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What is Let’s Get Moving?

Let’s Get Moving is a fun resource for preschool and prep children (three to six year olds) to learn basic movement skills and important health messages while their parents, carers or teachers learn all about the importance of movement for their early learner.

This resource is a great way for your children to have fun learning, while doing. And best of all it’s a great way for you to spend quality time with your children doing fun activities together.

You can use this resource in a number of ways—just delve in and do some of the fun movement skills, take a break and read some of the health and safety messages or if you have spare time, play the Let’s Get Moving activity in the back of the book.

The Let’s Get Moving activity has been designed to include all the messages in this resource and is a fun and easy way to get your children active. And at the same time it will help them understand just how important regular movement is in their life.

So what are you waiting for? Hurry up and let’s get moving—quickly like a lightning bolt, slowly like a yawn, curving like a banana, or strongly like a sumo wrestler!
Why get moving?

Children aged between three and six years have an instinctive need to move. They climb on people, furniture, stairs, and railings. They balance along kerbs and walls, swing around banisters, poles and trees, and they jump on, off, and over anything and everything.

This need for movement is as important as their need for food, drink, rest and sleep, as it’s during these important preschool years that many of their fundamental movement skills are developed.

However, current trends in the Queensland lifestyle have affected the amount of time children spend moving.

It is recommended that early learners should be physically active for at least three hours spread throughout the day. Viewing of television and other electronic media should be limited to less than one hour per day. Prolonged periods of time should not be spent being sedentary, restrained, or kept inactive such as in a high chair, small playpen, porta-cot, pram or stroller. The exception to this is when the child is sleeping. (Australia’s Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines, 2014).

Another recent trend is for families to build large homes with small yards or to live in apartments or estates with little outdoor play space. It is also common for many young children to have no siblings to play with or have parents who are busy working.

When children are not given lots of opportunities to move, their health and physical development can be affected. It is therefore critical that as parents and carers we take the time (no matter how short) to get actively involved in encouraging our children to move.

Remember that young children are more likely to play games and activities for reasonable lengths of time if they have someone to play with – and that’s you.

Go for a walk, skip, hop or run together. Get out a ball to throw, catch, kick or strike. Turn up the music and try twisting, stretching, bending and swaying.
Benefits of getting kids moving

Being physically active every day is fun and can:

- Help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Build strong bones and muscles.
- Improve balance, movement and co-ordination skills.
- Promote social skills through interactions with people.
- Support brain development.
- Encourage self-confidence and independence.

Whatever their level of ability, children need to be active. (Australia’s Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines 2014).
How to use this resource

Young children need instruction, patience and guidance to learn basic movement skills.

It is recommended that early learners accumulate at least three hours of physical activity spread throughout the day (Australia’s Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines 2014).

Let’s Get Moving has been developed to give you lots of fun ideas to help your children get active.

This resource can be used in a number of ways. Why not flick through the book together with your child and:

• look at the special illustrations
• chant the special movement rhymes
• have loads of fun with the movements
• play a question and answer game with the Stop and think messages
• try out the challenges on the Spotlight cards or
• get some friends together and have a great time playing the Let’s Get Moving activity

This resource is divided into five sections:

• Movement skills
• Spotlight cards
• Stop and think messages
• Relaxation
• Let’s Get Moving activity

Movement skills

This is the action part of the resource. It contains 24 basic movement skills which children start to develop from a young age. These range from crawling, marching and climbing to stretching, swaying, twisting and catching.

These skills are important building blocks for some of the specialised movements that children need later on for sporting and recreational activities such as dancing, gymnastics, ball games and athletics.

The information on each movement skill includes a description of the skill and how it is developed, some ways to help your child do the movement, and ideas on how to make the movement easier or harder to achieve. It also includes some fun rhymes and illustrations of the movements.

Spotlight cards

The Spotlight cards provide suggestions to make the movement skills more imaginative and challenging. Each Spotlight card places the “spotlight” on a specific way to move, e.g. do it backwards, do it forwards, do it slower, do it faster.
Stop and think messages

This section contains 12 important messages to keep your children healthy and safe while doing physical activity. These messages range from drinking enough water and wearing a hat, through to avoiding tripping hazards and using safe play equipment.

Relaxation

It is important for children to learn how to relax so they can approach tasks with a focused mind. This section outlines some ideas on how young children can relax.

Let’s Get Moving activity

At the back of this resource is the Let’s Get Moving activity. This activity combines the 24 movement skills and the 12 health and safety messages into one fun package. It is a fantastic way for children to learn important skills and health and safety messages.

It can be played at different levels depending on your child’s ability. Different levels of difficulty are created by combining the movement skills with the Spotlight cards.

In this section you will find a list of things you will need to play the activity, rules for playing, and a Let’s Get Moving activity mat.

Have fun!

Don’t forget the emphasis of the activities is on fun! Encourage your child to participate to the best of their ability. But if they are finding a movement difficult just change the movement to make it easier for them. Some children may require mobility aids. If your child has physical difficulties, ask their doctor or physiotherapist about suitable equipment that will help them participate more in movement experiences.

The Noah’s Ark Library (see Where do I go for more information?) has a wide range of movement equipment for children with varying physical and sensory abilities. Your local toy library may also be a great resource.
Movement skills
Movement skills

Introduction

Children develop many of their fundamental movement skills between the ages of three to six years. In fact, movement specialists say these years are the most critical for learning because children this age are so eager to move and are generally fearless of injury, failure and teasing from peers (Campbell, 2001:2).

In this section we look at 24 fundamental movement skills. Your child may already be accomplished at performing many of these skills and may still be developing others.

These skills have been selected because they are important building blocks for specialised movement activities such as dance, sport and gymnastic activities.

The movement skills are divided into three groups:

Locomotor skills

These are movements that transport the body from one place to another. They include crawling, walking, marching, jumping, climbing, running, galloping, sliding, leaping, hopping and skipping.

Stability skills

These are movements where the body remains in place, but moves around its horizontal or vertical axis. They include stretching, bending, pulling, pushing, swaying, twisting, log rolling, and balancing.

Manipulative skills

These are movements that involve giving or receiving force to and from objects. They include throwing, catching, kicking, striking with a racket and striking with a bat.

In general, most children develop the locomotor skills first, followed by the stability skills and then the harder manipulative skills (Sanders, 2002:32).
What’s on each page

Each movement skill has been dedicated two pages packed full of information. This includes a description of the skill and how the skill is developed, some ways to help your child perform the movement, and ideas on how to make the movement easier or harder to achieve. It also includes some fun rhymes along with illustrations of the movements.

Skill description

Each skill and how it is performed is described in detail.

When can they do it?

This section describes how children perform the skills at different stages of their development. Your child will progress through each of these levels before reaching proficiency.

This information is a general guide only and the ages referred to are for “typical” development. Remember that all children are different and a child’s level of skill will depend on their individual ability, when they were first introduced to the skill and how often they get to practise.

Showing them how to do it

These are simple cues to help you show your child how to accomplish the skill. Do a demonstration and call out the words at the same time. Watch how your child is going and select the way or ways that are needed. And don’t forget to adjust the words to suit your own situation.

Equipment ideas

Most of these skills don’t require equipment. However, if equipment or props are required, the idea lists can give you some great low-cost suggestions. Remember that these are suggestions only, so be resourceful and look around the home for alternatives and even make the equipment yourself. Don’t forget to make sure it is safe and durable enough to withstand your child’s boisterous movements.

Interesting activity ideas

Most of the movements can be made into fun and interesting activities. These ideas are great when your child has a strong interest in a particular skill and wants variety or further challenges.
Make it easier or harder

The emphasis of the activities is on fun so make sure you match the movement skills and activities to your child's level of ability. If your child is having difficulty, select something a little easier from the Make it easier list. Alternatively, if your child needs challenging, try something from the Make it harder list.

Movement rhymes

Rhymes have been included in most of the locomotor skills. Not only are rhymes fun (and kids love them) but they provide a great rhythmical pattern for the kids to move their body to.

Keep it fun

If you want to maintain your child’s interest in any activity, it must be fun, fun, FUN. Incorporate your child’s favourite interests to create a world of make-believe – e.g. books, movies, plays or television shows, dinosaurs, vehicles, animals, fairies, dressing up – the list is endless. Be imaginative when telling your child to do things e.g. say “Don’t just run – run like an express train; gallop like a horse; climb like Spiderman.”
Locomotor skills
Locomotor skills

Moving the body from one place to another

The following 11 skills are locomotor skills:

Crawling
Walking
Marching
Jumping
Climbing
Running
Galloping
Sliding
Leaping
Hopping
Skipping
Crawling

Crawling is a diagonal movement pattern that involves crossing the midline of the body with the coordination of opposite arm and leg movements. The crossing of the midline of the body uses and integrates both halves of the brain and improves the brain’s functions such as integrated sensory processing (which is necessary for learning to read and write) (Stokes, 2002:131).

When can they do it?

Children usually learn to crawl as babies. Some may begin to crawl by moving unilaterally (both the right arm and right leg forward, then both left arm and left leg forward).

More experienced crawlers use diagonal or cross-lateral movement pattern of right arm forward, left leg forward, then left arm forward and right leg forward.

Showing them how to do it

- look straight ahead
- lead with one arm and your opposite leg
- when your right arm goes forward, move your left leg forward, then your left arm forward and your right leg

Equipment ideas

- commercially made tunnels
- home made tunnels
  - large cardboard boxes
  - folding mats (to create a triangular tunnel)
  - tyres with mats propped across them
  - chairs and tables with material draped over them
- tarpaulins or cargo nets for crawling under
- mats and cushions stacked to crawl over
- old carpet pieces laid over a pile of tyres to crawl over
Interesting activity ideas

Be a turtle
Place a small plastic swimming pool or a plastic laundry basket on your child’s back while she is on her hands and knees, and encourage her to move around like a turtle with a shell on her back.

Caving
Set up a series of tunnels made out of cardboard boxes and material draped over furniture. Tell your child that they are going caving – crawling through tunnels underground. Take some small hand-held torches (headband torches would be preferable if available) to create the atmosphere of caving. You could even place some items of interest to examine along the way, such as toy bats, cave art and/or sparkles (for glow worms).

Make it easier
- use cushioned surfaces (to protect the knees) for crawling on
- move to the other end of the tunnel and encourage your child to crawl through towards you (some children may feel anxious about confined spaces)

Make it harder
- use uneven surfaces to crawl along
- if crawling is always started with the same arm leading, try starting with the other arm leading

Crawling rhyme

Ooey Gooey
Ooey Gooey was a worm.
A big fat worm was he.
He crawled along the railway track.
The train he did not see.
Ooey Gooey!
Walking

Walking is a fundamental movement that involves transferring weight from one foot to the other while moving forward or backward. One foot is always in contact with the ground and the arms swing freely in opposition to the feet.

**When can they do it?**

Toddlers begin to walk with their legs wide apart and take short steps with their feet flat on the ground. They will fall easily on uneven surfaces.

Two-year-olds have a heel-to-toe foot contact with the ground when walking and their arms are held at the side with very little swinging.

Early learners are confident walkers. Their arms swing in opposite direction to their legs, although this is not always in time.

Mature walking follows a smooth rhythmic pattern, with arms and legs swinging in opposition to one another (O’Brien, 1982:10).

**Showing them how to do it**

Guide children to walk gracefully and efficiently with good posture:

- keep the body straight with shoulders back, look straight ahead and move in a relaxed manner
- make sure your feet are straight when they hit the ground (not turned in or out)
- have your arms slightly bent at the elbow, and relax your hands
- swing your arms freely and naturally
- move your right arm forward when your left leg is forward, then swing your left arm forward when your right leg is forward
- land on your heel, then move up onto your toes

**Equipment ideas**

- draw various lines (zigzag, curved, straight, etc) with chalk on the pavement for children to walk along
- lay masking tape in various lines (e.g. zigzag, curved, straight) along the floor
- provide pathways with various textures: inside —stick shapes of bubble wrap, sandpaper or velvet to the floor; outside—create pathways with sections of leaves, sticks, then pebbles
- create a series of footprints (either human or animal) on the ground or floor to follow
Interesting activity ideas

“Feelings walks”
Ask your child to walk in a way that shows they are sad, happy, angry or scared.

Mime walks
Ask your children to walk as if they are walking through mud or carrying a heavy load.

Tracking
Cut out various Australian animal footprints (e.g. kangaroo, echidna, wombat, dingo and emu) and stick them to the floor, or make animal footprints in the sand or dirt outside. Talk about the Aboriginal skill of tracking (following footprints to find an animal) and ask them to follow the kangaroo footprints and see where they go. Then follow the wombat footprints and so on. Try hiding a corresponding toy animal for an interesting surprise at the end of the trail.

Make it easier
- play music with a steady beat—the rhythm can assist walking skills and help establish a rhythmical movement pattern
- walk on flat even surfaces
- hold your child’s hand

Make it harder
- try walking up a hill
- use pathways with uneven surfaces

Walking rhyme

Rig-a-jig-jig
As I was walking down the street, down the street, down the street
A friend of mine I chanced to meet, hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, away we go, away we go!
Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, hi ho, hi ho, hi ho.
Marching

Marching is a more precise form of walking, accompanied by lifted knees and more firmly swung arms.

When can they do it?

Young children begin to march in late toddlerhood by lifting their legs up more when walking. They take short steps—more like marching on the spot.

By three years of age a small percentage of children can march in time to music. They are still very focused on the leg lift, with their arms still hanging by their sides.

Older children are more experienced marchers, who lift their legs and swing their arms in opposition, though this is not always in time.

Mature marching follows a rhythmical pattern, with arms and legs swinging in opposition to one another.

Showing them how to do it

- look straight ahead and keep your body straight
- lift your knees
- swing your arms strongly with clenched fists (right arm forward when the left leg is raised and then left arm forward when the right leg is raised)
- land on your whole foot heavily

Equipment ideas

- music to march to—a steady drum beat is good
- create pathways for children to march along by laying rope along the ground
- make hills out of piles of tyres or mats to march up and over
- make a ramp by placing a plank against an A-frame, platform, or wooden or plastic crate for children to march up then down
Make it easier
• play a steady drum beat
• march alongside your child
• remind them to lift their knees and swing their arms strongly

Make it harder
• march up steps
• march up or down a hill

Marching rhyme
The Grand Old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again
And when they were up—they were up
And when they were down—they were down
And when they were only half way up
They were neither up nor down.
Jumping

Jumping is the action of pushing off with both feet and landing with both feet. It is aerobic and rhythmical.

When can they do it?

(jumping off a platform)

Children first attempt to jump as toddlers. They take off with one foot at a time, demonstrating more of a stepping action. They have a very brief airborne period, then land on both feet in a deep squat, usually falling forward.

Older toddlers take off from a squat position, with a forward lean. The forces of their jumps are supported by the winged action of their arms. They land in a squat with their hands touching the ground for support.

Older early learners demonstrate a coordinated two-foot take off, although their arms are not as coordinated as their legs and their landing is not always well coordinated. By late primary school, children demonstrate complete synchronisation of arms, legs and head (O’Brien, 1982:14).

Showing them how to do it

(Get your child to check before they take off, that they have a safe landing area.)

- feet together
- bend at the knees
- push off with your feet
- push backwards with your hands as you take off
- extend your legs with force
- lift your body upwards and forwards
- put your arms forward to steady your balance on landing

Equipment ideas

For jumping on:
- mini-trampoline (maximum height 30 centimetres)
- bouncing board suspended between two trestles

For jumping over:
- skipping rope
- hoops (to jump in and out of)
- a hand-held stick or wand
- foam tubes, noodles or soft mats
- hurdles

For jumping off:
- up-turned crates
- balance beams supported by two A-frames
- tyres
For jumping forward:
- tape on floor or rope on ground to mark take off point
- shapes drawn on or taped to the floor

Interesting activity idea

Muoy pi bey (Cambodia)
Trace two parallel lines a short distance apart, in the dirt or sand. Your child calls out “One – muoy, Two – pi, Three – bey, JUMP!” And on “JUMP” they jump from the starting line to the far side of the second line. The second line is then moved further away, and they jump again trying to get to the far side of the other line. The game keeps going until the second line is too far to jump to (Dunn & Winter, 2000:20-21).

Make it easier
- lower the height to jump from
- hold your child’s hand to ease fears

Make it harder
- jump with feet together, then feet apart (side strides) or alternatively one foot forward, one foot backwards (front strides)
- jumping with knees kept high
- ski jumping from side to side, feet together

Jumping rhyme

Jump Josie
Two in the middle and you jump, jump, Jo-sie,
Two in the middle and you jump, jump, Jo-sie,
Two in the middle and you jump, jump, Jo-sie,
Jump right up and down.
(substitute ‘Josie’ with the name of the child who is jumping)
Climbing

Climbing is a movement that involves using both arms and legs to go up a structure.

When can they do it?
At three years of age young children can climb playground equipment, mostly placing two feet on each step.
By four years of age they can climb ladders and trees using an alternate arm and leg pattern. By five years of age young children are quite skilful at climbing. By six years of age they require a variety of equipment to encourage exploration in climbing (Australian Sports Commission, 1991:23).

Showing them how to do it
• hold the ladder or stair rail firmly with both hands
• place one foot on the step, then the other
• closely watch what your hands and feet are doing
• feel what your hands and feet are touching and holding

Equipment ideas
• child-sized ladders propped against A-frames, platforms, crates
• mats to go under ladders and other climbing equipment
• mats stacked like a mountain or staircase
• stairs
• tyres
• commercially produced climbing structures (borrow these from your local toy library)
• wooden boxes
• a friendly adult to climb up and on
• ladders, A-frames and other climbing equipment with textured handgrip areas for your child to feel (especially useful for children with visual impairment or physical limitations)

Climbing rhyme
I can climb so very high
I can almost reach the sky
I can climb most anything
I’m a monkey on a string.
Make it easier

• lower the height of the climbing equipment
• hold your child’s hand and offer verbal guidance and encouragement

Make it harder

• increase the height of the climbing equipment (though no higher than 1.5 metres for three to five year olds)
• provide more complex climbing equipment that involves climbing up, over, under, down and through different structures

Climbing rhyme

The Bears climbed up the mountain
The bears climbed up the mountain
The bears climbed up the mountain
The bears climbed up the mountain to see what they could see.
And all that they could see, was the other side of the mountain.
The other side of the mountain
The other side of the mountain
The other side of the mountain
Was all that they could see.

(You can substitute ‘The bears’ with your child’s name)
Running

Running is a rapid movement that involves transferring weight from one foot to the other with a brief loss of contact with the ground by both feet.

When can they do it?

When older toddlers first attempt running, their legs are stiff and their stride is uneven and short. Both legs do not appear to leave the ground. Their arms swing stiffly and within a short range.

By three years of age they have a longer stride and both legs are airborne for a brief moment. They land with flat feet, and only move their arms slightly.

Early learners have increased stride length, leg swing and speed. Both feet are off the ground for a longer time. Their arms swing forward and backwards to counterbalance their leg action.

By late primary school, the length of stride and duration of the flight phase of children's running are at their maximum. They swing their arms vertically in a large arc in opposition to the legs (O’Brien, 1982:12) and (McCall & Craft, 2000:24).

Showing them how to do it

- look forward in the direction you are running
- lean your body slightly forward
- bend your arms at the elbow
- push off hard with the trailing foot
- lift your knees
- your right arm swings forward as your left leg lifts forward, and then your left arm swings forward as your right leg lifts forward
- both feet are off the ground briefly
- land on the balls of the feet
- breathe naturally
- to run faster push off the ground with greater force

Equipment ideas

- a large open space free of obstacles
- obstacles (e.g. chairs, witches hats, bean bags, pot plants) to run around
- capes to wear when running
- create pathways for running along out of rope or draw with chalk on the pavement
Interesting activity ideas

Maze
Create a maze with tyres, cardboard boxes, furniture with material draped over, and mats for your child to run in and around to find the exits.

Traffic lights
Play this activity with a few friends. Have three large cardboard circles (one red, one green, one orange) for the traffic lights. Define a large rectangular play area. Give each child a hoop to hold at waist height to be his/her car. One person is to operate the traffic lights. The green one means run quickly anywhere in the area. The red means stop immediately, then jog on the spot. The orange one means march slowly and carefully.

Make it easier
• provide a large open space free from obstacles
• run with short steps

Make it harder
• vary the running surface
• add obstacles to run around
• play running games that require sudden stopping and starting

Running rhyme
I can run as fast as you
I can run as fast as you,
I can run as fast as you,
Running on the spot.
Puff, puff, puff, puff,
Puff, puff, puff, puff,
Puff, puff, puff, puff.
Galloping

Galloping involves stepping with one foot then sliding with the other foot in a forward direction. The weight is transferred from the front foot to the back foot with a small lift, before the front foot takes the next step. The stepping foot is always the front foot.

When can they do it?

Galloping is generally not part of a child’s movement until about four years of age. When early learners first try galloping, their trailing leg often contacts the surface in front of the leading leg. Galloping at this stage tends to follow an irregular pattern.

As children gain more experience, the trailing leg may lead during flight but usually lands next to or behind the leading leg. There is usually an exaggerated lift when both feet are together. Both feet may come together with the trailing leg’s toe close to the heel of the leading leg or both feet beside each other. Arms are slightly raised for balance. Movement tends to be choppy and stiff.

The mature galloper uses a low lift when their feet come together, with the trailing leg’s toe close to the heel of the leading leg. Their arms swing in opposition to their leg movements. This mature gallop pattern is smooth and rhythmical (McCall & Craft, 2000:25).

Showing them how to do it

- always keep one foot in front of the other
- take a big step with your front leg
- slide the other leg to the heel of the front leg
- lift your body upwards when both feet are together, as the front leg takes another step
- keep following the pattern, step then slide, step then slide

Equipment ideas

- hobby horses or small broomsticks to hold between the legs and gallop around as if riding a horse
- a large open space
- up-tempo music to gallop to
- obstacles (e.g. chairs, buckets, witches hats to gallop around)
Make it easier
- always lead with the same foot
- guide your child with the repeated cue of “step then slide, step then slide”
- provide galloping music or rhythms

Make it harder
- change the leading foot
- gallop with a partner
- gallop backwards

Galloping rhyme
(To the tune of ‘Here we go round the Mulberry Bush’)
This is the way that <Child’s name> gallops,
<Child’s name> gallops,
<Child’s name> gallops
This is the way that
<Child’s name> gallops
On this sunny day.
Sliding

Sliding is like a gallop but to the side, with minimal bounce (Kirchner & Fishburne, 1998:114). This movement is used in many folk dances. It is also an important movement in basketball and football for guarding an opponent. Sliding is also known as moving forward (or sideways or backwards) without lifting the feet off the ground. Sliding can also be done with the whole body—down a slide or along a slippery surface.

When can they do it?

When children first attempt sliding, the trailing leg often contacts the surface in front of the lead leg. Sliding at this stage tends to follow an irregular pattern.

As children gain more experience, the trailing leg may lead during flight but usually lands next to or behind the leading leg. Both feet may come together with the trailing leg’s foot in front of the leading leg or both feet beside each other. Arms are slightly raised for balance and movement tends to be choppy and stiff.

The mature slider brings their feet together, side by side, following a smooth rhythmical pattern (McCall & Craft, 2000:25).

Showing them how to do it

- move sideways
- take a step to the side, then slide the other foot over
- move smoothly, don’t bounce
- keep your feet glued to the floor
- wear shoes or bare feet on grass or carpet (socks are best on wooden, lino or tiled floors)

Equipment ideas to use

- folk dance music
- smooth surfaces e.g. wooden or lino floors, water sprayed outside onto a large tarpaulin
- commercially made slippery slides
- planks inclined at a 45 degree angle against an A-frame, wooden platform, plastic or wooden crate
- flattened cardboard boxes spread out on a small hill for children to slide down
Interesting activity ideas

Skiing on the ski slopes
 Invite the children to explore “skiing” (sliding):
• tape large blocks or shoe boxes to the children’s shoes and pretend they are skis
• find appropriate-sized sticks for poles
• set up an area like a ski slope with large flattened cardboard boxes placed on a slight slope in the backyard to slide down, and rope tied between posts so that the children can pull themselves along.

Make it easier
• slide to one side only
• guide the child by repeating “step to the side then slide, step to the side then slide”

Make it harder
• try sliding to one side then the other
• slide around obstacles
• slide with a number of children, clockwise in a circle, then counter-clockwise

Sliding rhyme
This is the way we slide along
slide along, slide along.
This is the way we slide along
Early in the morning.
(change the last line each time –
in the evening, on the weekend,
on a school day)
Leaping

Leaping is a graceful long step as the body lifts off the ground to cover a distance or go over a low obstacle. A short run before a leap aids the momentum of the leap. Leaping is essentially very similar to running except your feet are lifted off the ground for a longer period, and a greater height and distance are achieved.

When can they do it?

Children first attempt to leap as older toddlers. Their take-off is low, like the lift in a gallop. It is a very brief airborne period.

Early learners have an increased stride in their run, so their leap is noticeably wider, with a distinct airborne period. Their legs are still slightly bent.

The mature leaper fully stretches the leading leg forwards and the trailing leg backwards to create a very graceful long airborne step. The arms are synchronised in an outwards stretch.

Showing them how to do it

- run before you leap
- push off and reach
- leap up and over
- land lightly
- stretch your arms out to help you leap
- to gain maximum height stretch upwards with your hands and forward with your leading foot
- bend your knee as soon as the ball of your foot touches the ground (to cushion your landing)

Equipment ideas

- obstacles to leap over e.g. small bean bags, wooden blocks, cushions, hoops
- mats and cushions for landing
- markers to leap towards e.g. carpet squares, chalk drawn lines or shapes on pavement, rope or sticks laid on the ground
- commercially made stepping stones and large wooden blocks (approximately 30 x 40 centimetres) to leap onto and off
- rope or sticks held low to leap over
Interesting activity ideas

**Deer leaps**
Ask your child to pretend to be a deer leaping over fallen trees in a forest.

**Hot lava pools**
Set up a space with scattered material laid on the ground to represent hot lava pools. Your child must leap over these “pools” otherwise their feet will be “scorched”.

Make it easier
- leap from a low platform (20–30 centimetres high)
- hold your child’s hand
- give verbal cues and demonstrate the leap

Make it harder
- provide obstacles to leap over
- make the distance to leap to further away
- encourage higher leaps
- try leading with the other leg

**Leaping rhyme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A-leaping, A-leaping, graceful in the air</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-leaping, A-loping, can take you anywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over the fences, over the gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leap over anything, I can’t wait.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hopping

Hopping involves standing on one foot and lifting off the ground by leaning slightly on the hopping foot side and moving the bent arms out and in for balance. Hopping can be done on the spot or by moving forward, backwards or sideways by hopping. Hop on one foot for a brief period only and then change to the other foot.

When can they do it?

When children first begin to learn to hop, their bodies are held straight and upright with their non-hopping leg knee lifted vertically. Their hopping leg lifts only slightly off the floor. Their arm movement is uncoordinated and not helpful.

As children gain more experience, they lean forward more on take-off. The non-hopping leg is tucked behind with the heel closer to the bottom. Their arm action is still uncoordinated.

The mature hoppers have their non-hopping leg tucked behind fully. Their hopping leg knee is bent then fully extended at take-off to generate a greater lift. Both their arms move upwards at take off then downwards together. The entire hopping action is a coordinated rhythmic movement (Kirchner & Fishburne, 1998:112).

Showing them how to do it

- hold your head up and look forward
- swing your bent knee
- bend your arms and flap like a chicken
- take off on the ball of the foot
- land on the ball of the foot, then drop your heel down
- bend your hopping leg slightly to cushion your landing

Equipment ideas to use

- small bean bags for hopping over
- hoops for hopping in and out of
- lay rope on the ground or floor for hopping over
- hop around obstacles e.g. plastic containers, milk cartons
Interesting activity idea

Hopscotch

Make a hopscotch playing area with chalk drawing six squares in a line with two additional squares drawn on either side of the second last square on the pavement. Stand behind the line of the first square and throw a token into the first square, stand on one leg then bend down and pick it up. Throw the token into the second square, then hop into the first square and bend down and pick it up then hop back to start. Each time the throw gets further away, your child has to hop on each single square and jump on the double squares to retrieve the token then hop and jump all the way back to start.

Make it easier

- start with small hops
- offer a hand, the back of a chair or a broom handle held between your hands for your child to hold onto for balance

Make it harder

- to increase the height of the hop swing arms backward, then rapidly forward and upward
- try hopping on the other leg
- hop in time with a partner

Hopping rhyme

Hopping rhyme

Hop on your right foot
Hop on your left foot
Jump on both feet
That is best
Wave with your right hand
Wave with your left
Nod your head and take a rest.
Skipping

Skipping is a combination of a long step and a short hop, alternating the lead foot after each hop. You need to be able to hop before you can skip. The goal of skipping is a smooth rhythmical movement pattern, not height or speed.

When can they do it?

Children need to be able to hop before they can skip. Younger children begin to attempt skipping with a foot shuffling action.

Most four-year-olds skip on one foot, then walk with the other. Children begin to skip by always leading with the same foot. Approximately 15 percent of children can skip at age four.

By age five most children are beginning to grasp true skipping with alternate feet, though at this age they hold both arms forward.

By age six most have grasped the skill of skipping, with their arms swinging in the opposite pattern to their feet. A proficient skipper, skips with a smooth rhythmical pattern (Australian Sports Commission, 1991:22).

Showing them how to do it

- hold your head up and look forward
- take a step and then hop with the same foot, and then take a step and a hop with the other foot
- swing your right arm forward when the left leg is forward, and swing your left arm forward when the right leg is forward
- always land on the ball of your foot
- maintain a smooth steady rhythm when skipping

Equipment ideas

- music with a good swinging beat
- large open space to freely skip in
- ribbons and streamers to wave while skipping
- skipping ropes for skipping in and out

Skipping rhyme

Pop Goes the Weasel
Round and round the mulberry bush
The monkey chased the weasel
The monkey stopped to pull up his socks
Pop! Goes the weasel.
Interesting activity ideas

Skipping around the maypole
Maypole dancing is a traditional spring celebration in many European countries. Make a maypole (use a pole, a tree or an adult wearing a hat) and attach a streamer for each child to the top. The children skip in a circle around the pole, then stop and change direction.

Make it easier
• guide your child by repeating “step then hop, step then hop”

Make it harder
• skip around obstacles
• skip holding hands with a partner
• skip with two steps and hops on one side, then the other (a double skip)
• try skipping with a skipping rope

Skipping rhyme
Skip to my Lou
Skip, skip, skip to my Lou
Skip, skip, skip to my Lou
Skip, skip, skip to my Lou
Skip to my Lou my darling.
Notes
Stability skills
Stability skills

Movements where the body remains in place (standing, sitting, kneeling or lying) and moves around its horizontal or vertical axis

These eight skills are stability skills. Most of these skills are acquired at the same point in a child’s development, although some are more challenging than others.

Stretching
Bending
Pulling
Pushing
Swaying
Twisting
Rolling
Balancing
Stretching

Stretching involves the extension of one or more joints of the body. A light or gentle stretch moves the joint only partly through its range of movement. A strong, forceful stretch, such as stretching upwards and backwards requires full extension through many joints. The stretching process is necessary to maintain and/or increase flexibility.

When can they do it?

Children first begin to stretch as young babies when they reach out for a toy or a finger in their first few months of life. When asking children to stretch, only have them hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Make sure they sustain the stretch outwards and do not bounce (Pica, 2004:128).

- make your arms, legs, neck, feet and hands as long as they can be
- **standing**—stretch arms up above head and out to the side

- **sitting**—stretch legs out; stretch feet by pointing toes; flex feet; stretch arms to touch feet
- **lying**—stretch arms up above head, to the side and down towards the toes
- **kneeling**—stretch forward with arms and side ways with arms above head

Equipment ideas

- hanging objects (such as chimes, bells, plastic containers, streamers) just within children’s reaching height, so they can stretch up to touch them
- mats to lie on
- hoops, rope and thick elastic to hold when stretching
Interesting activity ideas

**Tai Chi—The Morning Sun**
Instruct the children to lift their hands outward and upward, with their arms fully extended, so that their hands meet above their head.

**The wind blows**
Hands push right across the front of the body with arms fully extended to the right side indicating the movement of the wind.

**Make it easier**
- start with light and gentle stretching movements

**Make it harder**
- encourage your child to stretch to their fullest extent
- encourage your child to stretch from a variety of positions in a variety of ways

**Stretching rhyme**

I am stretching oh so high
I am stretching to the sky
I am stretching oh so wide
I am stretching to outside.
Bending

Bending is a stability movement which involves moving in a hinge-like manner at a joint where adjacent bones are joined together. Tucking, curling and coiling are other movement words commonly used to describe these hinge-like movements.

When can they do it?

Children begin bending at the joints of their bodies in early infancy. At preschool age, young children develop a conscious understanding of which body parts can bend and which bending movements should be avoided.

Showing them how to do it

Encourage your child to find and test different parts of the body that bend. Observe their exploration closely and guide your child to bend in a way that does not strain muscles.

- **standing**—bend forward with knees slightly bent to touch toes

- **sitting**—legs straight, place both hands on one outstretched leg and slide down the leg until you feel a slight stretch
  - gently tuck your chin into your chest
  - bend your arms at the elbow and at the shoulder joint
  - bend your hands forward and back at the wrist joint
  - bend your feet forward and back at the ankle joint
  - bend your legs at the knee and at the hip joint
  - curl your spine gently forward

Avoid hyper-extending any joint area. Bends to avoid include:

- side bends from either standing or seated positions
- touching toes with straight legs from either standing or seated positions
- head to the shoulder
- head tilt backwards
- when lying on the stomach on the floor—pushing up on arms and curving back and neck backwards
- when seated on the floor—knees bent inwards with feet out (creating a “W” shape with legs)

(Landy & Burridge, 1999:17) and (Landy & Burridge, 2002:21-22)
Equipment ideas
• tunnels and boxes requiring a bend to fit into
• small bean bags, plastic lids, blocks on the ground to bend down and pick up
• mats to lie on for seated or lying down bending

Interesting activity idea
Imitate things that bend
Provide photos, paintings, drawings, posters of animals, plants and objects that bend. Discuss the image and ask the children “How does it bend?”, “What part of it bends?” and “Can you use your body to bend like an emu?”.

Make it easier
• start with light gentle bends using the child’s whole body (e.g. bending forward)

Make it harder
• bend in a slow and sustained manner to increase flexibility
Pulling

Pulling is a stability movement skill that involves directing a force or object towards the body. The pulling action usually starts from the hands and arms, though feet, knees and torso can also start a pulling movement. A smooth controlled pulling action should be encouraged and jerking or tugging actions discouraged.

When can they do it?

Young children begin to delight in the challenge of pulling large objects as toddlers. Pulling objects still provides a challenge for early learners, as they choose larger and heavier items to pull. They also begin to cooperate with their peers in pulling activities such as tug-of-war.

Showing them how to do it

- start by placing your legs shoulder-width apart
- keep your back straight and your knees bent
- get a firm grip with your hands
- pull the object towards you
- keep the pulling action smooth

Equipment ideas

- toy wagons with ropes or handles for pulling
- an old row boat (even a pretend one), canoe or kayak with child-sized oars
- strong rope, stockings or bath towels (for tug-of-war)
- knotted climbing rope to pull body up on
- washing baskets with a rope or stocking handle for pulling
Interesting activity idea

Cooperative pulling
Securely tie a rope around a piece of furniture (e.g. table), a washing basket full of sand or just pull the handles of a wheelbarrow, and encourage a team of two to four children to work together to pull the object along.

Make it easier
- lighten the load
- check your child has the correct pulling action – knees bent, feet wide apart, straight back and a firm grip on the rope
- pull together

Make it harder
- increase the size and load of the object
- try pulling with different body parts, such as rope around waist, or around elbows (never around the neck)
Pushing

Pushing is a stability movement skill that involves directing a force or object away from the body. For stability, the body’s centre of gravity needs to be low (bent knees) and the base of support needs to be broad (feet apart).

When can they do it?

Young children start pushing as toddlers. Often as young children start to walk, they enjoy pushing trolleys, boxes, small chairs and toys around. Pushing seems to be more difficult for young children than pulling.

Showing them how to do it

- keep your back straight when pushing hard
- make your legs strong and firm on the ground with feet wide apart for strong pushing movements
- bend your knees and push from the centre of your body

Equipment ideas

- large wooden, plastic or cardboard boxes of all shapes and sizes
- a wall or fence to push against
- balls of various shapes and sizes
- bean bags to push with elbows, shoulders, nose, toes while on the floor
- chairs and other suitably sized furniture for young children to push (and have results)
- doors to push open
- doorframes to push hands against
- trolleys and washing baskets
Interesting activity ideas

**Hand push-of-war**
Have two children kneeling opposite each other. They hold their hands up in front of one another and push against each other’s hands. For a further challenge, ask the children to try this standing on one foot. See who can hold their balance for the longest. Have mats or other soft materials around for falling on.

**Feet push-of-war**
Ask two children to lie down on a large mat with their feet up in the air. Then bend their legs and push their feet against each other’s feet.

**Make it easier**
- lighten the load
- encourage your child to bend their knees, have feet wide apart and push hands away from their tummy
- push together

**Make it harder**
- increase the size and weight of the object
- try pushing with different parts of the body, such as back, elbows, feet
Swaying

Swaying is a slow controlled movement of the head, torso or arms from side to side or forwards then backwards. The body’s support base (feet if standing or bottom if sitting) remains fixed.

When can they do it?

Children first begin to sway as an older baby when they have good standing stability. Toddlers enjoy swaying when they are confident on their feet. It is often their whole body response to music.

Showing them how to do it

There is a whole range of swaying movements to explore from either a sitting or standing position:

- place your feet a little apart and make them strong (keep them in one spot on the floor)
- move your body from your hips
- sway your body forwards, backwards, side to side
- sway your arms—above your head, hanging low from side to side; out in front
- sway your hips from side to side or forwards and backwards
- sway your torso from side to side with your arms by your side and legs stable

Equipment ideas

- scarves to wave around
- ribbon wands
- gentle music for swaying to
- hoops
- feathers
Interesting activity ideas

Tai Chi—An Old Oak Tree Sways in the Wind
Extend arms right out to the sides and form into the shape of two branches, which sway very slowly, while the trunk remains firm.

Nature sways
Ask your child to imagine that they are grass swaying in the breeze, seaweed swaying in the ocean, or long hair in water. Use photos or pictures to provide imagery for your child to copy. The children’s picture book “Swimmy” by Leo Lionni features swaying sea anemones.

Make it easier
• place your child's feet a little apart
• help them to find a stable position

Make it harder
• sway with your feet together
• sway with arms up above head
Twisting

Twisting is a rotation of a body part or parts around their own axis. The following joints can be used in twisting—spine, neck, shoulders, hip, ankle and wrist. Twisting movements can take place on or off the ground. A twisting action that continues to go around is known as spinning or twirling. Remind children to spin or twirl in both directions to reduce dizziness. If a child becomes excessively giddy, ask them to jump up and down lightly on the spot.

When can they do it?

Young children begin twisting body parts in early infancy, by turning their head towards the breast. As an older toddler they will imitate whole body twisting dance movements, usually with more movement in the arms than the torso.

At preschool age young children can begin to explore which body parts can twist and which twisting movements should be avoided.

Showing them how to do it

- twist as far as you can
- keep the rest of the body still (e.g. when twisting your torso keep your legs and feet still)
- standing—legs face forward with arms stretched out to the side, twist torso to one side, then the other; face forward and twist hips around in a circular motion
- sitting or standing—have body face forward and twist neck, turning head to one side then the other; twist hands around on wrists
- sitting—twist feet around on ankles

Avoid twisting movements at the knee joint, as these are potentially harmful (Landy & Burridge, 1999:17).

Equipment ideas

- ropes
- wands
- streamers
- scarves
- hoops (to hold whilst twisting)

Make it easier

- start with light easy twists such as “twist your body to the side”

Make it harder

- try twisting when jumping into the air
Rolling

Rolling is a movement made when lying on the floor or ground with either the arms by the side or over the head and rolling the body over from front to back, back to front or side to side.

When can they do it?
Rolling is the first whole-body movement skill that infants achieve. Log rolls are a good starting point in developing rolling movement skills. Forward rolls are best learnt under the guidance of a trained movement instructor during the primary school years.

Showing them how to do it
• keep your arms close to your sides
• keep your legs straight and close to each other
• start the roll with your shoulders
• make sure you have a clear and soft area to roll on

Equipment ideas
• mats or carpeted area for rolling on
• pillow cases to get into and roll
• plastic or cardboard cylinders for rolling in
• a slight slope to roll down

Interesting activity idea

Body bowling
Set up two large mats along side each other with a line of empty plastic bottles around the mats. Ask your child to lie in the middle of the mats and give directions like “Can you knock one bottle with your elbow?” “Can you knock two bottles with your head?” and so on until your child has knocked over all bottles by log rolling.

Make it easier
• roll on your own, free from obstacles
• provide cushioned mats
• provide a slight incline to roll down

Make it harder
• try leading with your lower torso
• provide uneven surfaces to roll on
• provide a rolling obstacle course
• introduce the idea of a snake roll—where two children lie face down with arms outstretched above their heads and hold hands to roll together
Balancing is a fundamental movement skill that requires the ability to hold the body over a comparatively small base.

When can they do it?
Young children first develop skills in balancing when they learn to sit (static balance). Later when they learn to crawl and walk they are developing skills in dynamic balance.

Showing them how to do it
Balance for stationary positions (static)
- focus eyes straight ahead on a fixed point
- have your feet flat on the floor
- keep your body straight and still
- spread your arms out to help you balance
- balance on both feet with eyes shut, on one foot
- stand on tiptoes
- stand on heels with feet together
- stand on both feet and lean to one side then the other
- balance on two hands and one knee; two knees and two elbows; one foot and one hand
- kneel; kneel with one knee up
- sit on the floor—wrap arms around knees and lift feet off the ground

Balance when moving (dynamic)
- have your head up and look forward
- have your back and shoulders straight
- keep your body steady (control those wobbles)
- place your feet straight along the path
- hold your arms out for balance

Equipment ideas
- masking tape lines on floor
- rope laid on ground
- chalk drawn lines on pavement
- planks of hardwood laid along the ground or between two upturned crates
- mats to lay under balancing structures
- stilts made from cans with cord handles (punch holes at top sides of can to thread cord though)
- foam noodles
- large exercise ball to lie on
- duck walker (circular piece of wood with rounded block of wood secured underneath)
Interesting activity ideas

Musical statues
Play this game with a group of children. Encourage them to move in different ways to music. When the music stops, call out “one”, “two”, “three” or “four” and children freeze in a position that has that many balance supports (e.g. for two—the child could balance on one hand and one foot).

Make it easier
- lower the level of the balancing equipment or choose a wider balance structure
- hold your child’s hand to reassure them

Make it harder
- raise the height of the balance structure (not higher than 1.5 metres)
- provide a balance structure with a narrower width
- walk along a balance structure carrying an object (e.g. a ball in the hands or a bean bag balanced on the head)
Manipulative skills
Manipulative skills

Movements that involve giving or receiving force to and from objects

The following five skills are manipulative skills:

Throwing
Catching
Kicking
Striking with a racquet
Striking with a bat
Throwing

Throwing is a manipulative skill that requires a pushing forward force to be exerted on an object.

When can they do it?
When children first start throwing, the motion is mainly performed from the elbow. The throw consists of a pushing action. When the hand releases the ball the fingers are spread, then the arm moves forward and downward. The body and the feet remain mostly still.

With more experience, young children will swing their arm in preparation for the throw and their arm will move forward in a high over-the-shoulder action. Their fingers will control the ball more on release of the ball. Their body rotates more, and the leg on the same side as their throwing arm moves forward.

Mature throwers use their whole body more to exert force in the throw. Their arm swings backward as their body rotates to the throwing side, with weight on their rear foot. Then as their arm moves forward their body rotates through their hips, spine and shoulders to have their throwing shoulder in line with the target. Their weight shifts to the foot on the opposite side to their throwing arm (McCall & Craft, 2000:26).

Showing them how to do it

Underhand throw
- focus your eyes on the target
- hold the ball with your fingers
- turn your body back slightly as you swing your arm straight back
- step forward as you throw the ball

Overhand throw
- focus your eyes on the target
- hold ball with your fingers
- turn shoulders back slightly then step forward with the foot opposite to your throwing arm
- bring your throwing arm up and behind you before you throw

Equipment ideas

Items to throw
- balls of all shapes, textures and sizes
- helium balloons filled with water (this weights them so they don’t roll far)
- paper plates (frisbee)
- a tennis ball in an adult sock (the leg of the sock provides a handle for easier throwing with a swinging action)
Targets to throw in or at
- clean garbage bins
- laundry baskets
- crates
- child-sized basketball net

Interesting activity ideas

Pendulum bowling
Tie a beach ball in a plastic grocery bag, then tie rope through the loops and tie the other end of the rope to a ceiling beam or other high pole. Set up a cluster of empty one-litre plastic drink bottles on the ground/floor. Seat your child close to the suspended ball and ask them to throw the ball and see how many bottles they knock over. This is a good activity for children with low leg mobility.

One Potato Two Potato
Sit a small group of children in a circle and pass around four balls. As the balls are being passed they repeat the activity rhyme (below). When the rhyme finishes, see who is caught with the ball.

Make it easier
- begin with holding a 15–20 centimetre diameter ball with both hands on either side of the ball in front of the chest area and push it away from the body with force
- balloons, scarves, balls of wool and sponges are lighter and slower movers for throwing
- bean bags are weighted and easier to grip for throwing

Make it harder
- step further away from target
- smaller balls (such as tennis balls) can be introduced when the child is ready to throw with one hand

Throwing rhyme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One potato</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One potato, two potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three potato, four. Pass it on, and don’t get caught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With three potato more.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Catching

Catching is a receptive manipulative skill that involves the receiving of an object. It is one of the more difficult fundamental skills.

When can they do it?

When first introduced to catching, young children are unable to predict where a ball thrown into the air will land. This means they usually have no success at catching. However, if they are interested they will seek the ball and retrieve it.

By two-and-a-half to three years of age, children can catch a ball thrown to them from a short distance (one to two metres away). They do this by positioning their body ready to catch with lower arms held at right angles to waist, and scooping the ball into their chest. They have a sense of where the ball is and are ready to catch, although they may only catch the ball sometimes.

Older children can throw a ball high into the air and catch it eight times out of 10. They can also play a game of catch with a friend without spending most of the time chasing the ball.

Older primary school children can catch a ball automatically without effort. They can participate in skilled ball games as members of a team and catch a ball in a variety of situations (Sanders, 2002:48).

Showing them how to do it

- stand steady and ready to catch
- hold your arms bent slightly with hands curved and fingers spread
- focus your eyes on the ball
- move your arms forward to meet the ball
- catch the ball with your hands

Equipment ideas

- balls of all shapes, textures and sizes
- balls with a sound maker inside (great for children who are vision impaired)
- balls of wool
- helium balloons (much stronger so they will last longer)
- scarves
- sponges
- lemons
- small bean bags
- potatoes
Interesting activity idea

**Queenie Queenie**
One child is chosen to be Queenie. She/he stands with their back to the other children and throws the ball over her/his head towards them. The child who picks it up hides it behind their back and everyone says the rhyme (See activity rhyme box).

Queenie then turns around and guesses who has the ball. If she/he picks the right child, she/he becomes the new Queenie.

### Catching rhyme

*Queenie, Queenie,*  
Who's got the ball?  
Is she tall or is she small,  
Is he a boy or is she a girl,  
Or is it someone with a curl?

## Make it easier

- begin with catching a rolled ball  
- move closer to your child, so there is a shorter distance to catch from  
- throw slow moving objects, such as balloons, bath sponges and scarves so your child has greater control of the catch  
- textured balls and slightly deflated balls are easier to grip on catching

## Make it harder

- bounce the ball on the ground catch it  
- throw a ball in the air and catch it  
- catch at different places on the body (e.g. at chest height, knee height or by your hip)  
- catch with a scoop  
- catch the re-bound when throwing against a wall or a re-bonder  
- catch and throw with a partner
Kicking

Kicking involves the top or side of the in-step of a foot striking a stationary or moving ball.

When can they do it?

When children first start to kick, there is very little body and arm movement. They kick with a short swing of the leg that kicks “at” the ball.

With more experience they swing the kicking leg back more in preparation to kick.

Mature kickers use their arms and body more. The kicking leg swings through a long arc. After contact has been made with the ball, the support foot rises to its toes, and the kicking leg continues swinging upwards. (McCall & Craft, 2000:28)

Showing them how to do it

• keep your eye on the ball
• step forward with the non-kicking foot placed close to the ball
• swing your kicking leg back
• kick with the inside of your foot for short kicks
• kick with the shoelace area for long, powerful kicks
• your foot should contact the ball slightly below the centre of the ball

Equipment ideas

• large balls (20–25 centimetre diameter—soccer balls, footballs)
• a ball tied to a long length of elastic and suspended from the ceiling
• a space free of obstacles that could get damaged by a kicked ball (e.g. a corner of a yard, courtyard, verandah)
• targets
  – child-sized goal net
  – walls and fences
  – skittles
  – re-bounder
  – between the legs of a chair
  – large cardboard boxes
  – washing baskets
Interesting activity ideas

Crab soccer
Set up goals for each side. All players except goalies can only kick the ball in the crab walk position (get into position by lying on back and pushing up on hands and feet).

Kicking skittles
Set up rows of empty milk cartons or two litre juice bottles for your child to kick a light medium-sized ball at and see how many they can knock over.

Kicking obstacle course
Set up chairs, boxes and empty bins to kick in and around-and-about.

Make it easier
- start with kicking a stationary ball from a fixed position
- kick a ball at large targets
- practise taking two steps towards the ball then kicking

Make it harder
- try kicking the ball into the air
- try kicking around obstacles
- introduce simple versions of kicking sports
Striking with a racquet

Striking with a racquet is a manipulative skill that involves a pushing force with a racquet being applied to propel an object. An object can also be struck with the hand or other implements.

When can they do it?

When young children first begin to strike with a racquet, they hold the racquet tightly and swing the racquet with a chopping action. Their feet and body are not involved in the movement.

With more experience they will turn their body towards the target, then swing the striking arm back slightly then forward along a horizontal arc.

A mature striker grips the racquet like a “handshake”. The non-striking side will face the target then after a long back swing, the striking arm will swing forward as the body rotates to face the front. The racquet strikes the ball high on the racquet head. (Kirchner & Fishburne, 1998:133)

Showing them how to do it

Striking with your hand
- hold your drawing hand upright like a stop signal
- watch the oncoming ball; swing your hand towards the ball to hit it away from you

Introducing a small racquet
- wrap your fingers around the handle of the racquet—like shaking hands with it
- start with the racquet held up near your drawing side’s shoulder
- swing slowly at first to make sure the racquet is going to hit the ball
- keep your eyes on the ball until you hit it
- make sure no-one is standing nearby that could be hit with the ball or bat
**Equipment ideas**

- balloons (filled with air) and tied with string to the ceiling (helium balloons are stronger, so will take more blows)
- a helium filled balloon tied with string and taped to the floor
- newspaper scrunched into a ball shape and taped
- balls of all shapes, sizes, textures and sound making ones
- striking implements
  - plastic tennis racquet
  - wire clothes hanger bent into racquet shape, covered with an old stocking and sharp ends covered with tape
  - swimming kickboard
- targets
  - empty plastic bottles
  - posters
  - tyres
  - bells and streamers hung from a high beam

**Interesting activity idea**

**Striking under the clothesline**

Place a tennis ball in the toe of a stocking and tie the stocking to a horizontal bar of a clothes hoist or a tree branch. Ask your child to strike the ball with a child-sized racquet. When there are two or more children they can strike it to each other.

**Make it easier**

- begin with a stationary ball
- try using a tennis ball tied in a stocking suspended from a tree branch or pergola
- then strike a moving ball with the drawing hand
- introduce a small racquet held by the drawing hand

**Make it harder**

- try striking a moving ball thrown towards your child
- try striking balls to hit targets
Striking with a bat

Striking with a bat is a manipulative skill that involves a pushing force with a bat being applied to propel an object. This is the most difficult fundamental movement skill to achieve.

When can they do it?

When children are first introduced to striking with a bat, their feet are stationary and the bat is held over the shoulder with both hands. On striking, they swing the bat straight down similar to swatting a fly. With more experience they turn their body to the side in preparation for striking. The weight then shifts to the forward foot as the bat is swung with a diagonal whole body action to strike.

Children proficient in striking (upper primary age) stand with their feet wide apart. The weight is on the back foot in preparation with the body turned to the side. Weight then shifts to the front foot as the body rotates. The arm swing follows a horizontal, long, full arc (McCall & Craft, 2000:29).

Showing them how to do it

For a two-handed swing with a bat

- place both hands together near the end of the bat so they are touching (usually right-handed people grip with the right hand on top, and left-handed people grip with their left hand on top, but not always)—use the grip that feels right for you
- wrap your fingers around the bat, point the bat to the sky, if your right hand is on top, hold the bat over your right shoulder, and if your left hand is on top, hold it over your left shoulder
- if the bat is over your right shoulder—stand so your left shoulder is pointing towards the oncoming ball
- if the bat is on your left shoulder—stand so your right shoulder is pointing towards the oncoming ball
- make sure no-one is standing nearby who could be hit by the ball
- start with the bat over your shoulder, swing slowly at first to make sure the bat is going to hit the ball
- keep your eyes on the ball until you hit it, swing your bat level to the ground and swing through the ball, by keeping the bat moving even after you have hit the ball
Equipment ideas
- balloons (filled with air) tied with string to the ceiling (helium balloons are stronger, so they will take more blows)
- newspaper scrunched into a ball shape and taped
- balls of all shapes, sizes, textures and ones that make sounds
- striking implements
  - large plastic bat
  - cardboard cylinder
  - foam noodle
  - swimming kickboard
  - plastic golf clubs and hockey sticks
  - plastic spades
- targets
  - empty plastic bottles
  - posters on a wall
  - chalk drawing on a fence
  - tyres

Make it easier
- begin with a stationary ball
- try using a tennis ball tied in a stocking suspended from a tree branch or pergola; a 10 centimetre diameter ball balanced on a batting-tee or a cone; or a light ball hit with a bat or cardboard cylinder along the ground
- then introduce a lightweight bat held by the drawing hand

Make it harder
- try striking a moving ball thrown towards the child
- try striking balls to hit targets
Spotlight cards
Spotlight cards

The Spotlight cards are to use with the Let’s Get Moving activity. They give you suggestions on how to make the movement skills more imaginative and challenging. Each card places the spotlight on a specific way to move. They will keep your child on their toes and bursting with enthusiasm.

The ideas are divided into three categories:

Purple cards (effort awareness) – these place the spotlight on how the body moves. They include:
- time—quickly, slowly
- force—in a relaxed way, in a tight way
- flow—moving fast and then slow

Blue cards (space awareness)—these place the spotlight on where the body moves. They include:
- self space—on your own
- shared space—with others
- directions—along a straight line, zigzag line and a curved line
- levels and pathways—at a high level, low level, up then down

Pink cards (body relationship awareness)—these place the spotlight on the relationships the body creates. They include:
- with itself—with a big body, small body
- with others—as a leader, follower, with a partner
- with objects—over then under, on then off
Purple cards

Spotlight on effort awareness

slowly
like a snail
like a yawn
like a falling leaf

quickly
like a cheetah
like a racing car
like a lightning bolt

start slow then go faster
like an aeroplane taking off
like a train pulling out of a station
like a racing car starting a race

explosively
like a rocket
like a volcano
like a jack-in-the-box

start fast then go slower
like an aeroplane landing
like a train coming into a station
like coming up to a red light

in a relaxed way
be all flippy flopsy
like a rag doll
like a scarecrow

strongly
like a sumo wrestler
like a weightlifter
like an ox

lightly
like a butterfly
like a fairy
like a feather
Blue cards

Spotlight on space awareness

on your own
Find your own place. Mark your own area with a hoop or a carpet square. Spread your arms out and make sure they don't touch anyone.

with others
Move with the other players. Make sure the area is big enough for you to all move together.

along a straight line
Find a straight line to move along. If you can't find one, make one with chalk, masking tape, sticks or rope.

along a curved line
Find a curved line to move along. If you can't find one, make one with chalk, masking tape, sticks or rope.

at a low level
Move your body closer to the ground.

at a high level
Move your body closer to the sky or the ceiling.

up then down
Move your body up then down—like a yo-yo or like a jack-in-the-box.

forwards then backwards
Look straight ahead and move forward. Then keep looking straight ahead but move backwards.
Pink cards

Spotlight on body relationship awareness

**as a leader**
Form a line of people with you at the front. Do the movement skill with the other players following you.

**as a follower**
Another player stands at the front of the line and then you stand behind them. Follow the movement skill that they are doing.

**with a partner**
Choose another player to do the movement skill with.

**near to ... then far from**
Find an object (e.g. a tree, fence, chair, wall) to perform the movement skill close to, then move far away from the same object and perform the same skill.

**in front of ... then behind**
Find an object (e.g. a tree, bench, chair, table) to perform the movement skill in front of, then move behind the same object and perform the same skill.

**over ... then under**
Find an object (e.g. a bridge, table) to perform the movement skill over, then move under the same object and perform the same skill.

**on ... then off**
Find an object (e.g. a balance board, rope, mat, carpet) to perform the movement skill on, then move off the same object and perform the same skill.

**around ... then through**
Find an object (e.g. a tunnel, bushes) to perform the movement skill around, then move through the same object and perform the same skill.

**with a big body**
like a bus
like a giant
like a truck
with a small body
like a mouse
like an ant
like a pea

with a wide body
like an elephant
like a ball
like a steam roller

with a narrow body
like a pencil
like an arrow
like a bread stick

with a twisted body
like a corkscrew
like a crooked branch
like a spring

with a curved body
like a banana
like a rainbow
like a worm

watch and feel what your legs do
How do your legs feel while doing this movement? What do your legs do?

watch and feel what your arms do
How do your arms feel while doing this movement? What do your arms do?
along a curved line
Find a curved line to move along. If you can't find one, make one with chalk, masking tape, sticks or rope.

along a straight line
Find a straight line to move along. If you can't find one, make one with chalk, masking tape, sticks or rope.

with others
Move with the other players. Make sure the area is big enough for you to all move together.

on your own
Find your own place. Mark your own area with a hoop or a carpet square. Spread your arms out and make sure they don't touch anyone.

forwards then backwards
Look straight ahead and move forward. Then keep looking straight ahead but move backwards.

up then down
Move your body up then down – like a yo-yo or like a jack-in-the-box.

at a high level
Move your body closer to the sky or the ceiling.

at a low level
Move your body closer to the ground.
as a leader
Form a line of people with you at the front. Do the movement skill with the other players following you.

as a follower
Another player stands at the front of the line and then you stand behind them. Follow the movement skill that they are doing.

with a partner
Choose another player to do the movement skill with.

near to ... then far from
Find an object (e.g. a tree, fence, chair, wall) to perform the movement skill close to, then move far away from the same object and perform the same skill.

around ... then through
Find an object (e.g. a tunnel, bushes) to perform the movement skill around, then move through the same object and perform the same skill.

on ... then off
Find an object (e.g. a balance board, rope, mat, carpet) to perform the movement skill on, then move off the same object and perform the same skill.

over ... then under
Find an object (e.g. a bridge, table) to perform the movement skill over, then move under the same object and perform the same skill.

in front of ... then behind
Find an object (e.g. a tree, bench, chair, table) to perform the movement skill in front of, then move behind the same object and perform the same skill.
with a big body
like a bus
like a giant
like a truck

with a twisted body
like a corkscrew
like a crooked branch
like a spring

with a small body
like a mouse
like an ant
like a pea

with a curved body
like a banana
like a rainbow
like a worm

with a wide body
like an elephant
like a ball
like a steam roller

with a narrow body
like a pencil
like an arrow
like a bread stick

watch and feel what your legs do
How do your legs feel while doing this movement? What do your legs do?

watch and feel what your arms do
How do your arms feel while doing this movement? What do your arms do?
Stop and think messages
Stop and think messages

In this section you will find 12 important Stop and Think (health and safety) messages suitable for children aged between three and six years of age. It focuses on everyday issues that will help your child stay safe and healthy while taking part in physical activities. These range from drinking enough water and wearing a hat through to tripping hazards and safe play equipment.

Each message is broken down into three sections:

- **Facts**—background information about the health and safety messages
- **Suggestions**—ideas on how to address these health and safety concerns
- **Questions**—things to ask your child to promote their thinking on the issue

You will find the answers to the questions under “Facts”.

Combine these messages with the movement skills and play the *Let’s Get Moving* activity in the back of the book.
Drink water

Facts
- Children appear to adjust to heat more slowly than adults (up to twice as long) (Pangrazi, 1997:26).
- Children tend not to drink enough to replenish fluids lost during exercise.
- It is advisable that children drink approximately 100 to 200 mls (about half to one cup) of water 20 to 30 minutes before they are actively involved in movement activities. If heat is severe, frequent sips of water throughout the activity is recommended. Otherwise offer a drink of water again after the movement activity (McVeagh, 1992:112).

Suggestions
- Have a water dispenser in an accessible place for children to independently access.
- Remind children to drink water frequently throughout the day, especially in hot weather.
- Remember to drink water frequently yourself.

Questions for children
- Do you know where you can get a drink of water?
- Why is it important to drink water?
- How much water should you drink?
- How often should you drink water?
- When should you drink water?

Wear a sun hat

Facts
- Children should wear hats (8–10 centimetres broad brimmed or legionnaire-style) with an elastic strap under the chin.
- The broader the brim of the hat, the better the protection from the sun.
- Avoid hats with white fabric under the brim as they reflect UV rays onto the face and eyes.
- Avoid hats with velcro or clips on the brim as this encourages the brim to be turned upwards exposing more skin to the sun (Queensland Cancer Fund, 1997:88-89).

Suggestions
- Encourage hat wearing whenever playing outside.
- Involve children in the decision making process when purchasing a hat.

Questions for children
- When do you need to wear a sun hat? Why?
- What makes a good sun hat?
Play in the shade

Facts
- Outdoor playgrounds should be shaded.
- Children should avoid the sun between 10am and 3pm.
- Sun damage can still occur on cloudy days (Queensland Cancer Fund, 1997:88).

Suggestions
- Choose outdoor play areas that are well shaded by trees or shade structures.
- Install a shade structure (such as a gazebo, shade cloth stretched between four posts, or plant shady trees) in unshaded play areas.

Questions for children
- Why is it important to play in the shade?
- Can you show me a shady place to play?

Wear safe clothing

Facts
- Children (and adults) should wear appropriate sun-safe clothing (dark colours, collars and sleeves, closely woven fabric, natural fibre) for sun safety (Queensland Cancer Fund, 1997:89).
- Children should not wear clothing with drawstrings, loose ties, loops, sleeves or trouser legs that can get caught on equipment or potentially strangle a child (Kidsafe, 2001:Info sheet 4).

Suggestions
- Show children what safe clothing is and what unsafe clothing is.
- Explain the dangers of unsafe clothing.

Questions for children
- What is safe clothing?
- Why is it important to wear safe clothing?
- What should you do if you are wearing an unsafe piece of clothing, before you go running, skipping, climbing, balancing or playing ball games?
- What should you wear on hot days?
- What should you wear on cold days?
Hold on firmly when climbing

Facts

• In a recent study of children’s injuries treated at two Brisbane hospitals, falls from horizontal ladders were implicated in the greatest number of fracture injuries in playgrounds (Nixon, 2003:210).

• In the same study horizontal ladders were found to be the most heavily used, often creating queues. Children in the queue would encourage speedy use (Nixon, 2003:212).

Suggestions

• Actively supervise children when climbing.

• Encourage children to always have a “three-point” hold when climbing. This means they need to have contact with the climbing equipment with either two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand, and that the other hand or foot is moving up to the next rung, branch or step.

• If queuing does occur, actively supervise children in the queue and provide other activities for them to do (e.g. sing a rhyme).

• Climbing equipment for three to five year olds should be less than 1.5 metres from the ground.

• Soft surfaces should be under all playground equipment to cushion children’s falls (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 1).

• Recommended soft surfaces for playground equipment include bark, woodchip, sand, shredded rubber, synthetic turf or rubber tiles or mats (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 3).

Questions for children

• Why is it important to hold on firmly when climbing?

• What should there be under climbing equipment, so you don’t hurt yourself so much if you fall?
Watch out for tripping hazards

Facts

• Tripping hazards (e.g. uneven surfaces, tree roots and soft fall borders) can cause young children to fall and injure themselves.

Suggestions

• Before children engage in movement activities, check there are no tripping hazards. Ask children to identify tripping hazards as well.
• Point out to children any non-removable tripping hazards, such as tree roots, garden borders or level changes.
• Set up movement activities away from non-removable hazards.
• Create clear boundaries for the movement activity with ropes, boxes, chalk drawing or a stick drawn line in the dirt.

Questions for children

• What is a tripping hazard?
• Why do we need to remove them before we play?
• What can we do if we can’t remove the hazard?

Watch out for others around you

Facts

• For safe play there should be separate areas for quiet creative play, running and ball games (Kidsafe, 2001: Safe Play Hazard Hitlist).

Suggestions

• Carefully choose appropriate play areas, depending on what the movement activity needs.
• Allow clear spaces around each piece of playground equipment and any other obstacles (such as trees or fences).
• Allow plenty of space for ball games.
• If plenty of space is not available, find a space for ball games where the surrounds will not be damaged by a ball in flight, or control the ball’s movement by tying it in a stocking or on a string.
• Provide clearly defined areas for each activity.

Questions for children

• Why should you watch out for others around you?
• If there is not enough space for what you are playing, what could you do?
Protect your feet

Facts

• Wearing the right shoes is important to prevent foot problems. Shoes should fit snugly around the heel, support the arch and be able to flex across the ball of the foot (Australian Sports Commission, 1991:17).
• Shoes that are too big can make the feet very tired.
• Having a good grip is important for slippery surfaces.
• If there is no risk of danger or injury, going barefoot can be beneficial. It can exercise the muscles of the feet and give the child tactile feedback. Bare feet also provide a good grip when climbing.

Suggestions

• Show children what a good grip on a shoe looks like.
• Examine how well-fitting your children’s shoes are.
• Seek expert advice when purchasing children’s shoes.
• Always check the area for hazards before taking a child’s shoes off.

Questions for children

• What does a good grip look like?
• Why is it important to have a good grip when you are playing?
• When is it okay to take your shoes off?

Eat healthy food

Facts

• A well-balanced eating plan that includes all the food groups is essential to enable young children to be healthy, happy and active.
• The five food groups are:
  1. breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
  2. vegetables
  3. fruit
  4. milk, yoghurt, cheese
  5. meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, legumes

Suggestions

• Plan children’s meals to include all the food groups.
• Offer slight variations in food on a daily basis.
• Involve children in planning, shopping and preparing food.
• Help children learn about healthy eating by comparing examples of healthy food and food that should only be eaten sometimes.
• Play food sorting games to help children develop an understanding of the different food groups.

Questions for children

• What is healthy food?
• Why is it important to eat good food?
• What are the different types of food that you should eat each day?
Play with safe equipment

Facts
- Unsafe equipment can cause injuries to young children.
- Gaps between 125mm and 230mm in structures such as railings, handles or steps of playground equipment, can trap a young child’s head.
- Playground equipment that is over 500mm in height needs to have guardrails to prevent falls, and approved soft surfaces under the equipment.
- Protruding bolts, screws, nails and other elements can cut or bruise young children or entangle their clothing.
- Pinch points and sharp edges; broken, worn, or loose equipment or equipment with missing parts; and sharp items such as splinters, glass, metal shavings, syringes or nails can cause injury to young children.
- Trampolines need active supervision and safety checks to ensure the frame is stable, the springs are securely attached (and covered by safety pads) and that there are no tears or holes (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 11).

Suggestions
- Make sure there are no gaps in play equipment that could trap a child’s head.
- Check that any platform that is 500mm high (and over) has guardrails on all sides. Regularly check that these are well attached and are safe.
- Check and eliminate protrusions that can injure skin or hook children’s clothing.
- Check for and eliminate any pinch points and sharp edges.
- Regularly inspect your playground equipment for broken, worn, loose or missing parts.
- Seal off any unsafe equipment from children.
- Repair any unsafe equipment as soon as possible.
- Educate children not to touch sharp objects they find in a play area, and to alert the nearest adult of the object and its location.
- Actively supervise children’s play.

Questions for children
- Tell me some things that can make a play area unsafe or dangerous.
- What should you do if you see something that you think is unsafe or dangerous?
Have an adult nearby

Facts
- Children’s play needs to be actively supervised in order to prevent injury (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 4).

Suggestions
- Always supervise children’s play.

Questions for children
- Why is it important to have an adult nearby when you are playing?
- What can an adult do to make sure you are safe while playing?

Land safely

Facts
- In Queensland during 1999, 83 percent of playground injuries occurred when children jumped or fell from equipment (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 1).
- Slippery landings are dangerous.
- Young children need a soft landing area when jumping off or over objects.
- Children need to learn how to land safely at an early age to absorb the force of landing, avoid jarring of body joints and prevent injury.
- Kidsafe (QLD) recommends that all equipment with a fall height greater than 500mm, must have a tested soft fall surface (such as bark, woodchip or sand to a minimum depth of 200mm) underneath the equipment. The surface should extend for 2.5m around the equipment to cushion the impact of a fall (Kidsafe, 2001: Info sheet 3).

Suggestions
- Teach your child how to land safely—from standing, fall forwards like a tree; and from a squat or kneeling position, fall forwards, bracing fall with wide spread hands in front.
- Provide foam mats or mattresses in areas where children are jumping, climbing, rolling and landing.
- Make sure a suitable soft fall surface is installed under equipment that has a fall height greater than 500mm.
- If surfaces become slippery, direct children away from the area until it is dry.
- Raise your child’s awareness of dangerous landings.

Questions for children
- What is a safe landing area?
- How can you land safely?
Relaxation
Let's Get Moving

Relaxation

Relaxation for early learners

In our current lifestyle, young children tend to live very busy, harried lives. We hurry our children each morning to get dressed, to eat their breakfast and put on their shoes. Throughout the day, young children are not always given sufficient time to perform the tasks required of them.

This creates stress and anxiety, which in turn affects the child’s ability to perform the task or activity. Relaxation plays an important role here. Teaching young children how to relax will build their ability to confidently approach tasks and activities with a focused mind and strong bodies (Rickard, 1996:4).

Taking time to relax and focus on the body builds an understanding and awareness of how the body works. For example, if we ask young children to lie down on their back, close their eyes then curl their toes back making them really tight, then to relax them so that they are loose and floppy, they become very conscious of their toes and feet.

An awareness and understanding of how muscles work and how they feel when they are tense and relaxed evolves with frequent relaxation activities like the above, that can work through all the major body parts. Young children’s reactions tend to involve the whole body, so activities that focus on developing an awareness of individual body parts are especially useful (Maude, 2001:16). Later when young children approach movement activities they will have a greater awareness of how to use their body to perform the movement skill.

A quiet moment to just focus on breathing can give young children a chance to slow down and be still while they watch and feel the rhythm of their breathing pattern in their bodies. Invite the children to rest their hands on their lower chest ribs (their diaphragm) and feel the gentle up and down movement. Slow, deep breathing will relax and revitalise their bodies.

Frequent brief relaxation moments throughout the day will empower our young children to feel confident about what their bodies can do. Relaxation is especially useful after an active time, allowing the child to cool down, slow down and feel the difference between an active body and a still body.
A few quiet minutes of relaxation after an active game also help young children to learn the difference between being active and passive. The movement skills help to strengthen young children’s muscles. They then need to know how to rest their muscles. Relaxation is important for health and body maintenance.

Here are some ideas to promote relaxation:

- Have your child/children stand or sit in a comfortable position, close their eyes then:
  - feel what breathing does to their body;
  - breathe deeply in and out together whilst you say slowly “Breathing in, breathing out”;
  - listen to a piece of relaxing music;
  - imagine being an ice cream melting;
- softly ask your child/children to imagine: they are floating on a cloud; they are lying under a big shady tree; they are floating in a bath or any relaxing setting you can imagine or
- listen to positive affirmations, such as “I am now calm and relaxed”.

- Have your child/children lie on their stomachs then roll a beach ball down their backs and legs.

- Have the child/children curl up on the floor with eyes shut and simply rest for a short while.
Let’s Get Moving activity
Let’s Get Moving activity

The *Let’s Get Moving* activity is a fun way to get your children involved in physical activity and to learn important movement skills. *Let’s Get Moving* can be played virtually anywhere—inside, outside, at home, at preschool, in the park, or in the backyard.

The activity is for children between three and six years of age, although older children (and adults) will also have a great time getting involved.

You will find the activity in the back pocket of the book. The only other things you will need are a dice, a counter for each person playing, an adult, and some energetic and excited children.

The *Let’s Get Moving* activity centres around 24 basic movement skills and 12 important stop and think messages (which are detailed in this resource). Different ways of doing the movements can be found on the *Spotlight cards*.

Use the activity as a springboard for ideas. It is not essential that you finish the game by reaching the *Relax* circle. The purpose is for you and your children to enjoy moving – let them have fun exploring how their bodies work and what they can do.

The activity is flexible and can be adapted to meet your child’s individual abilities. Each child’s interpretation of the movements will be unique, as they have their own abilities and interests. Your role is to support their exploration and praise their participation.

We know that you and your children will have heaps of fun with this activity—so why wait—Let’s Get Moving.
Instructions

Aim of the activity
Have loads of fun while exploring movement skills in many different ways.

Number of players
2 to 20 (at least one adult)

What you need
- Let’s Get Moving activity mat
- Let’s Get Moving resource (this book)
- 1 dice
- 8 blue cards (space) cut these cards out of this book
- 8 purple cards (effort) cut these cards out of this book
- 16 pink cards (body) cut these cards out of this book
- Counters to match the number of players (or one counter for whole group)
- Various objects to throw (e.g. balls, balloons, small hand-held bean bags, bath sponges)
- Child-sized racquets or paddles
- Child-sized bats (e.g. cricket bats, base ball bats, hockey sticks, golf clubs or even rolled newspaper)

- Various obstacles to move on and around
- Space to move in

Set up
Place the activity mat on the floor or a table so that it is in the best viewing position for everyone playing. Place the three different coloured packs of Spotlight cards on the designated spot on the activity mat.

Each player chooses a counter and places it on the Wake up circle, or you may choose to have only one counter and move through the activity as a whole group (this way is more manageable for groups of five or more).
Choose your level

It is important to adapt the level to suit the individual skill level of the child having the turn. Different levels of difficulty are created by combining a movement skill with one or more Spotlight cards. If a child easily manages a movement skill, add a suggestion from one Spotlight card, then two then three cards. If at any time it is too difficult then just go back down a level.

Beginners

When a player lands on a Movement skill circle, she has a go at the skill written on the circle. She does it as many times as she likes or for as long as it is enjoyable. This level is ideal for younger children and children who cope best focusing on one factor at a time.

One spotlight

When a player lands on a Movement skill circle, he picks up either a blue, pink or purple card, and plans with the adult how he might perform the skill in the way described on the cards.

For example, the player might land on crawling and then pick up a pink card that says “On... then off”. Say to the child “Look around. What can you see that you could crawl on and then off?”

Select a piece of equipment together. Discuss safety, and what might be easy and what might be difficult. Once the activity has been planned, have a go at the skill together. Do it as many times or for as long as it is enjoyable. If you find the card you picked up too difficult to match with the skill, just pick another card.

Two spotlights

Children who are familiar with the game, can try picking up two different coloured cards and then determine if it is possible to perform the movement skill with these two variations. This may prove quite challenging and will require careful planning with an adult.

Three spotlights

Older children who are very familiar with the game, can try picking up three different coloured cards. After looking at the three chosen cards, determine if it is possible to perform the movement skill with these three variations all at once. To focus on three concepts plus the movement skill will be quite challenging and will require careful planning and assistance from an adult.
How to play

Choose who will start (e.g. the youngest, the oldest or the highest number in the roll of the dice).

The starting player rolls the dice first, then moves his/her counter the same number of steps as the number on the dice. The player then follows the directions on the circle on which they have landed.

The activity is made up of a trail of 24 Movement skill circles interspersed with 12 Stop and think (health and safety) clouds. See below for details about each circle.

Each player continues to take turns until everyone has reached the Relax circle. You don’t have to complete the game in one session. Just leave the counters on the circle or clouds you were up to on the activity mat and resume the game at another time.

Movement skill circles

There are 24 Movement skill circles on the activity mat. These skills are listed in the Movement skills section of this book.

A player landing on a Movement skill circle will get to perform the movement. Details of each movement skill including descriptions, variations, other activities and rhymes are featured in this resource book.

See the Movement skills section of this book for further ideas on:

- different levels of skill development (When can they do it)
- cues to support the development of the movement skill (Showing them how to do it)
- suitable equipment (see Equipment ideas)
- interesting activity ideas and related action rhymes
- how to make it easier and how to make it harder
Spotlight cards

When a player lands on a Movement skill circle he/she can also pick up a Spotlight card to make the movement more challenging. See Choose your level in this Instruction section for details.

Stop and think clouds

The Stop and think clouds on the activity mat correspond with the 12 Stop and think (health and safety) messages in the book.

When a player lands on a Stop and think cloud, you should guide a discussion about this important message. After your discussion, the player can then follow the arrow to get to a Movement skill circle.

See the Stop and think section of the book for ideas for your discussions and implementation of these messages. It is a good idea to read this information before using the activity, so that you are well informed to talk about the messages when your child lands on a Stop and think cloud during the activity. Don’t forget to adapt the wording of the questions to suit the knowledge of the child who is taking the turn.

Relax circle

When the Relax circle is reached it is time for the children to have some form of relaxation. Movement activities with young children should always end with some form of relaxation. A few quiet minutes of relaxation after an active game helps young children to learn the difference between being active and passive.

See the Relaxation section in this book for some ideas to promote relaxation.
Where do I go for more information?

**Asthma Foundation of Queensland**  
Website: www.asthmaqld.org.au  
For advice, counselling, training and information on asthma.  
Phone: (07) 3252 7677  
Freecall: 1800 278 462  
Fax: (07) 3257 1080  
Email: info@asthmaqld.org.au

**Ausdance QLD Inc**  
(Australian Dance Council)  
Website: www.ausdance.org.au  
For resources on dance and contact details of dance teachers for children.  
Phone: (07) 3122 7628  
Email: admin@ausdanceqld.org.au

**Child and Youth Community Health Service**  
For child health information or contact details for your local community health centre – where parents could be referred to for developmental screening by a child health nurse.  
Child Health Information:  
A 24 hour telephone service for families from across Queensland. Information about a range of child and youth health issues.  
Contact: 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) or contact your local doctor.

**Kidsafe QLD**  
Website: www.kidsafeqld.com.au  
For information and advice on playground safety issues, such as soft-fall and poisonous plants.  
Phone: (07) 3854 1829  
Fax: (07) 3252 7900  
Email: qld@kidsafe.org.au

**Noah’s Ark Resource Centre (Qld) Inc**  
Website: www.noahsark.net.au  
For the loan of educational toys and equipment, including multicultural equipment and equipment especially designed for children with special needs. Service available across Queensland.  
50 Shottery Street, Yeronga 4104  
Phone: (07) 3391 2166

**Parks**  
Contact your local council to obtain a list of parks with young children’s playground equipment, or visit www.playgroundfinder.com.
Playgroup Queensland
Website: www.playgroupaustralia.com.au
For details on your local playgroup and a wide range of play resources for sale.
86 Orchid Street, Enoggera 4051
PO Box 339, Alderley 4051
Phone: 1800 171 882
Email: info@playgroupqld.com.au

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing
Website: www.npsr.qld.gov.au
For more information on other services.
A number of sports offer activities suitable to this age group. State sporting organisation details can be found on the department’s website.
Phone: 1300 656 191
Fax: (07) 3247 3611
References


You may also be interested in these Queensland Government products ...

The Queensland Government is committed to giving babies and young children an active start and instilling in them a positive attitude towards an active lifestyle.

Ideas to get kids active

The following resources will help you with ideas on how to include more activity into a child’s day.

- **Move Baby Move** - a booklet for parents that includes appropriate activities for babies as they develop
- **Active Alphabet** - consists of two booklets - one for parents and carers; and one for toddlers
- **Let’s Get Moving** - a booklet for parents, teachers and early childhood carers that includes games and activities to help preschoolers get active.

Daily Physical Activity - iPhone App now available!

The *Daily Physical Activity Guide* is a ‘how to’ manual for early childhood professionals, primary and secondary teachers to help them incorporate physical activity into their daily teaching program.

It is also a quick and easy avenue for the general public to incorporate physical activity into their everyday lives.

The app is free for download through iTunes and emphasises the ‘fun’ aspect of physical activity.