



Policies and Procedures

Active play and physical activity

Purpose

The educators, staff and management acknowledge the importance of active play and physical activity behaviours that contribute to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- encourage children to engage in a range of child-initiated and adult-guided physical activities within the educational program
- promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes being physically active every day.

As a health promoting service we will promote active play and physical activity for children, educators, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

Policy statement

Background

Active play is about moving, being and doing. Children may engage in active play by themselves or with other children. Active play uses large muscles and provides children with a range of physical, emotional and social benefits. Outdoor play is very important as it helps develop gross motor and fundamental movement skills. Active play also helps develop a strong and healthy body, builds skills, creates feelings of wellbeing and helps protect from disease.

Whole service engagement

It is recognised that every member of the service impacts on the children's health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes active play and physical activity. All members of our service, including educators, staff, children, families and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy.

Definitions

Active play covers a range of activities including climbing, throwing, jumping, running, lifting, pushing and pulling appropriately-sized objects, sweeping, raking, digging, and being active to music, movement and games.

Child-initiated active play is developed by the child through exploration of the environment, equipment and games.

Adult-guided active play encourages children's physical development through promoting movement skills in a non-competitive environment.

Physical activity includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

Procedures

Healthy policies

- Educators, staff, families and children are active participants in the development and implementation of the whole service active play policy and are encouraged to promote and support active play initiatives in the service.
- Educators, staff and families are provided with information about policy requirements.



Healthy physical environment

Active play

- Outdoor play equipment is adaptable and moveable, to encourage change and to challenge children.
- Active play experiences are inclusive of the diversity and abilities of all children including children with additional needs.
- Suitable areas have been set up so children are able to participate in active play and physical activity in all types of weather.
- The service seeks to ensure that fundraising focuses on healthy and active options.

Screen time

- Screen based activities, such as watching DVDs or playing computer games, are not available to children under two years of age.
- Screen time is limited for toddlers and pre-schoolers (aged two to five years).
- Active play is promoted instead of offering screen time.
- No TV time is used as part of our daily educational routines
- The time children spend being seated or inactive, other than during meals and naptime, is no more than one hour.
- Educators engage with children about the content of what they are viewing and respond to their reactions.

Active travel

- Active travel, such as walking, riding a bike or scooting to and from the service is encouraged for educators, staff, children and families.
- The service aims to identify and address barriers for active travel within the local environment.
- Space is provided at the service for children to leave active travel equipment.

Healthy social environment

- As role models, educators, staff and families are encouraged to actively engage with children in active play and physical activity.

Learning and skills

- Educators and staff involve children in planning for active play and physical activity experiences both indoors and outdoors. Children are taught how to use equipment safely.
- Child-initiated and adult-guided active play and physical activity experiences, which challenge and encourage children to explore, extend and test limits, are planned and provided on a daily basis as part of the educational plan.
- Opportunities to learn about the importance of active play and physical activity are embedded in the educational program through discussion, group games, stories, music and movement.
- Staff routinely identify opportunities to engage children, educate and promote appropriate physical activity skills and active play.
- Road safety education is incorporated into the educational program.
- The service engages in walking excursions within the local community that promote physical activity and safe active travel.
- Educators are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to engage in adult-guided active play and physical activity with children.



Animal fun

Animal fun is a unique program designed to improve physical skills for young children. It has been developed by a team of Psychologist, physiotherapists and occupational therapist from Curtin University.

Acacia is implementing Animal fun program in our children's program which

- Provide children with a fun way to practice and improve their gross and fine motor skills
- Help children to develop the basic building blocks of balance, muscles strength and control as these skills form the basis of more complex movements required in sports and other activities
- Encourage children to participate in a fun and social way with their family, friends and educators

The National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0 to 5 years¹

- For healthy development in infants (birth to one year), Being physically active several times in a variety of ways, particularly through interactive floor-based play; more is better. For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake.
- Toddlers (one to two years) At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities including energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- Pre-schoolers (three to five years) should be physically active at least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- For children two to five years of age, sitting and watching television and the use of other electronic media (DVDs, computer and electronic games) should be no more than one hour.
- Children younger than two years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games).
- Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be sedentary, restrained or kept inactive, for more than one hour at a time – with the exception of sleeping.

Engaging children, educators, staff and families

- Educators, staff, children and families are key partners in developing a healthy and active physical environment.
- Educators and staff engage children in developing active play initiatives through discussions and idea sharing.
- Educators, staff and families are provided with information, ideas and practical strategies on a regular basis to support active play in the service and at home.
- Families' experiences, expertise and interests are drawn upon to support active play initiatives.
- Families and children from culturally diverse backgrounds are engaged to ensure cultural values and expectations about physical activity are respected.

- Physical activity and movement information is provided to families such as information about the importance of minimising sedentary behaviour and strategies for increasing physical activity.

¹ Australian Government Department of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-physical-activity-0-5-pdf-cnt.htm>



- A sense of fair play and courtesy among children is encouraged to promote a friendly playing environment.
- Educators act as positive role models of physically active behaviour. Educators and staff are supported to be physically active and minimise sedentary behaviour, inside and outside of work hours.
- Physical activity and movement information is included in staff orientation.
- All physical activity sessions must be adequately supervised by educators.
- Program plans incorporate a variety of adult guided outdoor and indoor active play experiences such as dance, drama, moving to music, climbing and active games on a daily basis.
- Educators will vary activity sessions to incorporate aspects of endurance, flexibility and strength.
- In adverse weather conditions, outdoor playing time is substituted with equivalent indoor activities.
- Educators to utilise surrounding community grounds and park facilities.
- Invite families to attend and participate in physical activity experiences with their children where appropriate
- Educators to plan regular outing to support active play
- Incursions will be planned to support active play such as, sporting clinics, music and movement,
- Gardening and maintenance of outdoor environment

Community partnerships

- The service works with local health professionals, services and other organisations to increase educator and staff capacity to support children's physical development and active play initiatives.
- Information about community physical activity opportunities is made available to families through discussions, newsletters and visual displays, for example a service could promote information about local community clubs and walking groups.

Related legislation and policies

National Quality Standard 2018 – Quality Area 2

Service policies this may link to:

- Educational program
- Behaviour guidance
- Social Media: such as television, online video or computer
- Staff health and wellbeing
- Child Safe environments

BREACH OF THIS POLICY

Any educator or staff found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

References

- Family Law Act 1975

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