



# Play and Learning 7

## Active play

Active play is important to help your child grow, develop and stay healthy.

As well as being fun, active play helps children:

- **learn about their bodies** – to develop balance, strength, and coordination.
- **develop socially** when they play with other children.

### When it comes to active play:

- **babies** love kicking, rolling, splashing in the bath, and being gently bounced, rocked, and pulled up to sit.

At around 7 to 8 months, babies learn getting onto all fours, crawling, and rocking backwards and forwards.

Then from around 9 to 11 months, babies start pulling to stand and cruising around furniture. Babies usually learn to walk by 15 months.

- **toddlers** love exploring their world – climbing, jumping, and tumbling. Everyday things like steps, doorways, grassy slopes, ride on toys, boxes, and furniture are challenging and fun.
- **young children** move more confidently and enjoy challenges – riding tricycles, bicycles, visiting playgrounds, ball games, trampolines, and swimming. With practise, they develop skills like jumping, climbing, swinging, sliding, balancing, lifting, pulling, pushing, throwing, and catching.

### What you can do

- **Screen time** – children learn best in hands-on activities with you. Screen time is not recommended for children under 2 years old. Children aged 2 to 5 years should have 1 hour or less of screen time a day.. Make the most of playtime – turn off all screens including phones, tablets, TVs, and computers.
- Toddlers and young children should be **busy and active for at least 3 hours every day**.
- **Watch your child** – help them move and play at the level that suits their level of development. Let them go at their own pace.
- **Let them use you for support** while learning about movement. Let your child bounce on your lap, or balance on your crossed legs – you will feel how much support they need.
- **Let your child try new things** during active play. Encourage and support them using positive words like 'Hold on tight' or 'Look carefully'.
- **Allow time for repetition** – your child will want to try a new skill over and over again.
- **Try new experiences** – go to a different park or try new play equipment so your child can try out new challenges.



## Some activities to try

- **Rough and tumble play** – bouncing, jumping, piggyback and shoulder rides, and pretend wrestling. Explore different surfaces – grass, sand, carpet, indoor and outdoor playgrounds.
- **Movement games** – statues, wheelbarrow races, ‘Simon says’, hide and seek, walking like animals, spinning, obstacle courses or action songs like ‘Ring-a-ring-a-rosie’ or ‘Hokey-pokey’.
- **Ball games** – rolling, bouncing, throwing, batting – use different sizes and weights. For older toddlers, balloons make good balls too! Play catch, skittles, football, soccer, basketball – or just chase bubbles.
- **Cardboard boxes** – let your child stack them, sit inside and be pushed or pulled around, or fill with toys and ‘drive’ around. Take cardboard to a park and slide down a grassy slope.
- **Pedal toys** – sit on toys, tricycles, bicycles, scooters.
- **Playgrounds** – visit your local park for a play on swings, slides, see saws, climbing frames, sand, and water play.
- **Trees** – climb safely or swing off a rope.
- **Rugs, towels, and bed sheets** – slide along the floor while child is sitting on top, or use to make a cubby house.
- **Old cushions** – kneeling, standing, hiding, stack them to climb, or sit and balance on.
- **Sand play** – digging, building, carrying buckets of sand, walking in the sand.
- **Water play** – running through water, swimming, splashing, filling, and emptying buckets.



## Keeping your child safe

- Supervise your child closely at all times especially around water, play equipment, or when using objects such as scissors, pencils, glue or paint. Avoid flammable or toxic materials.
- Babies, toddlers and young children can choke on small toys and objects. Regularly check toys to make sure they are safe and in good condition.
  - Toys should be bigger than a 20 cent coin.
  - Strings on toys should be less than 20 centimetres long.
- Do a safety check and make sure your home is safe for your child to actively explore.
- Keep your child safe by watching them and helping when they need you.
- **Be SunSmart** – make sure your child has adequate sun protection when playing outdoors.

## Find out more

For more information on play, learning, and a range of other topics, visit:

- [playgroupwa.com.au](http://playgroupwa.com.au)
- [bringingupgreatkids.org](http://bringingupgreatkids.org)
- [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)
- [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childhealthresources](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childhealthresources)

For more information about the metropolitan **Child Development Service** phone 1300 551 827 or visit [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childdevelopment](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/childdevelopment)

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