

MOVE & PLAY

Early Years Parent Play Day

Play Stations to Promote Physical Literacy

Planning a physical activity experience for an interactive parent and child event can seem daunting. It doesn't have to be! Getting children excited to be physically active comes naturally at this age and with positive activity experiences and role modelling, we can support the development of physical literacy and give children the opportunity to grow up valuing and participating in physical activity throughout their lifespan. The following document outlines an example of how you can practically link the Developing Physical Literacy in the Early Years poster to highlight key themes to engage parents and children in an interactive opportunity to explore how important physical literacy development is in the early years.

Key Messages for Parents:

- 90% of a child's brain develops before the age of 5. Exposing children to a multitude of movements and allowing for repetition of these movements strengthens neural connections and helps to build a strong foundation of movement. More complex skills can build upon this foundation as the child grows and develops.
- Children need to feel challenged and need to experience success to help build confidence and motivation. Being confident in their abilities and motivated to move will help them stay physically active throughout their lifespan.
- Children love to be outside and it is a great place to develop physical literacy and a relationship with nature. Plus the added bonus of a healthy dose of Vitamin D!
- Children need to be exposed to a variety of different environments to help them develop physical literacy. This means, in the air, on the ground and in and around water based environments, including ice and snow.

(continued)

- Keep it fun and don't forget to play together as a family!

Space Required & Set Up

This handout is designed to be flexible to support a variety of groups, venues and situations. Work with the space that you have and adapt activities as needed! In an ideal situation, an open activity space is preferred but activities can be modified with the space available.

Equipment Required

These activities are designed to use minimal equipment, equipment that you may already have available or that can be easily found at your local dollar store. The following list is suggested and can be modified as needed:

- Foam Dice
- Pool Noodles (bean bags can be substituted)
- Hula Hoops
- Balloons
- Small foam balls

Play Station 1: Monkeys & Bananas

From the Learning to Fly & Other Great Adventures Resource (www.befitforlife.ca)

- Talk to children about how monkeys live in the jungle and ask them what a monkey's favourite food is.
- Have all of the children move randomly around the room while pretending to be monkeys.
- Shout out 'banana' and have the children go into a 'downward dog' (banana) position.
- Have them hold this position until you say 'monkeys' and have the children go back to moving around like monkeys.
- Repeat back and forth.

How can you adapt this activity to the interests of your child?

Try using Dinosaurs and Dinosaur Eggs, Bumble Bees and Flowers. Depending on the mobility of your child this activity could also be done in a chair.

What are all the different ways you moved?

I.e. Bend, stretch, fall, balance, etc.

Play Station 2: Headbands

From the AniMoves Resource

- Show the participants the animal on the card and ask them to move like that animal (sounds encouraged!) while the leader tries to guess what animal they are.
- All of the animals in the AniMoves resource are animals that are native to Alberta.

What did you notice about the children when they were playing this game? Were they having fun? How did you know?

* AniMoves can be purchased for \$20 from our online store (www.befitforlife.ca/resources) and come with a variety of ideas of how to use them to get children moving and learning about our local animals in Alberta.

Play Station 3: Count & Move

Adapted from the Fitness Dice resource. Free download: www.befitforlife.ca/resources/fitnessdice

- Roll the dice and count the dots.
- Do the corresponding activity on the Count & Move Poster.

What else was this activity teaching the children? What other themes could you use based on the interests of the children? Could the children decide on the actions?

Play Station 4: As Big As the Sky, As Tall As the Trees

From the Moving Story Book found here: www.befitforlife.ca/resources/asbigasthesky

- Ask participants if they know what province we live in.
- Explain that the book is about Alberta and how we (and all living things) are connected to the land that makes up Alberta.
- Read the book and have participants do the actions, asking questions about animals and parts of the story.
- After the story, recall some of the difference geological formations in Alberta. Have participants act out some of these. (Mountain, rivers, tall trees, flat prairies, small rocks, wind, etc.)

What other books do you have that you could be active with? Can you create your own active story?

Play Station 5: Family Scavenger Hunt

Download the Family Scavenger Hunt: www.befitforlife.ca/resources/scavengerhunt

- Use the list to find items outside.
- If available, use a magnifying glass to get a better look at the items you find on the list.
- If a natural area is not available or it is the winter season, encourage participants to explore something else to replace that item. E.g. roll snow into a ball, find some frozen water.

Play Station 6: Superhero Kick & Score

From the Learning to Fly & Other Great Adventures Resource

- Line participants up on a line each with their own soft ball. Ensure that there is space between each participant.
- Line up pylons (or similar targets) across from each participant
- The distance between the child and the pylon should reflect their ability (provide some challenge but allow for success).
- Have participants try to knock down their target, pick it back up, get their ball and try again.

How could you adapt this activity to allow for appropriate challenge for individual children? How can you make it more or less challenging?

Play Station 7: Hoop & Dart

From the Move & Play through Traditional Games Resource

- This activity is a variation on the traditional Indigenous game of Hoop and Dart.
- Use a hula-hoop and short pool noodles (approx. 1 foot long).
- Encourage children to stand in a line ready to throw.
- Roll the hula hoop along the ground parallel to the children and have the children try to throw their noodle “spear” through the hoop.
- The difficulty can be adjusted by rolling the hoop faster/slower, closer/further away, having different sized hoops, or by holding the hoop stationary.
- Build confidence and motivation by starting with an easier version of this game (close hoop that is not rolling very fast) and progress to a more challenging version if appropriate.

Play Station 8: Can You?

From Ever Active Schools' Colour Task Activity Cards. Download them here:
www.everactive.org/colour-task-card-activity

- Use these activity prompts to support parents to be active with their children to move and recognize colours, shapes and movements.

To build on this activity, try the Guess My Skillz game with the Lucky 7s Cards. The cards are available for purchase for \$15 and are found here: www.befitforlife.ca/resources/lucky7

Play Station 9: Balloon Keep Up

Adapted from the Move & Play through Physical Literacy Cards

- Blow up balloons and ask participants to keep them in the air.
- Encourage them to use their hands, elbows, knees, feet and head.
- Before starting ensure there are no latex allergies or fears of balloons.

Play Station 10: Free Play!

- Put out equipment that you have and/or used during the previous activities and allow the children and adults to use them in anyway they want! Be creative and have fun!

Watch the children play... what do you notice? What are they learning to do?