PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STATEMENT

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Aims

As a Healthy Early Years London setting, we want to ensure that we promote the health and well-being of the whole setting community through encouraging physical activity and providing consistent messages to children, parents and staff.

We are aware that children of all ages should be active.

Being active is important for children under five because it helps them build and maintain a good level of health; physical activity is critical to optimal growth and development. Children under five need time to play and master their physical environment and fundamental movement skills; the early years are also an important time to establish habits relating to physical activity.

The Chief Medical Officers provide guidance on how much physical activity children under five should be doing:

Physical activity guidelines for infants

Infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity, e.g. crawling.
For infants not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake .
Tummy time may be unfamiliar to babies at first, but can be increased gradually, starting from a minute or two at a time, as the baby becomes used to it. Babies should not sleep on their tummies.

Physical activity guidelines for toddlers

Toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes per day in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including active and outdoor play, spread through the day; more is better.

Physical activity guidelines for pre-schoolers

Pre-schoolers should spend at least 180 minutes per day in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. More is better; the 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

These figures are taken from the UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines and the DHSC physical activity life-stage infographics, which are free to download and share with families.

Physical activity programme

Our planning for both indoor and outdoor physical activities is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each programme of activity supporting physical development is planned, reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis.

For children who cannot yet walk we plan opportunities for them to move freely on their tummy or back. Treasure basket to encourage children to reach/grasp, tummy time activities, outdoor soft play area. For children who are capable of walking, we provide free space to move and play imaginatively either inside or outside.

We structure and set up the environment to facilitate active play: home corner, role play, creative workshop, painting, graphics or mark making, tactile or sensory, music and dance, construction or block play. We provide equipment to facilitate play — climbing frames, spades, balls, blocks, streamers, cardboard boxes — and lead structured activities that encourage movement, action songs, parachute games.

We have a supportive environment

We endeavour to provide an environment and space which promotes physical activity and active play throughout each day: classroom interest areas, circle time, story time, role play, transition time, outdoor play equipment. We ensure that outdoor activities are planned and children can access these on a daily basis, providing access to outdoor play on a daily basis, having continuous free-flow play, planning daily visits walking to the local park, and for non-walking children using soft materials to create active, stimulating and safe environments.

We are thinking sensibly about health and safety

We are aware that in order for children to learn about managing risks associated with physical activity, we need to offer stimulating and challenging environments; through these environments children are supported to explore and develop their own abilities and understanding. Alongside this we aim to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable dangers. We conduct risk assessments and establish suitable

arrangements for off-site visits to encourage children and their families to take advantage of the range of physical activities available within the local community.

We minimise the amount of time children spend being sedentary for extended periods

In the early years, spending time sedentary limits the opportunities that children have to move. Sedentary behaviour is any low-energy activity that takes place while sitting or lying down. We avoid using restraining equipmentfor long periods of time, unless for reasons of safety. We don't use sitting devices unless/until infants can sit up unaided. Children are only required to sit when eating. We interact regularly with every child to encourage movement.

We provide suitable physical activities for all

All of our children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities , are entitled to a comprehensive programme of physical activity opportunities that allows all children to improve their skills of co-ordination, manipulation, control and movement and to develop positive attitudes towards physical activities including sports. Our provision is also fully inclusive of children from different cultures and religions. All staff are aware of the need to be sensitive to individual beliefs about what is acceptable in relation to physical activity.

Staff training and development

Staff actively and positively support children's outdoor and physical activity experiences, e.g. provide a variety of fun activities, such as riding tricycles, playing tag, obstacle courses, dancing, parachute games; encourage children to explore nature, different colours, textures and shapes; join children in play, running, dancing and games; encourage children to work together to create their own games and activities. We have received training on supporting children's physical development, providing physical activity opportunities and reducing sedentary behaviour, and feel confident leading and modelling activities for young children.

Working with families

Staff are confident in giving out advice to parents and carers in relation to families adopting healthy lifestyles and being physically active. We encourage parents to walk, scoot or cycle with their children for part or all of the way to the setting. We facilitate this by providing somewhere safe to leave bicycles or scooters. We regularly promote/hold

special events for children and their families which promote physical activity, such as walking to nursery for sports day, treasure hunts/obstacle courses, and stay and play.

We have developed a range of outings that our children can walk to. This supports children's and families' knowledge of places of interest in the local environment that are easy to reach on foot. These include walking to the local park , local shops and the library.

We also provide/promote a range of information workshops, activities and parenting programmes that support parents' understanding of the importance of being physically active and of children's development. These include parenting programmes such as Mellow Parenting, stay and play, swimming sessions, leisure centres, under-5s physical activity clubs and sessions.

Useful links

UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines
Physical activity guidelines: infographics
NHS: physical activity guidelines for children under 5
Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework