CHCECE003 Provide care for children

Topic Two | The importance of physical activity

Relevant Frameworks

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<th>QA2</th>
<th>Children’s health and safety</th>
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<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.</td>
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<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.</td>
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Quality Areas related to children’s health and safety

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<th>Belonging, being &amp; becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency</td>
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<td>Outcome 3</td>
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<td>3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing</td>
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<td>4.1 Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflectivity</td>
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<td>4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating</td>
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<td>4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another</td>
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<td>4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials</td>
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Early Years Learning Framework for Australia outcomes
Physically active programs

We are a much more sedentary society than we have been in the past, as amusements such as TV or digital games involve less movement, advertising in children’s TV time emphasises high calorie highly processed foods, and fears about dangers in the environment mean parents are less likely to let their children roam. These and other factors have contributed to a fall in childhood exercise and a resultant rise in childhood obesity.

There are now several programs that have been developed to assist children’s services in promoting good health and physical activity. One such program is Munch & Move which was developed in NSW by NSW Health with support from the NSW Department of Human Services (Community Services) and the Area Health Services. The program provides training for educators, resources, information and ideas for experiences and activities as well as advice and support from local health professionals. The program also fits in with the National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework.

A Queensland program aimed at training teachers in Education and Care services through workshops is the Moving with young children program. This program was developed as part of the Queensland Government’s Get Active Queensland Children and Young People Strategy, and aims to explore practical ideas on how to include physical activity into Education and Care services routines.

There are also two programs in Victoria, Kids – “Go for your Life” (developed by the Victorian Government) and Romp and Chomp (developed by Deakin University as part of an obesity prevention program). These programs are not specifically for Education and Care services but provide information on nutrition and physical activity that can easily be adapted.
Promote physical activity

Recommendations of physical activity

Daily physical activity gives important physical and social health benefits during childhood and can lead to a physically active lifestyle into adulthood. The recommendation for children is for 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

The Department of Health and Ageing (2010) recommend the following for children aged 0 – 5 years:

For healthy development in infants (birth to 1 year), physical activity – particularly supervised floor-based play in safe environments – should be encouraged from birth;

Toddlers (1 to 3 years of age) and pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years of age) should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day;

For children 2 to 5 years of age, sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games) should be limited to less than one hour per day;

Children younger than 2 years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games);

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers should not be sedentary, restrained or kept inactive for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping.

The Department of Health and Ageing also endorse the following recommendations made by The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (USA).

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Recommendations for infants
Infants should interact with parents and/or educators in daily physical activities that are dedicated to promoting the exploration of their environment.

Infants should be placed in safe settings that facilitate physical activity and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.

Infants’ physical activity should promote the development of movement skills.

Recommendations for toddlers
Toddlers should accumulate at least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity.

Toddlers should be physically active for at least three hours every day.

Toddlers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

Toddlers should develop movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.

Recommendations for preschoolers
Preschoolers should accumulate at least three hours physical activity each day, with at least 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity.

Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of daily, unstructured physical activity.

Preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.

Recommendations for all children
Children should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.

Individuals responsible for the well-being of children should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child’s movement skills.

(Adapted from the discussion paper for the development of recommendations for children’s and youths’ participation in health promoting physical activity Dept of Health & Ageing 2005)
Encouraging participation

Selecting appropriate activities

Physical activity should be a fun and positive experience for children to encourage movement and fun to avoid stress and frustration. It is important to choose activities that complement each child’s ability. By providing activities that are slightly more difficult the child will be given the opportunity to develop new skills. For example, if a child lacks coordination skills required to catch a ball, it might be a good idea to encourage them to keep on practicing, but in a non-threatening and non-competitive environment.

It is important to acknowledge children as competent learners and build active communities of engagement and inquiry.

*It is important to acknowledge children as competent learners and build active communities of engagement and inquiry.*

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Physical activity for children

The National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0 – 5 provided by the Department of Health and Ageing (2010) gives the following ideas on what constitutes physical activity for children and stresses that for young children, this will primarily occur through unstructured, active play, but will also include more structured activities such as dance and gymnastics programs.

Physical activity for infants

Activity or movement in the first 6 months of life includes reaching for and grasping objects, turning the head toward stimuli and movement of the arms and legs whilst lying on the stomach (‘tummy-time’).

The second six months of life is characterised by learning basic movement skills such as crawling, pulling up to a standing position, creeping whilst using an object for support and finally walking.
Physical activity for toddlers

Physical activity for toddlers is characterised by active play and learning locomotor skills including running, jumping, hopping, galloping and skipping.

Activity may also include stability skills, including balancing and climbing. Toddlers also experiment with object control skills such as kicking, catching, throwing, striking and rolling.

Structured activities such as water familiarisation, dance and gymnastics based programs may also provide valuable opportunities for toddlers to be active.

Physical activity for preschoolers

Further development of locomotor, stability and object-control skills occurs during this period. It is important to provide preschoolers with opportunities to practice these skills and to give feedback and encouragement.

Video: Get Moving- Fast Campaign

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPQjLeeooKo

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The Get Moving Campaign aims to create awareness of physical activity in children. For information go to the:


Participation in physical activity with children

The basic strategies educators need to implement in order to ensure children engage in and enjoy a range of exercise and physical activity include:

Being a good role model - be active yourself

Enjoy physical activity with children and have fun.

Being active with children

Some ways in which educators can participate with children in physical activity include:

- provide experiences and opportunities to practice fundamental movement skills
- find activities that children like
- plan experiences and opportunities that are active
- encourage walking rather than using prams or carrying, go for interesting walks
- monitor sedentary activities and provide a balance, turn off the TV and limit activities such as computer and digital games
- children also need to be provided with safe areas for running and climbing.

Regular exercise is important if we want to remain healthy and this habit needs to be encouraged from a young age. A lifelong positive attitude to physical activity should be encouraged.

**Appropriate exercise for children**

Don’t assume simply because children are naturally active that they are getting enough physical activity or exercise. For a variety of complex reasons, such as geography, wealth, safety concerns, litigation, lifestyle changes and increased technology, children these days seem to be getting insufficient exercise.

For small children, crawling, rolling, walking and climbing can be arranged in relatively safe environments. Children should not spend long periods of time in high chairs or walkers, but should be encouraged to explore their environment using their whole body. Educators can reinforce the use of their bodies through praise and making specific comments e.g., “What a good crawler you are Robert! With those strong legs and arms you'll soon be outrunning us!"

With toddlers, praise for physical exercise should reinforce their growing abilities and encourage them to keep practicing e.g., “Great climbing Harry! You look like a mountain climber up there!"

With toddlers and preschoolers, exercise that might lead to future interests can be encouraged (e.g., dancing, ball games, races - but not against each other, just in a group). Links can be made with the more mature forms of the games (e.g. showing a dance video of jazz ballet, discussing soccer, netball or cricket games they might have seen on TV, watching gymnasts perform or discussing the fitness levels of circus performers). However it is important to ensure that competition or specialisation is not encouraged and that children are supported to participate in a wide range of activities.

With school aged children, beginner (modified) forms of these games can be introduced as children begin to develop the skills of working together in a group.

It is important to remember that young children love to move and with encouragement this can be developed into a life-long source of enjoyment.

It is also important for educators to consider the following:
Different children will demonstrate varying levels of comfort in various activities

Educators need to be able to identify signs and cues that the child has had enough

Do not force children to participate in physical activity

Do not push children to participate at the same level as their peers

Have an awareness of children’s underlying health issues that may impact on their participation in physical experiences

Foster children’s participation in physical experiences by providing experiences which are inclusive for all levels of fitness and promoting agency through shared decision making about the types of activities children wish to engage in.

It is important that educators consider that some children, who think they are not physically fit, may decline to participate in active experiences. We need to think how we can provide alternative physical options and gradually increase their physical activity so that they feel successful at each stage leading to a positive sense of self.

Foster children's participation

As educators we need to help children understand the dangers of overeating and eating unhealthy foods as well as the benefits of physical activity. The best way to do this is to make positive comments as the children are involved or are talking about healthy physical experiences. For example:

"Wow, Tyron, you can jump high!"

"Isn't this fun dancing together?"

"Can you feel your muscles getting stronger?"

"Bella and Sarah, you have climbed right to the top!"

Suggested experiences to help explain to children the link between physical activity, health and wellbeing may include:

Making up posters of healthy activities and healthy foods

Having a brainstorming session of the different physical activities children would like to experience.

Including these or simpler options in the centre program:

- Have special activity days, e.g. Bike Day, where the children bring in their bikes from home, including helmets, and have a riding day
- Involve regular physical activity in all areas of the program, e.g. dance, action songs/rhymes, yoga or stretching, bursting bubbles and science experiments, e.g. seeing how far paper aeroplanes can fly
• Read stories that expose the children to a variety of physical activity and promote a positive attitude to regular activity
• Encourage the children to talk about the physical activities they do at home
• Have the children share ideas about exciting playgrounds in the area or other physical activity opportunities in the community
• Ensure the program has a balance of active and passive experiences
• Be a role model and participate in the physical activities with the children
• Talk about your physical activity interests with the children, e.g. share your interest of dance, rock climbing, canoeing

Have fun together doing physical activities! You could also include facts and suggestions on physical activities for children in your centre newsletter.

Importance of physical activity to health & wellbeing

Exercise or physical activity is the other side of the good health equation to nutrition. Being active is important for children’s health.

Active children are more likely to:

• Feel good about themselves
• Be happy, relaxed and sleep better
• Have improved physical skills such as coordination, balance, muscle control and strength
• Have strong bones
• Maintain healthy growth and development
• Have improved heart and lung health
• Reduce the risk of developing heart disease
• Become active adults
• Perform better at school
• Develop good social skills (e.g., obeying rules, getting along with others and making friends).

In order to enjoy physical activity children need to learn some basic or fundamental movement skills such as:

• Throwing
• Kicking
• Hitting a ball
• Balancing
• Catching
• Jumping
• Skipping
• Riding a bike

In order to enjoy physical activity children need to learn some basic or fundamental movement skills such as:

Skills and strategies

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Physical activity supports health and wellbeing

• Grow and develop healthily
• Build strong bones and muscles
• Improve balance and develop skills
• Maintain and develop flexibility
• Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
• Improve cardiovascular fitness
• Reduce stress and feel more relaxed
• Improve posture
• Boost confidence and self-esteem
• Have fun with their friends and make new ones

You can read more information about being active here:

**Food and energy**

Food provides nutrients that are needed for the body to function properly.

**What is the main function of food?**

The main function of food is to:

- Provide energy for exercise and to keep the body functioning
- Carry out growth and repair of all parts of our bodies including soft tissues like muscles and harder body parts like teeth and bones
- Regulate body functions: our body uses the nutrients to make substances that regulate and control our body functions, for example, hormones and enzymes.

**What is energy?**

People obtain their energy from the carbohydrates, fats and proteins contained in foods. In nutrition, what we mean by energy is the power locked into foods as chemical energy that our bodies can release and change into:

- **Mechanical energy:** for work, physical activity and to keep our bodies functioning
- **Heat energy:** to keep our bodies warm

**How does the body use nutrients for energy?**

Energy is not a nutrient but is released from food components. The energy obtained from food is measured in kilojoules or calories. In a healthy diet we will consume the amount of energy (kilojoules/calories) to equate to the energy expended in everyday exercise and movement. That is, what we eat, we use.

Foods contain a mixture of nutrients that give us energy (fats, carbohydrates and protein) and nutrients that do not give us energy (vitamins, minerals and water). On the nutrition panel on food labels we can see the amount of energy that the food is providing in kilojoules (calories), plus a break-down of the energy being supplied by the individual nutrients.

See document: Important vitamins and food sources below

**Meal times with children**

Although the lunch time period is a busy time for educators, time should really be taken to sit at the table and eat with the children. This is an opportunity to eat the same food as the children or another healthy food choice, as well as providing children with a good role model and encouraging discussion.
## Important vitamins and food sources

Below is a chart that includes the main function of some of the important vitamins, as well as the best food sources.

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<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Main Function</th>
<th>Best Food Sources</th>
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<tr>
<td>vitamin A</td>
<td>Maintains normal vision; aids night vision; promotes normal growth of bones; helps keep skin clear and smooth; increases resistance to infections</td>
<td>Liver, lentils, beans, eggs, deep yellow and green vegetables and fruit, butter, milk and certain fish oils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin B1</td>
<td>Stimulates metabolism of carbohydrates for energy production, necessary for healthy function of heart and nervous system</td>
<td>Yeast extract (vegemite), whole grain cereals &amp; products, liver, kidney, lean pork, nuts, peas, sesame seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin B2</td>
<td>Helps in energy production (metabolism of carbohydrate, protein &amp; fat), healthy skin &amp; eyes, aids in production of red blood cells and break down of fatty acids</td>
<td>Milk, cheese, yeast extract, meat extract, liver, mushrooms, eggs, almonds, whole meal bread &amp; flour, green vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin B3</td>
<td>Active enzyme in metabolism of other nutrients, essential for growth</td>
<td>Lean meat, liver, yeast, wheat germ, eggs, milk, soybeans, corn, wholegrain cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantothenic acid</td>
<td>Metabolism of carbohydrate, fat &amp; protein for energy</td>
<td>Yeast extract, fish, lean meat, liver, legumes, nuts, eggs, bread &amp; cereals, vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin B6</td>
<td>Metabolism of protein, formation of red blood cells</td>
<td>Yeast, wheat germ, whole grains (brown rice, barley), soybeans, nuts, lean meats, eggs, vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folic Acid</td>
<td>Formation of red blood cells &amp; enzymes, prevents neural tube defects, metabolism of DNA</td>
<td>Green leafy vegetables, mushrooms, wholegrains, yeast, legumes, leafy vegetables, peas, nuts, avocado, liver, kidney, heart, oranges, bananas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin B12</td>
<td>Formation of DNA &amp; nerve cells, formation of red blood cells, metabolism of carbohydrate &amp; fat</td>
<td>Only found in animal foods; liver, kidney, lean meat, fish, oysters, seafood, eggs, milk, poultry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin C</td>
<td>Important for healthy gums, teeth and bones, aids in absorption of non-haem iron; helps give immunity to infections and speeds healing of wounds</td>
<td>Citrus fruits, berries, mango, pawpaw, pineapple, tomatoes, cabbage, spinach, parsley, broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitamin D</td>
<td>Strong bones and teeth, absorption of calcium and phosphorus</td>
<td>Direct exposure of skin to sunlight, oily fish, fish liver oils, eggs, butter, margarine, cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>