In 2019 the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) set out the recommended levels of physical activity for 0-5 years:

Infants (less than 1 year):
- Infants should be physically active several times every day in a variety of ways, including interactive floor-based activity, e.g. crawling.
- For infants not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day while awake (and other movements such as reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling themselves independently, or rolling over); more is better.

Toddlers (1-2 years):
- Toddlers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities at any intensity, including active and outdoor play, spread throughout the day; more is better.

Pre-schoolers (3-4 years):
- Pre-schoolers should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) per day in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. More is better; the 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

What is Physical Literacy?
Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that provides children with the movement foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity. Enabling them to be physically literate supports children’s physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and creates healthy, active movers.

How will this framework help you?
This framework has been designed to support all early years settings to consider how best they can create active, healthy environments. This will ensure they develop the physical literacy of all their children providing opportunities to move more and sit less.

What should you do?
Physical literacy is fostered through active play provision and structured physical activity in an appropriate range of age and stage related opportunities. You should consider what those age and stage opportunities look like in your context in order to maximise progress in physical literacy.

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ACTIVE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Creating active opportunities for children starts with the environment you create. Think about creating stimulating spaces that encourage movement and not sitting.

Here are some ideas that make best use of the space, toys, equipment, furnish the room and colours and sounds to ensure children are moving more and sitting less and developing the skills and characteristics required of the EYFS framework.

- Opportunities to be physically active outdoors and indoors are maximised where possible (including for babies and non-walkers)
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.
- Babies engaging frequently in floor based play.
- Babies being able to move freely (stretch, bend, kick legs, fit arms)
- Play with shapes, textures, colours and sounds to support development of senses
- Babies reaching for, swiping at, and grasp and pick up objects
- Supervised water play at bath time.
- Tummy time to encourage babies being played with and development of weight bearing activities (e.g. rolling, pushing up from front lies, sitting, crawling, standing) and to enable them to engage in enjoyable and engaging movements. Provision should be made for the development of balance, travel, manipulative skills, so that variety and complexity of activity can be achieved.

In practice, it is important to plan or construct a structured environment, creative and imaginative activities should be included so that children can find out what their bodies can do.

As they continue to gain physical control children should be assisted to increase their movement vocabulary, extend their movement memory and enrich the quality of their movement.

Some children will have additional physical and/or emotional needs when accessing activity and play opportunities. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of these children and should be supported to become physically literate through a child centred approach.

10-11 MONTHS
Early movement development and physical literacy are based on:
- Tummy time to encourage pushing up from front lie, to assist development of neck, shoulder and core muscle strength, little and often (whilst awake and supervised)
- Babies engaging frequently in floor based play.
- Babies being able to move freely (stretch, bend, kick legs, fit arms)
- Babies being played with and interacting frequently with adults and other children
- Rolling over, sitting and crawling being nurtured for those ready, by providing space, encouragement and assistance
- Play with shapes, textures, colours and sounds to support development of senses
- Babies reaching for, swiping at, and grasp and pick up objects
- Movement stimulated through music, story, songs and nursery rhymes (away, rock and kick)
- Non-restrictive clothing to enable comfortable, free movement
- Supervised water play at bath time.

16-26 MONTHS
To develop balance, travel and manipulative skills encourage:
- Opportunities to be physically active frequently, independently, with other children and adults
- Unstructured play and games to stimulate exploring, balancing, travelling, climbing
- Ways of travelling (marching, toddling, jogging, jumping, stair climbing) up and down
- Activities to stimulate balance (sitting and standing, bending, balance within reaching and kicking distance)
- Movement at different speeds, on different levels and in different ways
- Play with toys and equipment of varying colour, shape, size and weight to develop manipulative ability (grasping, grabbing, squeezing, dropping, placing and picking up)
- Supervised water based play (splashing, wetting face, kicking legs, floating toys)
- Stimulating physical activity through the use of music, story, rhyme and songs.

22-36 MONTHS
Develop increased complexity and challenge through play:
- Increased opportunities to be active independently, with other children and adults
- Unstructured play (active creative and imaginative play, exploring the environment)
- Increase in ways of travelling (marching, tiptoeing, running, jumping, hopping, sliding down slides, climbing up and down steps, stairs, on hands and knees and feet)
- Movement at different speeds, directions and on a variety of levels and surfaces
- Activities supported controlled balance (stillness, reaching, on two feet, on one knee, hand, balance on varied surfaces and levels)
- Wide choice of toys of different shapes, sizes, textures and weights to increase manipulative control (picking up, patting, carrying and placing, rolling, bouncing and retrieving, throwing, chasing and collecting, striking, kicking)
- Adult led water play leading to floating on back and front and underwater
- Physical activity stimulated through use of music, story, rhyme and song

30-50 MONTHS
To enhance exploration, creativity and imagination, provide opportunities for:
- Try new activities, new movements and unfamiliar toys and equipment, alone, with adults and other children, to increase movement vocabulary
- Learn to follow instructions
- Increase in ways of travelling (gallloping, jumping and bending, rolling, climbing)
- Repeat and practice activities, to enhance movement memory
- Manipulate, balance and control objects with hands and feet (picking up and hand to hand, body, rolling, dropping and picking up, body half off ground and retrieving) with a range of objects
- Develop balance and linked movements (on wide and narrower surfaces, lower and higher surfaces, dancing, climbing)
- Increase variety of adult led water based play leading to swimming on back and front and underwater
- Increase variety of actions and sequences of actions, stimulated through music, story and rhyme

ACTIVE CHILDREN

It is vital from birth that all children are provided with the freedom to move and to sit less. Encourage, support and engage children to move more and sit less.

Think about creating stimulating spaces that encourage movement and not sitting. Babies being played with and development of weight bearing activities (e.g. rolling, pushing up from front lying, sitting, crawling, standing) and to enable them to engage in enjoyable and engaging movements.

Child led play is key in the first year and it is vital to move from transition to tying weight bearing activities such as rolling, pushing up from front lying, sitting, crawling, standing and to enable them to engage in enjoyable and engaging movements. Provision should be made for the development of balance, travel, manipulative skills, so that variety and complexity of activity can be achieved.

In practice, it is important to plan or construct a structured environment, creative and imaginative activities should be included so that children can find out what their bodies can do.

As they continue to gain physical control children should be assisted to increase their movement vocabulary, extend their movement memory and enrich the quality of their movement.

Some children will have additional physical and/or emotional needs when accessing activity and play opportunities. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of these children and should be supported to become physically literate through a child centred approach.

Active role models

Adults, peers and siblings all have a part to play in role modelling positive behaviours and encouraging children to move more and sit less. Children connect with adults that join in with playing and activity. They thrive when outdoors and perform better when not sitting for prolonged periods.

There are some fundamental aspects to get right:

- All staff are aware of the Chief Medical Officer’s recommendations for physical activity for 0-5 year olds.
- Adults role modelling moving more and sitting less including during traditionally sedentary times e.g. story time.
- Think about non-verbal and verbal communication and how your clothing promotes or inhibits movement.
- Remember, children will pick up on any negative behaviours or attitudes towards being active from those that influence them negatively.

Here are some specific things a good role model needs to consider:

0-11 MONTHS
- Sensitive and encourage and support children to be physically active through actions, verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.
- Remember to communicate and play at the child’s level which for non-walkers will mean getting down on the floor with them.

8-20 MONTHS
- Listen and respond to children to meet their activity needs. They observe and provide key vocabulary for the movements made and toys used.
- Support is provided for anxious children to enable access to activities in a safe, secure environment.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

16-26 MONTHS
- Enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity and also child and adult led activities.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.
- Remember to communicate and play at the child’s level which for non-walkers will mean getting down on the floor with them.

22-36 MONTHS
- Join in, model active play and dress appropriately for physical activity and enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity.
- Encourage, support and engage children in physical activity through action and verbal and non-verbal communication. They observe and provide key vocabulary for movements made to develop movement vocabulary.
- Physical activities are modelled to help children engage with support provided for anxious children to enable access to activities in a safe, secure environment.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

30-50 MONTHS
- Enable a balance of adult initiated physical activity and child led activities. Adults are enthusiastic and sensitive to the needs of the physical activity needs and preferences of children.
- Encourage, support and engage children in physical activity through action and verbal and non-verbal communication. They observe and provide key vocabulary, ask questions, and respond to children’s answers.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

40-60 MONTHS
- Promote a range of play activities for example: walking, running, skipping, throwing, hopping, jumping, balance, running, skipping, throwing, rolling, striking, kicking, running, skipping, throwing, rolling, striking, kicking.
- Active role play, on floor, on balance bike, to and from school and on a range of other objects and developing imaginative activities.
- Object control and competitive activities (carrying, rolling, pushing, pulling, explaining, exploratory, exploratory, social, and deep play).
- Explore new movements and unfamiliar objects, and developing imaginative activities.
- Repeating sequences and refining skill with a variety of small equipment including bean bags, balloon boxes, hoops, sticks, climbing frames and parachutes.
- Adult led swimming and water management activities.
- Using music, story and rhyme to create complex actions and sequences.