



Movement and Exercise Policy

We understand the importance of being active and adopting a healthy lifestyle. It is important that babies and children are offered plenty of opportunities to use and develop their increasing physical skills, in order to grow, develop and learn about the world around them. We believe that it is important that all children learn to use all their muscles in their bodies and that movement is our first language. By using physical actions, we can express emotions, thoughts, feelings and ideas for things we may not have words for.

Babies are born with a desire to move and use their physical skills to connect with the world around them. The term 'movement play' is used to describe the connections between movement, health and well-being. Early movement play is key to establishing children's physical, neurological and emotional well-being. It helps children to build relationships with others, thus supporting their social and emotional learning. Movement play helps to build the neural pathways in the brain, laying the foundations for future learning.

We believe that children are the experts in their own physicality, and so movement play should be child-led, full-bodied and spontaneous. There are five types of movement play:

- Floor play
- Belly crawling
- Crawling
- Push, pull, hang and stretch
- Spin, tip, roll and fall.

The adult should support movement play in a number of ways, including:

- Allowing children to be in control of their own movements, trying not to organise their movements for them (e.g. letting them work out how to climb down from a chair themselves).
- Getting down to the children's level, tune into what they are doing without immediately 'jumping in.'
- Mirroring the children's movements and interacting with them.
- Not using words when the children are involved in movement play. This can distract their thought process and spontaneity.
- Providing simple resources to engage the children (e.g. Blankets, ribbons, streamers).
- Modelling how to use the resources.
- Encouraging and celebrating movement and physical play as much as cognitive learning.
- Offering physical and emotional safety and support when needed.

We aim to ensure the learning environment is set up to allow children to move freely within the space provided, reducing the amount of time the children sit still.

Being active indoors and outdoors is crucial for children's development and well-being. The natural environment invites a wealth of opportunities for children to explore using their senses, as well as practise using their physical skills to make contact with the world around them in different ways. We endeavour to take the children outside to play as much as possible, ensuring they are dressed appropriately for the weather, including protection against the sun. When the weather does not permit the children with long periods of time outdoors, staff will provide opportunities for indoor physical activities, such as treasure hunts and obstacle courses.

Outdoor play areas give children opportunities to play and have fun. They are often one of the few places children can play freely without adult direction. Play areas can also help children to learn



about themselves - their strengths, abilities, achievements and their limitations; and about how to assess risk, problem solve, communicate, collaborate and get along with others.

We appreciate that risk and challenge in play areas must be age and developmentally appropriate for the children who will use them and we support those children that need extra help.