

Active Start— Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years

National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)

The guidelines presented below support NASPE's position that all children birth to age five should engage in daily physical activity that promotes health-related fitness and movement skills.

Infants (birth to 12 months)

1. Infants should interact with parents and/or caregivers in daily physical activities that are dedicated to promoting the exploration of their environment.
2. Infants should be placed in safe settings that facilitate physical activity and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.
3. Infants' physical activity should promote the development of movement skills.
4. Infants should have an environment that meets or exceeds recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.
5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of infants should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

Toddlers (12 to 36 months)

1. Toddlers should accumulate at least 30 minutes daily of structured physical activity.
2. Toddlers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours per day of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
3. Toddlers should develop movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.
4. Toddlers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.
5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of toddlers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

1. Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity.
2. Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours per day of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
3. Preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.
4. Preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.
5. Individuals responsible for the well-being of preschoolers should be aware of the importance of physical activity and facilitate the child's movement skills.

Excerpted with permission, from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), an association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, *Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years* (Reston, VA: NASPE, 2002), 5–11. Visit www.aahperd.org/NASPE.