



## Have a Ball Together!

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**meilleur départ**  
Resource Centre/Centre de ressources  
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# Physical activity for 0-18 month olds

Physical activity is important for all children – even infants who are just starting to develop their movement skills.

For babies aged 0-18 months, physical activity is all about exploration, experiencing simple movements and learning about the world.

## 24-Hour Movement Guidelines

### Move

- Infants (less than 1 year) should be physically active several times a day. For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake.
- Toddlers (1-2 years) should be physically active at least 180 minutes a day, including energetic play – more is better.

### Sleep

- 14-17 hours a day for those aged 0-3 months, including naps.
- 12-16 hours a day for those aged 4-11 months, including naps.
- 11-14 hours a day for those aged 1-2 years, including naps, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.

### Sit

- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (such as stroller or high chair).
- Screen time is not recommended.
- When sedentary, reading, storytelling and similar activities with a caregiver is encouraged.

## Benefits

Physical activity helps babies to be healthy, alert, relaxed and happy. Physical activity also helps your baby:

- Stimulate their senses
- Improve their digestion
- Build connections in the brain which help with development
- Be easier to soothe
- Learn new skills and experience new emotions
- Set the stage for future movement skills
- Have better sleep habits

## Skills to Develop

Here are some physical skills you can help your baby with during the first year:

*0-3 months:* neck control, reaching, grabbing, arm and leg movements

*4-6 months:* rolling over, sitting, pushing with their legs

*7-9 months:* moving forward (crawling or scooting), moving objects between hands, standing

*10-12 months:* cruising (walking while holding onto furniture), playing with balls

*12-18 months:* walking up stairs, pushing and pulling objects while walking forward

*These are general guidelines only. Every baby develops differently.*



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## Tips

To help your baby develop their movement skills, you can:

- Provide lots of opportunities for your baby to be active every day, including inside and outside.
- Limit the amount of time your baby spends in the stroller, car seat or infant carrier.
- Make sure your baby is playing with age-appropriate toys and that play areas are safe for your baby.
- Make sure your baby is wearing proper footwear if walking, climbing or jumping.

## Activity Ideas

Here are some activity examples to get your baby moving:

- Move an object side-to-side to encourage your baby to follow the object by moving their head.
- Gently move and stretch your baby's arms and legs.
- Provide lots of opportunities for tummy time.
- Place a toy in front or to the side of your baby and encourage your baby to reach for it.
- Have your baby kick and splash while closely supervised in the tub.
- Play music and encourage your baby to dance.
- Roll a ball to your baby.
- Blow bubbles and encourage your baby to catch them.
- Set-up cushions for your baby to climb over.
- Hold your baby's hands while they practice walking.

Whether at home, in childcare, at school, or in the in the community, we all have a role in getting kids active. Help set the path to a happy childhood and a lifetime of healthy living!

## References

Active for Life (<http://activeforlife.com/>)

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (<http://csep.ca>)

Kids At Play, Australian Capital Territory Government  
(<http://health.act.gov.au/healthy-living/kids-play>)

Nipissing District Developmental Screening ([www.ndds.ca](http://www.ndds.ca))



**For more information, tips and activity ideas, visit [haveaballtogether.ca](http://haveaballtogether.ca)**