling to dad, pushing off the floor and pulling up on nearby furniture are all types of activity for babies.



How much activity does your baby need?

Babies less than 1 year old should move, play and explore several times daily, in particular, through active play on the floor.

Tips to get your baby moving

Give babies tummy-time several times a day

- ✓ Give your baby time to play on their tummy when they're awake. Encourage your baby to move by searching for a toy or the sound of your voice.
- ✓ As your baby gets stronger place small toys within arms reach and encourage your baby to reach, bend and roll.
- ✓ Always supervise tummy time and end it when your baby looks tired.
- ✓ Some babies may not like tummy time at first. That's OK; just start with small amounts of tummy time several times per day.

Play together

- ✓ Playing with your baby is fun for both you and your baby and it helps build a strong bond.
- ✓ Give your baby plenty of opportunity to play with parents, caregivers, family and friends.

Create space to move and explore

- ✓ Create a 'baby playground' – surround your baby with a variety of toys and other objects to encourage reaching, grasping, bending and crawling. Nearby furniture with soft edges are perfect for your baby to try to pull-up, stand, balance and walk.

Limit the use of baby chairs

- ✓ High chairs, bouncy chairs, baby swings, strollers and other baby chairs all limit your baby's activity. Try to keep time spent in these chairs to no more than 1 hour at a time. Less is always better!

Stay still less and play more

Sedentary behaviours are those that involve very little physical movement while babies are awake. Replace time spent sitting or reclining with active play, this is healthy for your baby.

Avoid screen time

Screen time, such as watching TV, tablets or smartphones, is not recommended for children under two years of age. Screen time takes away important time for healthy active play.

The more children use screens, the harder time they have turning them off as they get older.

Tips to sit still less and avoid screens

Be a role model and reduce screen time for the whole family

- ✓ Leave smartphones and tablets out of main living areas.
- ✓ Tell friends and family that you are trying to limit screen time and to call you rather than text.

- ✓ For your older children, use a timer to track screen time or give them a specific time to watch their favourite show while your baby is away or sleeping.
- ✓ Plan to watch your favourite shows or use tablets or smart phones while your baby is sleeping.
- ✓ Turn off all screens during family mealtimes and other family activities.

Plan ahead!

- ✓ When going to a restaurant bring along some favourite toys rather than giving your baby a smartphone.
- ✓ Some days are busy; recognize when your baby hasn't had an active day and plan for more activity the next day.

For more info and ideas:

Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines: www.csep.ca/guidelines

To speak to a Qualified Exercise Professional for free, contact the Physical Activity Line at **1-877-725-1149**



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Give your child a healthy start by giving plenty of time for active play, encouraging a healthy relationship with food, and avoiding screen time and sugar sweetened drinks. Once children are 5 years old, a healthy goal is to Live 5-2-1-0 every day.

5 Enjoy—
FIVE or more vegetables & fruits every day

1 Play actively—
at least ONE hour each day

2 Power down—
no more than TWO hours of screen time a day

0 Choose healthy—
ZERO sugar-sweetened drinks

