

LET'S PLAY!



motor play



Active physical play is important for children's health! When children move their bodies, it builds strong muscles and coordination, and helps them understand how to control their body, including using their hands to use small objects. Active play helps the heart to work better and increases the flow of oxygen to the brain. It also supports social skills, as well as emotional regulation.



Run, jump, and play with children as much as possible. Provide safe spaces and smaller materials for physical exploration. Support children to take safe and realistic risks to develop their motor skills. Talk to them about what they are doing, using words to describe body parts or movements.

Motor play actively engages a child's muscles and movement. For infants this may include reaching, kicking, rolling over, and eventually scooting or crawling. As children gain muscle control and coordination, they begin walking, running, jumping, climbing, riding, twirling, handling smaller objects, and more!

infants



Your role

Allow space and time for movement. Gently move babies' limbs. Place infants in different positions, including on their tummies, and provide interesting objects to reach for.

When, where, what

Throughout daily routines – on the changing table, when eating, and anytime a baby is calm and alert. Provide safe space for babies to crawl, stand, and walk.



toddlers

Your role

Encourage new movements by playing simple pretend games or dancing. Talk about children's movements and show them different ways of moving.

When, where, what

Add movement throughout the day. Share songs and finger plays to encourage different movements. Provide space and materials such as parachutes, tunnels, stairs, rockers, and climbers to encourage a range of movements.



preschoolers



Your role

Model and support new skills like jumping, climbing, balancing, or riding a tricycle. Encourage children to take safe risks with their movement.

When, where, what

You can add movement throughout the day by including music or physical actions in any activity or routine. Opportunities to run and play outdoors are always a great time to learn and practice new motor skills!



Visit ctoec.org/play to see how these ideas connect to the CT ELDS, Sparkler, and other OEC Resources.

