

Lesson 2.3: Play at home (Part I)

Background (Read before you teach): Young children need plenty of opportunities to run, climb, skip, dance, and practice other motor skills (National Resource Center, 2016). Active play outdoors is very important to help children get enough physical activity. Weather permitting, toddlers and preschoolers should get at least 60 minutes of outdoor active play daily. Parents and caregivers can encourage physical activity by leading games and dancing. Total active time (indoor and outdoor) for preschoolers should be at least 90-120 minutes daily.

Children ages 6-17 years need at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily (USDA and HHS, 2016). An example of moderate activity is dancing or walking quickly. Running or playing soccer is an example of vigorous activity. Pediatricians also recommend that children limit screen time (such as watching TV, playing videogames, or using computers) to two hours or less daily. Among US children and youth (6-19 years), only one in four meet both recommendations (Belcher et al.,



Figure 1. Bean bag toss (NSFS repository 2015)

2010; Fakhouri, Highes, Brody, Kit, & Ogden, 2013). Younger children (6-11 years) are more active than teenagers, so it is important to promote activity as children grow. Boys are more active than girls.

Teaching Tips: If children are present, have an assistant teach the children all the activities first while the parents participate in the lesson. During the activity part, ask the children to teach the games to their parents. During the opening games, invite parents and children to create a story as they act out the movements. Using imagination to create and act out stories helps engage children in the activity. Another station that requires no

materials can be a “tag” game, where parents and children can invent new rules to “tag” each other.

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

Key Message: Parents can use simple and fun games to help children be active

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

- Identify how much physical activity is recommended for children over 2 years and
- Try simple, fun ways to help children be physically active

Materials: Motor Skills Poster; supplies for activity stations to be set-up before class (paddle and yarn ball; scoop with ball; 3 bean bags and small buckets; radio or CD player and lively music); food and other supplies for food demonstration (suggested Apple Crisp)

Handouts: recipes (Apple Crisp)

Set-up: Set-up 4 stations in advance around the corners of the room. Color a strong paper plate and attach a stick with duct tape to the back. Make a large scoop from a milk carton and attached a small ball with yarn. Hint: you can make a ball from duct tape. Buy or make 3 small beans bags with socks filled with dried beans and tied tightly. Mark on floor with tape a standing spot for tossing bags into the buckets.

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

Last time, we talked about the benefits of physical activity for a child's normal motor development. (Show motor milestones poster). Building motor skills in young children is essential for an active future. Today, we will practice these skills and see how easy and fun it can be.

Begin the class with an active game involving parents and children. Choose one of the following:

As-If Game

- (Invite everyone to stand in a circle. Ask them to act "as if" they are doing these activities: reach for a peach in a tree, swim away fast from a shark, jump over a stream, move their feet like they are skating, or march and beat a drum in a marching band). TIP: Have parents create a story to act out that involves all types of motor movements.
- **Ask:** What types of motors skills can your children practice while doing this activity? How would you change this activity when playing with your children? What made this activity fun?

Animal Fun

- (Invite everyone to stand in a circle. Ask them to act like their favorite animal: for example, hop with feet together like a rabbit, gallop like a pony, flap arms and chirp like a bird)

- **Ask:** What types of motor skills can your children practice while doing this activity? How would you change this activity when playing with your children? What made this activity fun?

Lesson (Add): (10 min) Discuss the following points:

Let's talk about how much and the kinds of physical activity children need to be healthy and develop normally. **Ask:** Does anyone know how much physical activity is recommended for children?

Healthy younger children (two to six years) usually want to be as active as possible throughout the day. Often, they may play actively for 10-15 minutes at a time. Overall, preschoolers need at least 90-120 minutes daily. That should include at least an hour of active play outdoors.

For children ages 6-17 years, doctors recommend **at least one hour** a day of physical activity. More than one hour is best. It is okay to split up the time into smaller amounts, such as 10-15 minutes at a time. However, at least 60 minutes a day should be spent in moderate physical activities that make the heart beat faster and breathing a little harder, like very fast walking or bicycling slowly. More vigorous activities, like running, playing soccer, or jumping rope, are excellent. Start slowly and build-up if your child has not been very active

Ask: Do you think children in this community actually get enough physical activity every day? Why do you want your children to be more active? Do they spend too much time watching TV, playing videogames, or using other screen devices rather than playing actively?

(If you have local data on physical activity, share it now or present national data)

In the US, only 4 out of 10 children are getting enough physical activity and avoiding too much screen time. Children older than 9 years are less active than younger children. Girls are less active than boys, but both need to be more active.

Participating in daily physical education at school and in afterschool organized sports helps children meet recommendations for physical activity. Find out how much activity your child is actually getting at school or day care. At home, play active games with your children to help them develop motor and social skills (take turns, follow the leader, and learn teamwork). Encourage them to play outside and don't scold them for getting dirty.

Say: There are two types of active play. Both are valuable to a child's development.

1. Unstructured play- physical activity that is not directed by an adult such as children playing at a park or in a field, riding bicycles, or dancing to music at home.
2. Structured play- physical activity that is directed by an adult such as games that involve rules or sport lessons.

Ask: What type of active play were we doing during the opening game today?
(Structured play)

Activity (Apply): (30 min) While the assistant starts the food demonstration, the educator leads the activity.

Say: Let's get moving! Now, we are going to learn some other fun ways to play actively with children. While children play, they develop motor skills and also other life skills (social, follow rules, sharing, friendship, and teamwork). Active play contributes to a child's total physical activity per day and decreases the risk of obesity.

Allow participants at least 3 minutes at each station. As you visit each station, think about what motor, social and other skills your child can learn through these simple games.

Station 1: Toss and Catch- Use homemade scoop (milk carton) with ball attached by yarn to scoop



Figure 2 Toss and catch scoop (NSFS repository, 2014)

Station 2: Paper Plate Paddle- Use a strong paper plate with a stick taped to the back and a yarn ball to hit back and forth.



Figure 3. Paper plate paddle (NSFS Repository)

Station 3: Bean bag Toss—Toss 3 bean bags in small plastic buckets or baskets. Use tape to set spot where players will stand to toss bags.

Station 4: Freeze Dance --Invite everyone to stand in a circle. When the music starts, everyone will dance but stop or freeze whenever the leader pauses the music. Take turns letting others lead the activity)

- After everyone has visited the stations, **Ask:** What motor skills can your child practice through simple games? What social skills can your child learn (taking turns, following rules, teamwork)? How can you tailor some of these activities we did today to meet your child's interest?

Summarize: While physical activity is important for the health of all people and development of children, it can also be fun for the whole family. The physical activities practiced today are just a few examples that can be done anywhere, are easy to do, and don't require a lot of time, materials or money.

- Food demonstration, tasting and sharing. Pass around the containers, showing the 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?

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

What did you learn? Why is this information important to you?

Choose a goal to work on this month (week). Try to choose small changes that you can make within a week.

For example, “I will spend at least 10-15 minutes a day in active play with my child”. Write your goal on the recipe handout. Ask a friend or family member to help support you in reaching your goal. Invite families to share their goals.

References and Resources:

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<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-1/>

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