

Lesson 2.2: Getting Ready to Play

Background (Read before you teach): There are things that most children can do by a certain age. These are called [development milestones](#) (CDC, 2016). Each child develops at his or her own rate. Nevertheless, these milestones are a good way to measure a child's developmental progress. Milestones mark development of social, language, learning/thinking, and movement (motor) skills.

Some children show delays in motor and social skill development (Hediger, Overpeck, Ruan & Troendle, 2002). This may mean a child is unable run, hop, or skip at an age when most children can. Lack of physical activity (active play) at an early age, low birth weight and/or premature birth can lead to delays in motor development. [Identifying problems](#) (CDC, 2016) early and discussing concerns with a pediatrician can help children get back on track to be ready for school. Helping children develop motor skills is a way to encourage physical activity and thus, healthy weight gain.

Teaching Tips: This lesson focuses on motor development to help parents understand the importance of physical activity. Subsequent lessons (Play at Home I and II) teach simple games that parents can play with young children to develop motor skills. As

participants (adults and children) play the games in these three lessons, encourage parents to call-out motor skills.



Target Audience: Mexican-origin families with children, 3-8 years

Key Message: Parents can help children develop motor skills through active play

Be active together as a family.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify motor milestones for 2-5 year olds
- Explain why physical activity (active play) is important at an early age for motor development and good health

Materials:

- Motor Milestone picture matching cards
- Ball
- Supplies and recipes for food demonstration (suggested Easy Eggplant Stir Fry)
- Video clip (of kids doing physical activities), laptop, projector, screen (optional)

Handouts: recipes; optional: motor milestones handout or [CDC Motor Milestones Moments](#)

Set-up: Prepare sets of motor milestone cards for each group of 3-4 participants. Set up projector, laptop and screen if you choose to show a video of children engaged in active play

Opening (Anchor): (10 min) Welcome! Review what was covered last time and ask if participants have made changes, based on their goals. Congratulate and encourage them to keep on making changes.

Today, we will talk about how children develop motor skills. Right from birth, a child is learning how to control his or her body and to interact with the world. This learning process is called motor skill development. Of course, children also develop language, social, thinking and other skills but today we will just talk about motor development.

Begin the discussion with an open-ended question. Choose one of the following:

- (Show a video clip of teachers with children doing physical activities in school). **Ask:** What do you see happening in this video? What motor (physical) skills would help your child be ready for school? How would having these skills help your child enjoy school more? or
- **Ask:** When you were a child, what was a fun way to be physically active? What are you doing now with your children? How does playing with your child help them?

Lesson (Add): (15 min) Discuss the following points:

- **Say:** Let's practice a few motor skills (Ask parents and children to form a circle and toss a ball to each other). Being able to toss a ball is one example of a motor skill. (Ask them to stand on one foot and hop or to walk on their tip toes). These are other examples of motor skills.
- **Ask:** What are some examples of other motor skills? Crawl, run, skip, flap arms, stand on toes and jump. Fine motor skills involve smaller muscles for activities like drawing or writing. Gross motor skills involve larger muscles for activities like running, jumping, or hopping. During the preschool years, children improve the most in their motor skills.
- **Ask:** Why is physical activity important for children?

Physical activity helps in the development of motor skills and normal growth of children (helps build muscles, strengthen bones, increases self-esteem, increases learning, and can prevent childhood obesity).

Children need active play, both free time play and more structured play activities. Structured play is guided by a teacher, parent, or caregiver.

An inactive child is likely to grow up to be an inactive adult. Lack of physical activity can lead to health problems such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Active children have fewer chronic health problems; are sick less often (and miss less school); and have a lower risk for getting heart disease, diabetes, obesity, or depression later on.

- **Ask:** Is anyone struggling with their children to get them away from the TV or videogames and outside to play? Why don't some children want to be physically active?

A child who feels physically awkward or uncoordinated may avoid physical activity and be less likely to want to participate in active play.

Children who are the least active often have less developed motor skills. This may be because physically active children spend more time learning and improving new motor skills.

Sometimes, children spend too much time in the stroller and are not encouraged to walk.

Parents can encourage children to be active by allowing them to walk more often. They can play simple active games with them at home. By increasing the time available for children to be physically active, parents can support motor development and increase the chances of their children being physically active throughout childhood.

Activity (Apply): (25 min) While the assistant prepares the food demonstration, the educator explains the activity to the participants.

- **Say:** There are things that most children can do with their bodies by a certain age. These are called motor development milestones. Each child will develop at a different rate than another child, but these milestones are a good way to measure

your child's developmental progress. You can help your child's motor development during active play.

(Divide participants into pairs and give each pair a set of cards. Some of the cards show ages: 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, 5 years. These are the milestone ages. The other cards have pictures and/or words showing motor skills) **Say:** Let's match each motor skill with the milestone age. Some of these activities use large muscles (in legs or arms) and others, use smaller muscles (fingers).

Answers:

2 Years: Begins to run, climbs onto and down from furniture without help, walks up and down stairs while holding on, throws ball overhand, kicks a ball, and stands on tip toes.

3 Years: Climbs well, runs easily, pedals a tricycle (3 wheel bike), walks up and down stairs with one foot on each step.

4 Years: Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds, catches a bounced ball most of the time, pours, cuts with supervision and mashes own food.

5 Years: Swings and climbs, can use a toilet on their own, stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer, hops and may be able to skip, can do a somersault, jump rope, uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife.

Summarize: As we will see next time, physical activity through free play or structured play can help children practice and develop motor skills. While milestones describe what most children can do by a certain age, every child is unique. A parent/caregiver who thinks his or her child may be developing more slowly than expected should discuss concerns with a pediatrician. Mexican-American children may show delays in motor development, possibly due to lack of physical activity at an early age, low birth weight, and/or pre-mature birth. Parents can work with the doctor and other health providers to help their children reach their fullest potential.

Food demonstration, tasting and sharing. Pass around the containers, showing participants any foods that might be new or unfamiliar (for example, low-fat products, whole grain alternatives). Explain step-by-step how the food is prepared. Serve samples for tasting. **Ask:** What are some ways that your children can help prepare this recipe? How can you use it at home? What do you like about the recipe? What would you change?

Away: (10 min) Pair-up and set specific goals

Closing (Away): (10 min) Pair-up and set specific goals

What did you learn? Why do you want your children to be physically active? What can you do with your children to help develop their motor skills? Choose a goal to work on this month (week). Write your goal on the recipe handout.

For example, “I will take my child out of the stroller and allow him or her to walk”. Or, “I’ll find an age-appropriate, fun play activity to do with my child.”

Ask a friend or family member to help support you in reaching your goal. Invite families to share their goals.

References and Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Learn the Signs. Act Early. Developmental Milestones*. Accessed Jan 21, 2016.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Hediger, M. L., Overpeck, M. D., Ruan, W. J., & Troendle, J. F. (2002). Birthweight and gestational age effects on motor and social development. *Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology*, 16(1), 33-46. doi:10.1046/j.1365-3016.2002.00393.x

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Learn the Signs. Act Early

Baby Steps: Learn the Signs. Act Early

- (English video) <http://www.cdc.gov/cdctv/lifestagesandpopulations/baby-steps-autism.html>
- Child Development: It's Better to Know/Desarrollo Infantil: Es Mejor Saber (Spanish video) http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/video/ltsae_spanish/index.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Learn the Signs. Act Early.

- Milestones Moments (English)
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/ltsae_booklet_milestone_moments_eng_printerspreads_web-ready_7.22.11.pdf
- Indicadores del Desarrollo (Spanish)
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/ltsae_booklet_milestone_moments_span-printerspreads_web-ready_7.22.11.pdf

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