

Montessori Works

Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy (Procedure/Guideline)

Rationale

The increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in childhood reflects the levels of physical activity and sedentary behaviour of entire communities. Developing healthy habits associated with being physically active sets the foundation for good habits in later life and can impact on immediate and long term health outcomes. Early childhood education and care services are an ideal place to develop good habits in young children and influence the behaviours of families. Educators and families can work together to share the responsibility of making physical activity a priority both inside and outside the home.

Service Commitment

Montessori Works seeks to promote children's physical activity by supporting the development of their gross motor skills and fostering the emergence of their fundamental movement skills through a range of intentionally planned and spontaneous active play learning experiences. Our service also supports limiting the amount of time children spend engaging in screen time and sedentary behaviour for recreational purposes.

Our service is committed to a journey of continuous improvement, striving for quality service provision under the National Quality Framework. We will ensure key physical activity messages within *Munch & Move* are embedded into our curriculum supporting the *Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep* and the *Get Up & Grow* Physical Activity Guidelines.

Further, Montessori Works recognises the importance of supporting families to promote children's physical activity through positive, respectful and reciprocal relationships.

Relevant Legislation

National Quality Framework

Early Childhood Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.3 Physical environment

Part 4.5 Regulation 155 – Interaction with children

Part 4.5 Regulation 156 – Relationships in groups

National Quality Standard

Standard 1.1 – The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.

Element 1.2.2

Standard 2.1 – Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted.

Element 2.1.3

Element 2.2.1

Standard 3.1 – The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.

Standard 3.2 – The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Element 4.2.2

Element 5.1.1

Elements 6.1.2, 6.1.3

Standard 6.2 – Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.

Element 7.1.2

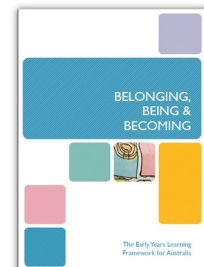
Element 7.2.1

Early Years Learning Framework

Learning Outcome 3 – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Principles – Secure, respectful, reciprocal relationships; Partnerships with families; High expectations and equity; Ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Practices – Learning environments; Intentional teaching; Learning through play; Responsiveness to children; Assessment for learning.

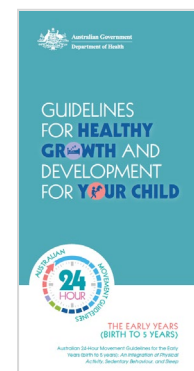


Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep

For healthy growth and development in:

Infants (Birth to one year)

- Physical activity, particularly through supervised interactive floor-based play in safe environments, should be encouraged from birth. For those not yet mobile, this should include **30 minutes of tummy time** (including reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling, and crawling) spread throughout the day during awake periods.
- Infants should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair).
- Screen time is **not recommended**.
- When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.



Toddlers (1–2 years)

- Toddlers should spend at least **180 minutes** in a variety of physical activities, including energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- Toddlers should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair) or sit for extended periods.
- For those younger than 2 years, sedentary screen time is **not recommended**.
- For those aged 2 years, sedentary screen time should be **no more than 1 hour**; less is better.
- When sedentary, engaging in pursuits such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.



Pre-schoolers (3–5 years)

- Pre-schoolers should spend **at least 180 minutes** in a variety of physical activities, of which **at least 60 minutes** is energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- Pre-schoolers should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g. in a stroller or car seat) or sit for extended periods.
- Sedentary screen time should be **no more than 1 hour in total throughout the 24-hour period**; less is better.
- When pre-schoolers are sedentary, caregivers are encouraged to engage with them through activities such as reading, singing, puzzles and storytelling.

Key Resources

- NSW Health *Munch & Move* program resources available on the Healthy Kids website www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au
- *Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years)* — <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#npa050>
- SunSmart NSW – www.sunsmartnsw.com.au
- Kidsafe – www.kidsafe.com.au

This policy (procedure/guideline) aims to:

1. Promote children’s participation in a range of safe active play learning experiences.
2. Provide a positive active play environment which reflects cultural and family values.
3. Promote lifelong learning and enjoyment of physical activity.
4. Limit time spent engaging in screen time (television, DVDs, computer and other electronic games) and sedentary behaviour whilst at the service.
5. Encourage communication with families about physical activity, gross motor and fundamental movement skills development and limiting screen time and sedentary behaviour.

Our strategies to implementing this policy (procedure/guideline) include:

1. Promote children's participation in a range of safe active play learning experiences

Note: Active play learning experiences include planned play (eg. action games/songs, intentional teaching experiences), spontaneous 'free' play (eg. child initiated, active play in the indoor/outdoor environments; dancing to music), intentional teaching experiences and everyday physical tasks (eg. helping with gardening; setting up experiences; tidying up spaces).

- Provide opportunities for children to be active every day through a balance of planned and spontaneous active play experiences (including everyday physical tasks), in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Plan daily intentional Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) experiences to support children's physical activity and their FMS development. This includes daily floor-based play for babies – tummy time, and the intentional planning of FMS experiences for older toddlers and preschool-aged children that consists of a warm-up, FMS game and a cool-down.
- Foster the development of a range of FMS - including running, galloping, hopping, jumping, leaping, side-sliding, skipping, overarm throwing, catching, striking a stationary ball, kicking, underarm throwing and stationary dribbling.
- Ensure active play experiences are play based, varied, creative, developmentally appropriate and cater to the abilities and interests of each individual child.
- Support educators to provide active play experiences that encourage children to explore, challenge, extend and test their limits.
- Ensure all active play experiences are safe by providing an appropriate environment - ensuring all equipment is developmentally appropriate and well maintained and supervision is constant.
- Encourage children's participation in physical activity of varying intensity (eg. lighter through to vigorous activity).
- Provide space, time and resources for children to revisit and practice FMS and engage in active play.
- Encourage educators to provide opportunities for learning about the importance and benefits of being physically active, and involve children in the planning of active play experiences.
- Encourage educators to actively role model to children appropriate physical activity behaviours.
- Encourage children and educators to consume water before, during and after active play experiences.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity during excursions (eg. walking excursions promoting physical activity and safe active travel).
- Provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood physical activity.

2. Provide a positive active play environment which reflects cultural and family values

- Positively encourage children to participate in a range of active play experiences.
- Provide children with ongoing encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Provide positive instruction, role modelling of the correct FMS and constructive feedback to children to assist them in developing and refining their FMS.

- Plan active play experiences that are inclusive of and reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of our educators, families and community.
- Work in collaboration with families and other professionals to provide active play experiences that are inclusive of all children including those with additional needs.
- Promote physical activity for everyone to participate in a fun experience and not for competition.
- Invite and engage families and the wider community to participate in promoting physical activity with the children.
- Encourage children and families to choose active travel options to and from the service and provide safe storage of active travel equipment while children are in care at the service.
- Encourage children to be understanding and accepting of the different physical skills and abilities of other children.
- Provide families with information and ideas on incorporating physical activity at home, including sharing information about community events that promote children's wellbeing through physical activity.

3. Promote lifelong learning and enjoyment of physical activity

- Provide opportunities and encourage all educators to engage in professional development topics related to promoting physical activity and limiting screen time for example *Munch & Move* training.
- Offer a range of active play learning experiences.
- Encourage children to be as active as possible during daily active play times.
- Encourage all children to participate in active play experiences to the best of their ability.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning about the importance of being physically active and reducing screen time as part of their learning experiences.
- Assist children to develop daily habits, understanding and skills that support health and wellbeing.
- Ensure any fundraising promotes healthy or active lifestyles and advocates for children's wellbeing.

4. Limit time children spend engaging in screen time (television, DVDs, computer and other electronic games) and sedentary behaviour whilst at the service

- Limit the amount of time spent on screens.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
- Discuss with children the role of screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of screen time for both education and recreation.
- Encourage educators to model appropriate screen behaviours to the children.
- Encourage the promotion of productive sedentary experiences for rest and relaxation.
- Ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day.
- Under no circumstances is the screen to be used as a reward or to manage challenging behaviours.
- Ensure that children under two years of age are not provided with screen based activities, such as watching television and DVDs or playing computer games.

5. Encourage communication with families about physical activity, gross motor and fundamental movement skills development and limiting screen time and sedentary behaviour

- Provide a copy of the *Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy* to all families during orientation to the service.
- Request that any details of children's additional needs in relation to physical activity participation be provided to the service.
- Encourage families to share with the service links between cultural backgrounds and physical activity.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information, support and advice on physical activity, gross motor and fundamental movement skills development, everyday physical tasks, active transport and limiting screen time and sedentary behaviour. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, noticeboards, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

Monitoring and Review

- Report on active play/physical activity and screen time goals and achievements in the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) where appropriate, annual reports or management committee meetings.
- Regularly review the *Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy*.
- Provide families with opportunities to contribute to the review of this policy (procedure/guideline).