



Lots of Active Play

Do you have children who seem to be bundles of energy all the time? This is normal for many children. The problems come when adults expect them to sit and play quietly. It's hard to sit when the energy keeps flowing. Instead of fighting with children to play quietly, plan more active play to help them get out their energy.

Taking children outside to run, jump, and climb is great, but children can safely have active time indoors too. Try some of these ideas for active indoor play.

Children need
lots of active play
time every day.

Obstacle Course

See what you have around the house to create an obstacle course. Think of things like crawling under a chair, jumping over blocks, walking on a board (that's placed flat on the floor), skipping around a trash can, bouncing a ball from one place to another, etc.

Newspaper Throw

Set out old newspapers for children to crumple into balls. You may want to wrap each ball with some masking tape to help it hold its shape. Set out a cardboard box, a plastic or metal pan, or a laundry basket and let the children throw their balls into the container.

Jump, Jump, Jump

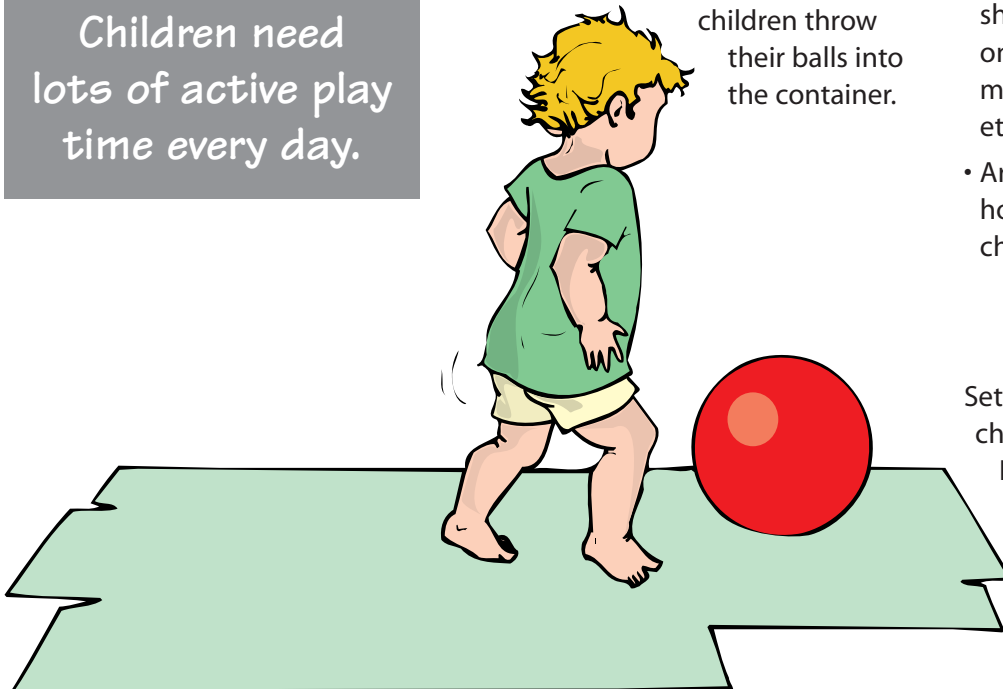
Tape some pieces of construction paper in a line, about 6 inches apart, on the floor. Show the children where to start and have them jump from one paper to the next.

There are lots of ways to do this jumping game:

- Instead of standing and jumping, have the children squat down and jump like frogs from lily pad to lily pad.
- Make a color pattern as you lay the paper on the floor. Tell children to jump only on the red (or blue, purple, yellow, etc.) papers.
- Cut the construction paper into shapes. Have the children jump only on the circles or squares, diamonds, stars, rectangles, triangles, etc.
- Arrange the paper to make a hopscotch board and teach the children how to play.

Indoor Snowball Fight

Set out old newspapers for the children to crumple into balls. Let them throw the newspaper balls at each other for a newspaper "snowball" fight.



Toss in the Air

Lay an old flat sheet or shower curtain on the floor. Have the children stand around the outside of the sheet, then reach down and hold onto the edge of the sheet that is in front of them. Tell the children to lift the sheet high over their heads, and then bring it down again to the floor.

- Try lifting and lowering the sheet quickly to see it ripple.
- Lay some soft, lightweight toys, such as small stuffed animals or foam balls, in the middle of the sheet. Have the children try to make the toys bounce out or stay in as they shake the sheet.
- Raise the sheet high, and then have everyone sit down quickly as the sheet comes down on top of them.

Act out Stories

Choose a story with some movement and let the children act it out as you tell it. They will love dancing with the monsters in "Where the Wild Things Are," hopping away as "The Runaway Bunny," or trip trapping across the bridge as "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." See what books you have or make up your own stories that the children can act them out.

Moving to Music

Turn on some music to start children moving. Try different types of songs — some fast, some slow — to get children dancing, marching, stomping, hopping, galloping, etc. You may want to add some props, like scarves, streamers, or musical instruments for even more fun.

Plan for outdoor and indoor active play times.

Animal Movements

Ask the children how different animals move. For example, a horse can walk, trot, jump, gallop, and rear up. Have the children stand in a circle. Tell them they will be horses or any animal they choose. You will be the trainer. Start the game by having the "horses" walk around the circle for 2 minutes, then change to trotting for 1 minute, then galloping for 30 seconds, and so on. End the game by having the children "freeze" in one position.

River Jump

Make a number of random lines on the floor with masking tape. Tell the children they are going on a walk in the woods. The lines on the floor are rivers. Every time they come to a river, they will need to jump over it without getting their feet wet.

Here are some other ways to play this game:

- See how high or far the children can jump as they go over the river.
- Make up a story for the children to act out. Jumping the river could be part of the story.
- Use hula hoops for jumping lakes.
- The children may want to draw their own pictures of rivers. Tape them on the floor and pretend the class is going on a trip.



Pennsylvania Pathways

Professional Development
for Child Caregivers

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