

Early Childhood Education: Physical Development

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Learning Goals

- Explain the major parts of physical development
- Explain activities that promote physical development

Physical Development in ECE

- Children learn best with healthy bodies and minds
- Parts of physical development:
 - **Physical Growth**
 - Nutrition
 - Health care
 - Hygiene
 - Safety
 - **Gross motor skills:** Movement
 - **Fine motor skills:** Coordination of small muscle movements
 - Necessary for activities such as writing, eating, manipulating small objects

ECE Classroom Environments

- Research provides evidence that young children learn best in an environment that allows them to explore, discover, and play
- Play should last at least 30 to 60 minutes both indoors and outdoors
 - Large blocks of time dedicated to play allow children to get involved in more complex and productive activities
- Play enhances every part of development, particularly physical development

Free Play and Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills	Fine Motor Skills	Perceptual-Motor Skills
Climbing	Water Play	Musical instruments
Digging	Blocks	Dancing
Balls	Writing materials	
Running and Jumping	Sand Play	

Organized Outdoor Play for Physical Development

- Throwing and catching games
- Kicking games
- Balancing tasks
- Dancing activities
- Sports activities
- Organized games

Station Activities for Physical Development

- **Station activities:** Self-challenging activities that promote physical activity
 - Children rotate through stations
 - Examples
 - Toss a ball
 - Run to touch a distant marker and return
 - Jump
 - Dance
 - Parachute
 - Marching to a drum
 - Move like an animal

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Sand Play

- Fill a large container or hole with sand
 - Substitute rice, beans, cornmeal
- Allow the children to play
 - Dig, build, pour
 - Make patterns with sticks and combs
 - Build castles
- Sand play fosters
 - **Physical Development:** Gross and fine motor skills
 - **Social Development:** Working with other children to solve problems
 - **Cognitive Development**
 - Mathematics with measuring containers
 - Science with observation techniques
 - Art through making objects and patterns

Water Play

- Types of Play:
 - Pour water into and out of different size cups
 - Drop objects into water
 - Imagination with toys
- Water play fosters:
 - Fine motor skills
 - Observation skills
 - Creativity
 - Mathematics

Playing with Blocks

- Create blocks of various sizes (and colors)
- Types of Play
 - Stacking blocks
 - Creating designs
 - Suggest imaginary scenarios
- Playing with blocks fosters
 - **Physical Development:** Fine motor coordination, visual perception, spatial orientation
 - Social Development
 - Creativity
- Encourage creative play by suggesting imaginary activities: Go to hospital, go to school, house in village

Parents and Physical Development

- Parent education about physical development should include:
 - Understanding physical growth
 - Nutrition, Safety, Hygiene, Health Care
 - Importance of active play