

Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines for the early years (0-4 years) ^[1]

Author: Various

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AVAILABILITY

Access guidelines online ^[2]

Introduction

All types of movement matter, and a balance of moving, sleeping and sitting is required for best health. Even if a child is getting enough physical activity in a day, the health benefits can be reduced by too little sleep, or too much sedentary behaviour—especially if that time is spent in front of screens. Here are some tips:

- For infants, supervised activities could include reaching and grasping and crawling.
- The older children get, the more energetic play they need.
- For toddlers, energetic play could include running, dancing and playing outside.
- For preschoolers, energetic play could include hopping, swimming and bike riding.
- For healthy sleep, have a calming bedtime routine, go to bed and wake up the same time each day, and avoid screens before bed.

Sedentary behaviours are those that involve very little physical movement while children are awake, such as:

- Sitting or reclining for prolonged periods in a stroller, high chair, or car seat
- Sedentary screen time such as watching television or playing with non-active electronic devices including video games, tablets, computers or phones

Although not all sedentary behaviour is harmful—like reading or storytelling with a caregiver—excessive screen time before age five is, as it's linked with language delays, reduced attention and lower school readiness.

Following these guidelines through the early years is associated with:

- Healthy growth
- Better learning and thinking
- Improved motor development
- Higher fitness levels
- Increased quality of life
- Reduced injuries
- Fun!

Related link: Let them play! Toddlers need 3 hours of physical activity per day ^[3]

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: physical activity ^[5]

health and safety ^[6]

quality ^[7]

curricula and pedagogy ^[8]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/17/11/canadian-24-hour-movement-guidelines-early-years-0-4-years>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/17/11/canadian-24-hour-movement-guidelines-early-years-0-4-years> ^[2]

<https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/benefits-and-guidelines/early-years-0-to-4> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/11/let-them-play-toddlers-need-3-hours-physical-activity-day> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/physical-activity> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety> [7]

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