

Movement and exercise 0–5 years

Centre for Community Child Health

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You can help to give your child a lifelong love of exercise and movement by being active yourself, and by cheering them along as they discover physical activity.

Birth to 1 year

It might seem funny to think of movement for little babies, but supervised floor-based play is a great way to get started:

- Tummy time helps babies develop their neck muscles, an essential early movement skill.
- Soft toys encourage touching, holding, reaching, pushing and pulling.

Once infants are mobile, you can:

- Encourage movement by playing music and making noise with objects.
- Create tunnels out of chairs or boxes to make moving even more of an adventure.

Tip

Try to avoid television, especially fast-paced shows. If your child does watch TV, share the songs and actions together!

1 to 5 years

Your toddler or preschooler needs to aim to be physically active every day for at least three hours! That sounds like a lot, but every little bit adds up and most toddlers and preschoolers will naturally want to move this much and more.

Fun ways to encourage your child to move:

- visit playgrounds
- play games like obstacle courses, follow the leader or tip/tag.

On rainy days, try:

- playing dress ups
- yoga and stretching
- moving like different animals—gallop like horses!

More information

You will find more helpful information on the Australian Government's **A Healthy and Active Australia**, www.healthyactive.gov.au and **Raising Children Network**, www.raisingchildren.net.au. If more help is needed please consult your family doctor or paediatrician.

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