

# **Child Care Setting and Physical Activity Manual**

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## **Background and Rationale**

The national obesity epidemic has not excluded preschool age children. Obesity in childhood is associated with many diseases such as depression, hypertension, coronary heart disease, diabetes, and high lipid levels. Currently, Kentucky ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for the highest rates of overweight and obese 10-17 year olds. Nationally 26.2% of children 2-5 years are classified as overweight or obese. While data specific to Kentucky youth are not available, it would seem logical that if Kentucky ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> for childhood obesity, clearly more than 26.2 % of Kentucky children 2-5 years old are overweight or obese. These troubling statistics have yielded a call to action to researchers, practitioners, law makers, and parents.

Increased physical activity has been identified as one strategy necessary to combat childhood obesity. In 2001, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) developed physical activity guidelines for youth from 0-5 years old in an effort to answer the questions, “How much activity is enough for preschool children?” Many perceive preschool aged children as being highly physically active and some data have supported that perception. Specifically, research suggests that 3-5 year old children are more active than older groups of children. Although this is encouraging, other research shows that these children may not be as active as believed. Thus, efforts to promote physical activity and to create environments that foster physical activity in young children are needed.

Prior to looking to increase the physical activity levels of youth it is important to understand the physical activity patterns of youth. Children are intermittently active. This means that they are typically active at a moderate to vigorous intensity, but they stop

when they are tired. Typically their physical activity occurs in short intense bursts followed by time for rest. These times for rest are typically short as well, and they quickly return to being active. Children typically move for enjoyment. Visualize a child moving from one location on the playground to another. While adults would typically walk, young children will run or skip. Lastly, the research is quite clear that the physical activity levels of children track. That is, active children tend to become active adults. Thus, if efforts are not undertaken to increase the activity levels of young children, not only will they be denied the benefits associated with childhood physical activity, they will not receive the lifelong benefits of physical activity associated with an active lifestyle in adulthood.

In addition to the positive health outcomes of physical activity for children, an abundance of research has been published regarding learning and academic performance benefits from physical activity engagement. It is known that children demonstrate improved on-task, attentive, and concentrative behaviors in the classroom immediately following movement breaks or class physical activity. Children have also been described as less fidgety, more attentive, and more on task when provided unstructured physical activity (e.g., free play indoors, recess).

Early childcare settings (ECS) offer an opportune time to promote physical activity. Most recent data suggest 5 million American youth spend at least some time in an ECS. On average 41% of children of working mothers attend an early childcare setting approximately 35+ hours per week (Capizzano & Adams, 2000). With such a large amount of their time spent in this setting, it is likely that the physical activity and subsequent energy expenditure accumulated in the ECS contributes to energy balance,

impacts weight status, and influences learning and/or school readiness. The remainder of this manual will provide strategies and activities designed to increase the physical activity of children attending ECS.

## **Working with Children in an Active Setting**

Children love to move and typically are happiest when they are engaged in physical activity. However, typically sedentary students are deemed manageable by teachers and leaders of children in learning contexts. While this may seem intuitive, in reality, active children may be easier to manage with a little work. To maximize physical activity opportunities during the day, it is essential that daycare providers be comfortable working with children in an active setting. This includes behavior management and motivation of children. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide strategies and principles for working with children in an activity setting.

### ***Management***

In a physical activity setting, managing students refers to effective organization and movement of students as well as efficient transitions from one movement activity to another as well as to other activities in the classroom and beyond (e.g., preparing for lunch, centers). As with most skills involved in teaching, becoming a good manager of students takes practice and patience. However, once students understand the expectations and routines, well managed children are a joy to teach. Effective management creates a positive environment, alleviates many behavior problems, and maximizes physical activity time.

### **Basic Management Principles**

- Establish expectations (or rules) and expect children to abide by them 100% of the time. Children will typically meet your expectations.
- Use student names often. Like adults, children love to hear their name it and shows them that you care.
- Provide specific positive feedback (SPF) For example, “Wow, Joey, You are really working hard today” or “Whoa Liz, thanks for keeping your own space.” This provides substantive feedback as opposed to “good job,” which is vague.
- Have a plan. Know what activities will be used and when they are going to be used.
- Be sure to identify boundaries and remind students often. If needed use cones or other markers to identify the playing area.

### **Routines**

Routines are very common in ECS. Some of the routines below are specific to a physical activity setting, while some are likely already established in a specific class or group. New routines will require practice by both the student and the teacher. Just as mistakes are made in physical skills, mistakes will be made early on when learning management routines. Thus patience is essential. Early on the focus should be on correcting the behavior with specific positive feedback and practicing the skill (e.g., freezing). With time students will become accustomed to the routines.

#### **Stopping and Starting the Class**

The ability to stop and start children is likely the most valuable management skill for teachers. To foster the stop routine, always use a consistent signal such as a whistle, a clap, or telling them “freeze”. This will allow students to know what to expect and know how to respond. This signal could be used throughout the day, not just during physical activity.

Children should be taught to put their hands on their knees and look at the teacher when they hear the stop signal. Establishing the stop signal will take practice. For this

reason, teachers should make a game to see who can freeze the fastest. This will help establish the stopping routine and make the routine fun for children. Specific positive feedback such as “Wow, Hector, you stopped the fastest that time; give me a fist bump,” will also help get students to follow the signal. Once the stop signal is given, teachers can quickly scan the class to see if everyone is frozen. If children have equipment, part of the stop routine is to safely place the equipment on the ground between their feet.

Similar to stopping the class, to get the class moving a consistent signal should be used. Children can easily learn to begin moving only when they hear the teacher say, “Go”. So teachers simply say, “When I say ‘Go’, let’s see how many jumps you can do in your own space. ‘Go’”.

### **Retrieving Equipment**

Although many activities will require no equipment, since equipment is used for some activities, it is important to establish a routine for retrieving and returning equipment. When feasible it is best to have the equipment spread out in a safe location to provide children with easy access. This will also help expedite the retrieval process and ensure children get more physical activity. Children should be encouraged to move quickly and safely to get the equipment. To foster this, one effective strategy is to give the child an activity to do once they retrieve the equipment. For example, “When I say, ‘Go,’ hustle and get a scarf and balance it on your shoulder. ‘Go’”. Not only does this provide children with incentive to hustle to get the equipment, it maximizes activity time and satisfies their need to play with the equipment. Once all students have the equipment and are engaged in activity, they can be stopped at any time (using the signal that has been established) to provide further instruction. As stated above, when students have

equipment, the stopping routine is hands on knees, eyes on teacher, and equipment between feet.

When returning equipment the routine involves hustling to safely place the equipment in the appropriate place (not throw it) and then walking in the teaching area. This provides the children with a task, minimizing behavior problems, and increasing physical activity levels.

### **Grouping Children**

While many activities are conducted with children working alone, at times partners, small groups and teams will be used. For this reason efficient routines for grouping children should be taught. Toe-to-Toe is a great game for getting children with partners. When the teacher says, “Toe-to-Toe” children are trained to quickly find the person closest to them and stand with the toes of one of their feet touching the toes of the other person’s foot. This will take time, but with feedback and repetition students will learn to be partners with the person closest to them and not their best friend. This process fosters children working with all of their peers and avoids having some students being ignored. For those students who cannot find a partner close by, the teacher should announce for them to come to the middle so he/she can quickly find partners for them. For most preschool aged students, the teacher will need to assist students with this process.

Similarly if small groups or teams are needed for an activity, the teacher will need to assist. With older children, it is appropriate to ask students to get into groups of three, four, or the desired number. With children ages 3 to 5, it is more appropriate for the teacher to form the groups. The key is to establish groups in the quickest way possible

and in the most humane way possible. It is important to avoid strategies such as allowing children to choose teams. This process always results in one child being chosen last.

To quickly split the class into two teams, the Toe-to-Toe method should be used first. Once students have found a partner, have one person sit down or raise his/her hand (this can be the tallest person, the oldest person, or the person with the darkest shirt). The students who are standing should be directed to one side of the playing area. Those who are sitting should be directed to the other side of the playing area. These two teams or groups are now ready for instructions and activity.

### **Teaching Behaviors**

In addition to establishing the above routines, there are other behaviors utilized by effective teachers to maximize physical activity and maintain appropriate behavior. First, the short attention spans of children means instructions should last no longer than 60 seconds. This will require several bouts of short instructions, but this is more conducive to physical activity and consistent with the needs and abilities of young children.

Instructions should also tell the students *when* to do something before *what* they are to do. This is called “when” before “what”. For example, rather than saying, “Go get a ribbon stick and...” which might result in youngsters not hearing any of the instruction, directions should be, “When I say, ‘Go’ hustle and get a ribbon stick and safely move in good spacing making circles with your stick. ‘Go’”.

Modeling is also important for children. Many children learn best by seeing and then doing while others learn from listening, and still others learn by listening and watching together. Thus, any time children can see an activity or task while it is being described the greater the chance they comprehend the message. For example, while

giving the above instructions, the teacher could be moving to the ribbon sticks quickly and safely and then modeling walking in good spacing making circles with the ribbon stick.

Modeling is also important with respect to the teacher's demeanor. Smiling teachers typically have smiling, happy classes. Teachers who move more tend to have classes that move more. Thus, when the teacher is engaged and having fun, the children are much more likely to be having fun and active.

Another strategy to maximize physical activity and to facilitate effective progressions (simple to complex activities), it is important for teachers to alternate between providing instruction and allowing students to perform the activities. It is more efficient and effective for a teacher to present short bouts of information (30-45 seconds of instructions), have students practice the activity, and then present another short bout of instruction to build upon the previous activity as opposed to giving a longer period of instruction (3-5 minutes) and allowing students to practice the activity. This is true because children in ECS do not have the capacity to remember several cues and directions presented all at once. They will have more success if the teacher focuses on one-to-three cues, allows them opportunities to try the activity, and then increases the complexity of the skill or activity by reviewing the cues and adding a cue or skill. The teacher simply needs to provide enough initial instruction to get the activity going. Remember, children do not need to know everything about the task up front.

Finally, teacher positioning is very important to keep students on task and for adequate supervision. One essential point to remember is "back to the wall", which means the teacher always has his/her back to the perimeter of the class or playing area

and has all students in view at all times. When the students are placed in a circle, it is important for the teacher to provide instructions and feedback as part of the circle, rather than by standing in the middle of the circle. If a teacher positions him or herself in the middle of the circle, half of the students are standing behind him/her, and it is also difficult for them to hear instructions or watch demonstrations. Another suggestion for teacher positioning is movement. Teachers should constantly move about the area so all students can be seen. This makes it easier and more convenient for the teacher to provide feedback to all students as well. In addition, proximity is important for supervising and maintaining student behavior. If one student is off-task, one effective practice is for the teacher to move close to the student so as not to address or embarrass the student in front of his/her peers.

### ***Addressing Misbehavior***

Regardless of the quality of the instruction, off task behavior will occur. To ensure that a learning friendly environment is maintained, specific strategies for addressing misbehavior should be employed. First, off task behavior must be addressed privately. This avoids embarrassing the child and allows a positive environment to be maintained. To address behavior privately, the teacher should use these steps:

1. Quickly, engage the class in an activity. A simple instruction such as, “Go back to walking with big steps in the area” or “Try tossing and catching your scarf again” can be used to do this.
2. Approach the child (while the class is active) and state, “Libby, talking while I’m talking is not acceptable. That’s a warning.”

3. Move away from the child and provide specific positive feedback to another child. For example, “I like the way Sara is using her listening ears”
4. Freeze the class and move continue with the activity.

This particular system works best when the only class rule is “Respect Yourself and Others”. How this rule is taught to children will depend on their age. Similarly, this approach to addressing misbehavior works best with the following consequences:

- First offense: Warning
- Second offense: Time out (child decides when to come back)
- Third offense: Time out for remainder of activity time

These consequences serve to remove the emotion, for the teacher and the student, that is often associated with misbehavior. It also allows students to make behavior choices and avoids having one child disrupt the entire class. However, these consequences are only successful in shaping behavior when used for typical behavior problems such as not listening or talking while the teacher is talking. Students who cause another student physical harm should not be permitted to be active for the duration of that activity. Also, these consequences are only effective if the children are enjoying the activity and find physical activity enjoyable.

## **Integrating Physical Activity**

Physical activity comes in many ways, shapes and forms. It is important to understand terminology that is often confused and used interchangeably with physical activity in order to distinguish their differences. Three terms that are often used to mean the same thing are *physical activity*, *physical fitness*, and *exercise*. Following are simple definitions:

- Physical activity - Bodily movement that is produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle and that substantially increases energy expenditure (USDHHS, 1996); a behavior that can change from one moment to the next
- Physical fitness - A set of attributes that people have or achieve relating to their ability to perform physical activity (USDHHS, 1996); a characteristic or trait that changes gradually over time
- Exercise - Leisure time physical activity conducted with the intention of developing physical fitness; generally planned physical activity

Based on these definitions, what children engage in is best described by the term *physical activity*. Physical activity comes in different intensity levels, and the physical activity offered in ECS does not have to be vigorous in intensity. Light and moderate intensity physical activity can easily be achieved in an indoor classroom setting. Following are some ideas teachers can incorporate physical activity into their daily, weekly, or yearly schedules to increase and supplement physical activity levels of children aged 2 to 5. It is important to remember that these physical activities should be embedded within the already existing curriculum as opposed to serving as a stand-alone curriculum. Additionally, physical activity and movement should be instituted as a culture in the classroom instead of appearing as an “extra” component. There is a way to teach or supplement every bit of content necessary for students in ECS through movement.

## ***Physical Activity Breaks***

Physical activity breaks are intended to be 5-10 minutes of movement that take place either during learning (to complement content being taught) or as a break from learning. Breaks that complement content may include having students stand on their spot and draw letters in the air by pointing their finger and arm straight ahead and tracing the letter as big as they can. Another idea may involve the students working on numbers and jumping up and down each time they count. The teacher may review colors by asking students who are wearing a certain color to perform a movement such as marching in place. Students may be asked to act out animals based on the appropriate animal sounds they hear. All of the activities presented below are intended to be used as physical activity breaks.

## ***Themes***

Themes can facilitate physical activity in ECS. In conjunction with music, books, movies, and a variety of learning activities, physical activity can enhance many different themes. Examples of possible themes include Beach Party, Derby Week, Winter Wonderland, and the Olympics. During a Beach Party themed week, for instance, teachers may select the following ideas:

### ***Beach Books***

Select beach themed books with activities that children can pretend to do with characters in the book. For example, “Curious George goes to the Beach” can be read and students can act out Curious George’s actions on the beach. For example, when Curious George builds a sand castle, children can stand and pretend to dig and build their own sand castle.

### ***Beach Adventure***

On this day the teacher tells a beach adventure story and children act out the story. For example, the day starts with children pretending to pack a healthy lunch and pretending ride their bike to the beach (with their helmet on of course). Once at the beach they can pretend to walk on hot sand, swim, body surf, and dodge seagulls around their head. Children can also move like animals found on the beach such as crabs and seagulls.

### Dance Day

Find beach themed music for dancing (e.g., Surfin' Safari by the Beach Boys).

Throughout the day turn the music on and allow students have a beach dance party. If possible straw hats, leis, and sunglasses make the beach party more exciting.

## **Calendars**

Physical activity calendars are simple ways for teachers and/or parents/guardians to incorporate physical activity in the classroom or at home. The purpose of the calendars is to provide one or two physical activity ideas each day for teachers or parents/guardians to perform with their students/children. If utilizing the calendars for outdoor activities, the ideas should align with the time of year and weather expected at that time. For instance, water games would be appropriate for July; however, they would not necessarily be a viable option for February. Example physical activity calendars can be found in the Appendices.

## **Family/Home**

Along with physical activity calendars that provide ideas for parents/guardians to perform with their children, several other ideas are available for encouraging physical activity with the family and/or in the home environment. Parent nights provide opportunities for information sharing as well as family physical activity. For instance, a

Friday Night Sock Hop is a great way to bring family members together, allow children to dress in poodle skirts, saddle shoes, and jean jackets, and encourage children and adults to dance to music. Perhaps teachers could teach their students a 50s dance that they could perform for their parents/guardians.

In addition to hosting a parent night to encourage physical activity, information sharing is important for providing knowledge and ideas for movement families can do together. Many parents/guardians do not know how to be active with their child, especially in an indoor setting. There are resources available that offer suggestions for activities that can be completed in small spaces using equipment that is commonly found around the home. Children are naturally active beings, so it is generally easy for parents/guardians to motivate them to move. Example activities and resources can be found in the Appendices.

## **Activities**

Following are examples of movement activities that can be introduced to children in a variety of environments and with different types of equipment. Samples will be provided for small spaces (e.g., indoor, classroom), large spaces (e.g., outdoor), very limited space (e.g., students standing in place), with scarves, with ribbon sticks, and with yarn balls.

### ***Small Spaces***

#### **Hi Lo**

Materials: None

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: Students begin moving around the area demonstrating appropriate spacing. The teacher then calls out various levels for the students to move. For example, “Walk at a low level” or “Jump at a high level”. Students can also be challenged to move at various speeds or making various noises. For instance, “Walk slowly at a low level with silent feet.”

### **Simon Says**

Materials: None

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: Students are instructed to only do what the teacher says if the teacher says, “Simon says....” before the instruction. If the teacher says, “Jump up and down” the students should remain standing still. However, if the teacher says, “Simon says, jump up and down” the children should begin jumping until the teacher gives another “Simon says” instruction. After children understand the game, many will enjoy having the teacher attempt to trick them into moving without a “Simon says” instruction.

### **Copy Me**

Materials: None

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: For this activity, children simply copy the actions of the teacher. This is an excellent way to teach new skills, activities, or dances. For older children, the teacher can provide verbal instructions that are different from his movements in an attempt to trick the children. This modification should only be used if the children are able to follow verbal instructions well.

### **Zoo**

Materials: None

Organization: Pictures of animals

Directions: This activity is an excellent activity to allow students to be creative and teach them animal movements as well. Animal movements are excellent for developing coordination, strength, and flexibility. The teacher can either call out different animal movements or show the students pictures of animals and have them move as the animal moves. For additional challenge, the teacher can show the picture without looking at it and then attempt to guess the animal by watching the students.

### **My Arm....**

Materials: None

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: For younger students this activity can be as simple as pointing to the arm, saying, “arm”, and making a throwing motion. For older students, the teacher can say, “My arm lets me throw a ball” while pointing at her arm. The children then pretend to throw a ball as far as possible. Another example would be “My legs let me walk” and children walk. The instructions can be modified for every body part. Other examples include “My eyes let me see while I skip” or “My nose lets me smell flowers” and students pretend to kneel to smell flowers.

### **Popcorn**

Materials: None

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: The teacher tells the class he is going to make some popcorn and they are the kernels. The students then squat down on the ground and hug their knees to get as small

as possible. The teacher then tells them that the pan is getting hot and they are sizzling. To demonstrate sizzling they bounce quickly with small jumps. As the skillet gets hotter their bouncing height increases and they sizzle faster. When the teacher yells, “POP” the students jump up making an X with their body (feet straddled and hands out) and stand still. The teacher can then either play popcorn again or move to another activity.

### **Tony Chestnut**

Materials: The Learning Station’s Tony Chestnut & Fun Time Action Songs

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: This activity is a classic that every student will love. The following are examples of words and actions that are used.

To - ny – Touch toes and knees

Eileen – Point to eye and lean

Chest – Touch chest

Neil – Kneel on one knee

Nut – Touch head

Pat – Pat legs

Knows – Touch nose

Bob – Bob up and down

I – Point to eye

Hip – Pat hips

Love – Touch heart

Skip – Skip in place

You – Point to someone else

### **Class Parade**

Materials: One piece of equipment, flag, etc.

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: Students begin marching in scattered formation. As the students march the teacher chooses the leader by handing them the flag. The rest of the students fall into a line behind the leader. Their goal is to get in line without touching anyone. Yes, this is a

lofty goal early on, but students that are able to do so should be rewarded by being the next leader. With this approach, most students will quickly learn to get in line without touching. To add energy to this activity, upbeat marching music can be used.

## ***Large Spaces***

### **Bubbles**

Materials: Container of bubbles

Organization: Scattered in area

Directions: In a large space, the teacher asks students to act out a bubble in different circumstances (e.g., floating along, bursting in the grass, moving quickly in the wind, blowing in circles in the wind, moving low to the ground). Afterwards, the teacher should blow bubbles in the area and challenge the students to touch or pop them before they hit the ground. The teacher should stress safety and show students their personal space prior to allowing them to chase after bubbles. The teacher can challenge students to use different locomotor skills to retrieve the bubbles.

### **Chalk Locomotors**

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Organization: Scattered on concrete teaching area

Directions: The teacher draws long, curvy, straight and zig zag lines on the area. The students are instructed to choose a line and walk on the pathway. Challenge them to increase their speed and try different locomotor skills such as hopping (one foot), jumping (two feet), sliding, and galloping. Teachers can also add levels (high, medium, low) and directions (forward, backward, sideways) for students to move along the pathways. Finally, students are given chalk and challenged to first draw a new line and

then walk, jog, etc on that line. After a few minutes that can move to a friends line and work with the friend.

### **Where is the Boundary?**

Materials: Cones or other markers for boundaries

Organization: Scattered in teaching area

Direction: This activity will help to reinforce the boundaries in an outside teaching area.

First, children walk the perimeter of the teaching area in a line by playing following the leader with the teacher. Then the teacher asks students to jump once inside the area. Then once time outside the area. Repeat this as many times as needed varying the skill. Next, students are asked to walk in the area where they are allowed to play.

### **Sneak Attack**

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Organization: Two teams in lines facing each other

Directions: Using sidewalk chalk, two lines approximately 20 feet apart are drawn.

Children are divided into two teams with one team on one line facing the other team on its line. Team A turns and faces away from Team B. When signaled, Team B slowly and quietly sneaks up on Team A. When Team B gets approximately 5 feet from Team A, the teacher yells, "Sneak Attack". Players on Team A turn and attempt to tag players on Team B before they can return to their line. Players who are tagged change teams. Team roles change and play continues.

### **Switch Places**

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Organization: Two teams in lines facing each other

Directions: Two teams face each other while standing on sidewalk chalk lines approximately 20 feet apart. When the teacher says, “Switch sides walking” the teams attempt to change sides without touching anyone from the other team. The team that does so the fastest gets one point. Teams can also be awarded points for safety and being quiet. Once students understand the game, the teacher can add difficulty by asking children to skip, do arm circles, or move backwards while changing sides.

### **Airplane**

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Organization: Scattered in teaching area

Directions: Students begin in push up position making motor noises. The teacher says “Take off” and students fly around like airplanes with their arms out and in good spacing. When the teacher says, “Time to land” children slowly lower themselves back into a push up position.

### **Red Light Green Light**

Materials: Sidewalk chalk

Organization: All students on a line

Directions: The entire class beings on one line. The teacher is the first traffic controller (TC) and stands on another line 20 feet away (TC line). When the TC says “Green Light” the children begin moving quickly toward the TC’s line. When the TC says, “Red Light” students must stop before taking one more step. If they take an additional step they must return to the starting line. The first child to reach the TC line becomes the new TC. Once students understand the game, the TC can attempt to trick students by saying “Red light”

even when children are stopped. If a child moves, she must move back to the starting line.

### ***Scarf Activities***

Scarves are excellent tools for allowing students to throw, catch, and many other activities. Handkerchiefs work well and can be purchased relatively cheaply at discount stores. They can also be dyed in a variety of colors.

#### **Throwing Over a river**

Students are asked to throw their scarf over the biggest river they have ever seen. Other challenges include throwing over a building, like a pitcher or quarterback, or into a wall. Youngsters can also be challenged to catch their scarf before it hits the ground.

#### **Toss and Catch on Body Parts**

In good spacing students toss or throw their scarf and attempt to catch it on as many body parts as possible. For most students the hands are the easiest body part to catch with. Head, shoulders, knees, and feet are more difficult. Some students will enjoy trying to catch their scarf on their back.

#### **Fireworks**

Students are scattered throughout the area with their scarf wadded as small as possible in their hand. The teacher then counts down from 10. When the teacher says, “ZERO” or “Fireworks” the students throw their scarf into the air at the same time.

### ***Ribbon Stick Activities***

#### **Letters, Numbers, Shapes**

Students are scattered throughout the area with one ribbon stick in their dominant or “favorite” hand. The teacher should write a letter on the board and demonstrate with a

ribbon stick how to write the letter. Ask students to write the letter in the air using the ribbon stick. Have them switch hands and try it this way. This activity can be done with numbers and shapes as well.

### **Rhythms**

To music, have each student follow the teacher's actions with the ribbon stick. The teacher can use different pathways (curved, straight, zig zag), levels (high, medium, low), times (hard, soft), forces (strong, light) and locations (self-space, general space) with the ribbon. Students could also be asked to march and wave their rhythm stick as if in a parade.

### **Body Parts**

Using scattered spacing, the students can grasp the ribbon stick in either hand. The teacher should encourage them to make circles with the ribbon stick around different body parts (feet, hands, head). The teacher can have them move the ribbon stick over and under objects, in front or behind objects or their body, and near or far away from their body.

### **And... Action!**

Students are scattered throughout the area with one ribbon stick in either hand. Present them with the follow scenarios and have them act each one out in personal space:

- Form a slithery snake beside you
- Wave a flag over your head
- Cast your fishing pole out and reel in a fish
- Jump up like a volcano
- Swirl your ribbon like a tornado

- Lead a marching band
- Fly a kite
- Walk your dog
- Pull a wagon
- Paint a beautiful picture

## ***Yarn Ball Activities***

### **Ball Balance**

Ask the students to balance the yarn ball on different body parts (e.g., back of hand, palm of hand, knee, elbow, shoulder, foot, back). Increase the level of difficulty by asking them to walk as they balance the yarn ball. Then have them try balancing the yarn ball on different body parts using different levels.

### **Great Balls of Fire**

In a designated area of the classroom (e.g., carpeted area), give each child a yarn ball.

Ask them to underhand toss the yarn ball anywhere in that space (step with opposite foot). Challenge them to keep the yarn ball within that space and keep the yarn ball from hitting anyone. Once the yarn ball has been tossed, have the students perform a locomotor skill within the designated area and try not to step on or hit a yarn ball. After freezing the students, ask them to retrieve one yarn ball (it does not have to be his/her original one) and continue the process.

### **Ready, Aim, Fire!**

This activity is best performed outside or in a large space. Place sets of two hula hoops approximately 10 feet apart. Place students in pairs, and each student should have one yarn ball. Standing at one hula hoop, he/she should underhand toss the yarn ball and try

to hit the other hula hoop. Remind students to step with the opposite foot of the hand they are using to throw. Once each person has tossed his/her yarn ball, have them retrieve their equipment and toss to the other hula hoop. Distances between hula hoops can be adjusted. Remember to emphasize throwing the ball hard and using correct form. The targets are simply an added challenge.

### **Clean Your Yard**

This activity is best performed outside or in a large space. Divide class into two groups. Establish boundaries and a line to split sides within the boundaries. Each student should have a yarn ball. The object of the game is for students to throw the yarn balls to the other group's area thereby cleaning their own yard. If a yarn ball is in the student's area, he/she can retrieve it and throw it to the other side. The teacher should emphasize the cues for throwing (T with body, L with throwing elbow, opposite step, and follow through).

## Appendix A

### Resources\*

\*this information should appear online only and updates should be made regularly

#### ***DVDs and Songs incorporating Physical Activity***

- Active Play Fun Physical Activities for Young Children by Diane H. Craft and Craig L. Smith
- *Fab 5: Classroom Activity Breaks DVD*. Spokane, WA: Focused Fitness.
- *The Monkey Does: Learning through Movement Series*.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Monkey-Doos-Learning-Through-Movement/dp/B0001ON26W>
- Tony Chestnut
- Hand Jivin'
- Sittercise
- Any turkey can tango
- J.U.M.P.
- Greg & Steve
- The Alligator Purse
- [Fitnessbeginnings.com](http://Fitnessbeginnings.com)
- Wiggles Dance Party
- Wiggles HopDeeDoo
- Wiggles Wiggletime
- Wiggles Yummy Yummy
- Wiggles Whoo Hoo
- Wiggles Magic Adventure
- Wiggles Big Red Car
- Wiggles Lights Camera Action
- Curious Buddies – Let's Move

## ***Children's Books incorporating Physical Activity***

### **Books**

- 26 Big Things Small Hands Do by Collen Paratore
- Animal Action ABC by Karen Pandell
- Ants Came Marching by Martin Kelly
- Barnyard Dance by Sandra Boynton
- Bear About Town by Stella Blackstone
- Bend and Stretch: Learning About Your Bones and Muscles by Pamela Hill Nettleton
- Boom Chicka Rock by John Archambault
- Bug Dance by Stuart Murphy
- Clap Your Hands by Lorinda Bryan Cauley
- Clara's Dancing Feet by Jean Richardson and Joanny Carey
- Dance with Me by Charles R. Smith, Jr.
- Five Green and Speckled Frogs by Priscilla Burris
- From Head to Toe by Eric Carle
- Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed by Eileen Christelow
- Froggy Plays Soccer by Jonathan London
- Froggy Rides a Bike by Jonathan London
- Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae
- Hey! Wake Up by Sandra Boynton
- Hop Jump by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- Hop Skip and Jump by Nicola Tuxworth
- How Can You Dance? by Rick Walton
- Maisy's Nature Walk by Lucy Cousins
- One, Two, Three! by David Booth
- Play it Safe by Mercer Meyer
- Pretend You're a Cat by Jean Marzollo
- Rap A Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles - Think of That! by Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon
- Soccer by Salina Yoon
- Stone Soup by Marcia Brown
- The Bouncing, Dancing, Galloping ABC by Charlotte Doyle
- The Human Alphabet by Pilobolus and John Kane
- These Hands by Hope Lynne Price
- Toddler Play by Wendy S. Masi
- Walk On! by Maria Frazee

## ***Books and Websites as Resources***

### **Books**

- 101 Indoor Activities for Toddlers and Preschoolers by Maria S. McCarthy
- 2000 Best Games and Activities by Susan Kettman
- Active Play Fun Physical Activities for Young Children by Diane H. Craft and Craig L. Smith
- Children Moving: A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education by George Graham, Shirley Ann Holt/Hale, & Melissa Parker
- Dancing in Your School: A Guide for Preschool and Elementary Teachers by Anne Dunkin
- Developmental Physical Education for All Children by Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Students by Robert Pangrazi & Aaron Beighle
- Everything Toddler Activities Book by Joni Levine
- Experiences in Movement by Rae Pica
- Foundations in Elementary Education: Movement by P. S. Weikart & E. B. Carlton
- Hello Toes! Movement Games for Children by A. L. Barlin & N. Kalev
- Jump for Joy! by M. K. Thompson
- Movement-Based Learning: Academic Concepts and Physical Activity for Ages 3 through 8 by Rhonda L. Clements & Sharon L. Schneider
- Movement in Steady Beat: Activities for Children Ages 3 to 7. By P. S. Weikart
- Movement Plus, Rhymes, Songs and Singing Games: Activities for Young Children by P. S. Weikart
- Moving & Learning Across the Curriculum by Rae Pica
- Moving & Learning Series by Rae Pica
- Moving with a Purpose: Developing Programs for Preschoolers of All Abilities by Renee McCall & Diane Craft
- Never Play Leapfrog with a Unicorn by Joella H. Merhhof, Kathy Ermler, Vicki Worrell, & Joan Brewer
- Physical Activities for Improving Children's Learning and Behavior by Billye Ann Cheatum and Allison Hammond
- Purposeful Play: Early Childhood Movement Activities on a Budget by Renee McCall & Diane Craft
- Toddlers Busy Book: 365 Creative Games and Activities to Keep your 1 ½ to 3-Year-Old Busy by Trish Kuffner
- Wiggle and Giggle Busy Book by Trish Kuffner

### **Websites**

- [www.actionbasedlearning.com](http://www.actionbasedlearning.com)
- [www.activeacademics.org](http://www.activeacademics.org)
- [www.braingym.com](http://www.braingym.com)

- [www.movingandlearning.com](http://www.movingandlearning.com)
- [www.ncpe4me.com](http://www.ncpe4me.com)
- [www.pecentral.org](http://www.pecentral.org)
- [www.sparkpe.org/early-childhood/](http://www.sparkpe.org/early-childhood/)
- [www.stationpe.com](http://www.stationpe.com)
- [www.take10.net](http://www.take10.net)

## Calendar Examples

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>Children need at least 60 minutes of activity per day</i>	2 Find a place to roll safely: Roll like a ball and a pencil	3 Play follow the leader	4 Play hopscotch with a friend	5 Practice jumping as high and as far as you can	6 How long can you hop without stopping?	7 Just be active for 60 minutes
8 <i>Children enjoy activity more when they are active with their parents</i>	9 Make a safe obstacle course with an adult	10 Move around at slow and fast speeds	11 Teach someone your favorite stretch	12 Play basketball for 10 minutes	13 Pick a fun activity	14 Be active for at least 60 minutes
15	16 Teach a family member your favorite game we play at school	17 Try to take a nature walk with your family	18 Play catch with a friend	19 Dance with your family or friends	20 Practice moving like all of the animals we did in class this week	21 Move for a total of one hour
22	23 Do your favorite fitness challenge	24 Do extra chores as a favor to your parents	25 See how many ways you can move at a high level and a low level	26 Teach a family member a new game	27 Invent new ways to do jumping jacks	28 Be active for 60 minutes

## **Card Example**

# Yay or Nay!

Materials: none

Organization: scattered

Directions: The teacher designates a “yay” movement and a “nay” movement (e.g., “yay” = jog in place; “nay” = twist). Next, he/she presents a True/False statement to the students. If the answer is true (or “yay”), the students perform the associated movement (jog in place). If the answer is false (or “nay”), the students perform the associated movement (twist).

Variations include changing movements.

## Newsletter Example

# WeCare4Kids Center

## WeCare4Kids supports physical activity!

Hello, Parents and Guardians! After attending some trainings this summer, WeCare4Kids staff feels prepared to incorporate physical activity and movement opportunities for our children. Our basic idea is to create a center that values physical activity and movement as a means to learn. Did you know:

- Kentucky ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for the highest rates of overweight and obese youth?
- Nationally 26.2% of children 2-5 years are classified as overweight or obese?

We have been developing our physical activity program, and things are finally ready to begin. Here are some of the exciting changes and activities you may observe around the center:

- Common signals for starting and stopping activities. All teachers will use, “Go” to signal for students to begin an activity. Additionally, they will say, “Freeze” when they want students to stop an activity. All students will be taught to put their hands on their knees and face the teacher when this happens.
- Children will learn to find a partner by using the toe-to-toe method. We will encourage them to work with different friends in the class for all activities.
- We will be integrating physical activity breaks with as many learning opportunities as possible.
- Themes will be incorporated on a monthly basis. Next week’s theme is Derby Week. Example activities include having the children gallop from center to center as well as during the organized outdoor activity. We will also be reading about horses (*Barnyard Dance*). One day, the children will be encouraged to wear hats, similar to Derby Day at Churchill Downs. We will send home a calendar to let you know each special day of the week.
- Family Nights will become a once-a-month event. During these nights, the children will show parents the dances and movement activities they have learned in the center. Parents are encouraged to participate with their children.

This is going to be a busy and “moving” year! I will be sending home newsletters to keep you informed on what new things to expect.

If you have any questions or comments along the way, please feel free to contact me at (712) 378-7437.

Jane Doe  
WeCare4Kids Director