

# Physical Activity Policy

Policy No. 235

## Introduction

This policy explains how PSESD Early Learning Programs ensure that children are provided with ample opportunities to engage in active play that supports learning in all domains throughout the early learning session. Regular physical activity impacts children's health and development and is vital to school readiness. At PSESD we recognize that children come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, traditions and experiences which will influence their attitudes around physical activity and exercise. Children can gain cultural awareness by exchanging games and engaging in a variety of physical activities together. The PSESD Early Learning *Physical Activity Guidance* should be used to further help explain how to implement the following policy.

## Daily Physical Activity

All children enrolled in a PSESD Early Learning Program will be provided with a variety of daily physical activity that is appropriate for their age.

### Babies, 0 – 12 months old

#### Early Head Start (0-3) Center Based

- Floor Time: - Short intervals at least four times each day while they are awake and supervised by an adult.
- Limit time infants spend in seats, swings, exersaucers/exercisers, and other containers to 15 minutes a day (strollers for outdoor time are excluded).
- Outdoor Time: All infants are provided daily outdoor time.

#### Early Head Start (0-3) Home Visits

- On Family Visit Plan and Summary Form include opportunities for parents to engage with their children in supporting movement and physical development.
- Encourage activities between parents/caregivers and babies/toddlers that support active play, free movement and exploration in accordance with curriculum.

#### Early Head Start (0-3) Play Groups

- The environment must be arranged to foster floor time (babies) and gross motor movement (toddlers).
- The Curriculum Planning for Playgroups form includes time and ideas for parent and child involvement in movement and play.

### Toddlers, 1-3 years old

- Total active play time (includes indoor, outdoor, moderate to vigorous):
  - 6 - 7 hour programs: 90 minutes
  - 10 + hour programs: 120 minutes
- Toddlers should not be expected to remain seated for more than 15 minutes at a time except during mealtime.
- Teachers plan, lead and participate in active play games and activities 2 or more times per day.
- \* Outdoor Play: 20 – 40 minutes Part Day programs (2.5 – 3.5 hr); 45 - 60 minutes Full Day programs over 2 times/day; except during inclement weather.

### Preschoolers 3 -5 years old

- Total active play time (includes indoor, outdoor, moderate to vigorous):

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- 2.5 – 3 hour programs: 30 minutes
- 3.5 – 4 hour programs: 45 to 60 minutes
- 6 - 7 hour programs: 90 minutes
- 10 + hour programs: 120 minutes
- Preschoolers should not be expected to remain seated for more than 20 minutes at a time except during mealtime.
- Teachers plan, lead and participate in active play (e.g. games and activities) 2 or more times per day.
- \* Outdoor Play: At least 20 – 40 minutes Part Day programs (2.5 – 3.5 hr); 40 minutes for FD programs (6 hours), 60 minutes Extended Full Day programs (10 + hour) over 2 time /day; except during inclement weather.

### Physical Activity Program Practices

- Removal from or elimination of physical activity is never used as a punishment. Teachers rarely remove children from active play as a strategy to manage challenging behavior.
- Computer time for children should be limited to one 15 minute session per day for educational purposes.
- Screen time used to support learning by teaching staff should be limited to a half hour a week (should be educational or encourage physical activity).
- Program practices are inclusive and offer access for children with disabilities to participate in physical activities with nondisabled peers.
- Potential barriers to physical activity participation shall be addressed on individual, classroom, and site level.
  - Staff will work with families to create individual child activity plans when necessary.
  - Children should play outdoors daily, except in the case of inclement weather\*.
  - Creating a gross motor space or room is advantageous. It is not a substitute for outdoor play.
  - Rearrange the indoor space to provide for gross motor movement when outdoor play is not possible.

\*When weather, air quality and environmental conditions pose a significant health or safety risk as identified by the National Weather Service (wind chill factor at or below minus 15 F or temperature above 90 F.)

### Related Documents:

Caring for our Children, Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2013, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Learning, Available at [cfoc.nrckids.org](http://cfoc.nrckids.org)

NAP SACC – Self Assessment Instrument, Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2014, Available at [www.gonapsacc.org](http://www.gonapsacc.org)

National Weather Service <http://www.weather.gov>

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Head Start Performance Standards: TBD