

Safe and Sanitary Fun – Simon Says “Don’t Touch Your Face!”

Physical Activity Guidelines for Child Care and School Age Care Programs ...

Modified for Physical Distancing

Updated 06/26/2020

Child care and school age care programs play a crucial role in ensuring that all children have a healthy and safe space to go as parents and family members head back to work. Although physical distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet of space aside from momentary or minimal contact) is critical in reducing the risk of spreading coronavirus, it may not always be realistic in large groups of young children. Still, it is important to attempt to separate children 6 feet apart and this can best be accomplished by keeping them in small, consistent groups throughout the day. This is necessary to reduce the risk of spreading illness and make it more manageable for child care providers to keep up with health needs like monitoring for symptoms, encouraging children not to touch their own or each other's hands and faces, and frequent cleaning and sanitizing of surfaces and objects. Refer to our [COVID-19 Website Link](#) for the most current guidance on group size for children in child care.

Quality care for children of all ages continues to include providing ample opportunities for children to move and be physically active even in smaller sized groups and with the need for following extra sanitation guidance.

Follow these guidelines for facilitating physical activities in child care and school age care settings to help minimize the spread of germs.

Plan Adult Led Activities Often

- In order to model safe movement practices adult led activities should occur often throughout the day. Even just a quick move for 5 minutes during transition time or group time has physical and developmental benefits for children.
- Children five years and older need to wear a face covering and it is recommended that children ages 2-4 also wear face coverings. See guidance about face coverings in child care on our [COVID – 19 Website Link](#).
- Keep group sizes small when guiding children in physical activities: Group size depends on the space where activities are conducted but is best not exceed half the total group size at full capacity. Remind children to keep a distance from each other when engaged in the activity. Physical reminders such as tape on the floor or hula hoops laid out 6 feet apart, can be helpful.
- Children should wash hands when changing activities. If hand washing facilities are not available, they should use a 60% alcohol wipe solution. Adults must supervise during use.
- Remind children throughout the activity not to touch their faces especially if balls or other items are used where more than one child touches the item during the game or activity.
- Children should keep a distance of 6 feet regardless of the activity, i.e. if doing a locomotor activity (walking, hopping, jumping, skipping, galloping, side-sliding), instruct children to take turns OR space them out so they can engage in the activity while keeping their distance from other children.
- Consider simple activities that do not require materials or items.
 - In smaller spaces, space children 6 feet apart – Simon Says (no face touching!), Red Light/Green Light, Build a bridge/tunnel/wall, stretching and yoga moves, dancing in place, practice the locomotion skills in place (hopping, jumping, stationary jogging).
 - In larger spaces, start 6 feet apart - Freeze Dance or Freeze Statue; Follow the Leader, pretend animals, locomotion moves (skipping, galloping, side-stepping etc.) from one side of a space to another keeping a distance apart.

Take children outside to play often.

- Children naturally run when they get outdoors. Rotate groups when children go outside to keep groups from mixing or combining. Instruct them to run in one direction to avoid bumping into each other.
- Designate spaces for several children to play while physically distancing from each other...tree stumps, grassy knolls, hills, sand boxes. Children can trade spaces every 5 – 10 minutes.
- Lead small group scavenger hunts around the outdoor space. Look for signs of spring, spot and count birds, squirrels, bunnies, collect small stones and pinecones for future counting games or to make collages).
- If traditional sports activities are planned, choose individual skill-building activities that allow children to remain 6 feet apart – such as kicking a soccer ball back and forth, taking turns dribbling and then shooting a basketball, etc.

When materials and items are used for activities

- For young children each child should get their own item and not trade or transfer them among each other. Ball tossing activities are not advised.
- For older children who have better self-regulation skills and can learn to refrain from touching their face, if the game or play involves transferring items to multiple children the item should be a smooth surface that is easily washed and sanitized: rubber balls, hula hoops, cones, plastic or wood handles of jump ropes. These items should be washed, rinsed and disinfected in between use by different groups of children according to current sanitation guidelines.
- Create individual materials that are used for a single child only. These items should be given to each individual child. The can be used in play and activities and then stored in plastic bags in a child's private cubby space. Children should not trade or share these types of materials.
 - Have children make their own yarn pom-poms (directions below)
 - Make duct tape balls
 - Roll up pairs of socks (they don't need to match and can have holes in the heels!)
 - Wrap painters tape around scrunched up newspaper
 - Cut squares of sheer material to make tossing scarves
 - Tape colorful plastic eggs together to keep them from coming apart.
 - Make a sidewalk collage ...give each child their own set of chalk and piece of pavement.
- Give children the opportunity to explore what 6 feet looks like. Give them each a 6 foot long length of rope, yarn, ribbon or tape to lay on a flat surface. Let them choose whatever measuring device they like (their own shoe, their favorite doll, truck or stuffed toy, etc.) to count how many of that item it takes to make 6 feet. They might need help learning to move the item along the 6' scale.



Designate starting and finishing spaces.

- During group time or when groups of children come together for activities give each child a piece of foam, a reusable easily cleanable grocery bag, or a-laminated square of paper for sitting or standing on and space them out at least 6 feet apart.
- These can be decorated by each child and include their name. When activities begin and end children can be instructed to return to their special spot. These "spots" should be stored in each child's individual cubby space and not stacked together unless they are disinfected after each use.

Physical Activity Ideas and Physical Distancing

Adopted from the [Healthiest Next Generation Initiative Resources](#)

Active kids tend to be healthier kids, and healthier kids are better learners.

Regular physical activity reduces feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression, and increases self-esteem. The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative of Washington State recommends that children participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Give children opportunities to be active while following guidelines for physical distancing and extra sanitation practices.

Try these activities during group time...space children 6 feet apart and give them a “special spot” to designate their own area.



- Turn on the music and dance, hop, jump or march in place. Try karaoke, dance videos, or the freeze game where the kids dance until the music stops.


- Practice progressive relaxation, tensing each body segment and then relaxing in turn (head, neck, shoulders, right arm, right hand, left arm, left hand, etc.).

- Play "fitness with the leader." This is "follow the leader," using exercises (pretending to lift weights, ride a bike, row a boat, etc.). In small groups children can follow each other with instructions to keep a distance.
- Make up "hand jive" routines, share, and teach to others.
- Using their own scarves, yarn sock or duct tape ball, children can practice tossing these items into the air and catching them themselves. Clap, once, twice, 3 times after each toss. Toss around the back, under the legs, crossing them over.
- Sport mimics: act out sport movements such as batting, kicking, dribbling, throwing/catching, dunking, swimming various strokes, and volleyball.
- Make paper airplanes and see how far they can fly - need ample space so children don't bump into each other or point them at other people! Using different colored paper for each plan helps children identify their plane.
- Try a children's workout video! Do it with the kids to model any new actions.
- Play Charades – OK to play in small, well-spaced teams and give visual hints to each other using hands and pantomime. Children can act out titles to popular movies, foods, animals.
- Hula hoop –spin the hula hoop around the body. Put the hoop on the floor and jump/hop in/out/over. (Wash the hoops in between groups of children.)
- Do the Hokey Pokey, Play Simon Says, Red Light/Green Light, Make a Bridge/Tunnel/Wall (sing to the tune of "If Yer Happy and Ya Know It")
- Jump Rope. Use the rope on the floor for numbers or letters. Make a shape with the rope and practice jumping, hopping in/out/over the rope shape. (Sanitize handles of the jump rope after each use. Best for each child to have their own jump rope.)

Outdoor Play:

- Go on a scavenger hunt. In small groups and spaced apart, look for items in nature that can then be used in art, math or science projects: pine cones, small sticks/stones, interesting leaves.
- Build an obstacle course with ropes, small cones, hula hoops laid out in a large area. Space the obstacles far apart for endurance and encourage use of a variety of locomotor skills such as jumping, hopping, galloping, and movements such as crawling, tip-toeing, log-rolling, etc. as children move between obstacles. Sanitize the items in between each group.

LOCOMOTION SKILLS (These movements can be done independently by children while spaced apart.)

<p>Walk</p> <p>Feet move alternately, with one foot always in contact with the ground or floor. Body weight is transferred from the heel to the ball of the foot and then to the toes for the push-off. Eyes look ahead. Marching is a rhythmic walk accompanied by lifted knees and swinging arms.</p>	<p>Run</p> <p>Running varies from a slow jog to a trot and a sprint. Look up and in the direction of travel. Remind children to watch where they are going to avoid running into each other.</p>	<p>Jump</p> <p>Jumping takes off from both feet and land on both feet. Jumpers should land lightly on the balls of the feet with knees bent. Jumping can be done stationary or traveling forward. Swinging the arms during a jump helps lift the weight and go further.</p>
<p>Gallop</p> <p>Galloping involves a coordinated step-together-step move. Step forward on one foot while bringing the other foot up to it. The same foot always leads, so change the lead foot when practicing the gallop.</p>	<p>Hop</p> <p>Hopping is done on one foot at a time. Lift and bend one leg while pushing off forward with the other foot. Land on the ball of the foot with the knee bent. Arms are used to balance the movement. Hop in one place to gain balance first then move in a forward direction. Hop on one foot a few times then change feet.</p>	<p>Side-Slide</p> <p>Side-sliding is similar to a gallop, but the direction is sideways. Step sideways with one foot and bring the other next to it. Change directions to change the lead foot.</p>
<p>Skip</p> <p>Skipping is a series of forward step-hops done with alternating feet. Take a step followed by a small hop on the same foot and quickly repeat the procedure using the other foot. The rhythm of the step-hops and swinging the arms up to shoulder height contribute to balance while skipping.</p>	<p>Leap</p> <p>Leaping uses an elongated step that takes off on one foot but lands on the opposite. It is used to cover distance or to go over a low obstacle.</p>	

From Diane Craft: Active Play – Fun Physical Activity for Young Children, 2010

School age kids will enjoy making yarn pom-poms. (Each child makes/keeps their own.)

- How to Make a Yarn Pom Pom
 - Materials: cheap skein or ball of yarn, one 3" by 4" piece of cardboard, scissors
 - Instructions: wind the yarn lengthwise around the cardboard about 200 times. Cut the yarn from the skein. Remove the cardboard and hold the yarn in an hour glass configuration around the middle. Wind another 12" string of yarn around the middle a few times very tightly and then make a couple of strong knots. Cut the remaining loops at the top on each side.
 - Storage: each child should keep their yarn ball in a bag in their own cubby

