**Infusing Physical Activity throughout the Child Care Day**

Early childhood is traditionally the most active period during one’s lifespan! It is especially important for young children to get plenty of vigorous physical activity during which they may be breathing hard and exhibiting sweating with flushed cheeks. This vigorous physical activity provides healthy exercise for children’s hearts, lungs, and muscles and facilitates the development of their fundamental movement skills. Typical vigorous physical activities young children enjoy are running, jumping, hopping, and dancing. Outdoor play usually provides the opportunity for lots of vigorous physical activity. Please note that children are typically most physically active during the first 15 minutes of outdoor free play. As children become less active, it is an opportune time to gather the children and initiate adult-led physical activities. When leading children in physical activities, avoid elimination games and instead select activities that promote everyone’s participation in the physical activity. On the days when the weather does not permit outdoor play, move furniture as needed to enable children to engage in vigorous physical activity while indoors.

Create learning centers that offer children the opportunity for self-directed physical activities. Include learning center choices such as a suspended covered balloon or ball for tapping and kicking, rolled socks for throwing at a large wall target, and a floor beam for walking. Vary the physical activity options in the learning center to maintain children’s interest.

Include at least two active transitions each day during which children can jump, march, creep, tip toe, walk backwards, or dance their way from one activity to the next to promote their motor skills. Transition time and circle time both present opportunities to move to music, a perennial favorite for infusing physical activity into the child care day.

Below is a sample daily schedule with a total of 120 minutes of physical activity infused throughout the child care day.

Citation:

Craft, D.H. (2018). *Infusing Physical Activity throughout the Child Care Day*. Unpublished document.

Arrival/

Learning Center Time Learning center time along with greetings and routines

Include opportunities for children to participate in self-directed **physical** **activities (15 min.)**

Transition Time/

Breakfast Clean up toys, bathroom break, breakfast if applicable

Include a **physically active** transition such as moving to music to gather children together **(5 min.)**

Circle Time Information sharing and singing songs

Include a song with large body **physical activities** that children can act out **(5 min.)**

Learning Center Time Include opportunities for self-directed **physical** **activities (15 min.)**

Snack Clean up, bathroom break, wash hands, and snack

Story Time Act out a story’s action using large body **physical activities** **(5 min.)**

Outdoor Play Initially encourage **moderate to vigorous** **physical activity** **(15 min.)** during the hour or more of freeplay

Lead at least two structured, adult-led **physical activities** **(20 min.)**

Transition Time/ Lunch Clean up, wash hands, lunch

Include a **physically active** transition such as dancing and then freezing as the music starts and stops to gather children for lunch **(5 min.)**

Nap Early risers engage in quiet activities

Snack Bathroom break, wash hands, and snack

Outdoor Play Again, initially encourage **moderate to vigorous** **physical activity (15 min.)** during the half-hour or more of freeplay3

Lead structured, adult-led **physical activity** **(15 min.)**

Circle Time Closing information sharing, language activity and music activity

Include a song with large body **physical activities** that children can act out **(5 min.)**