



Early Learning and School Readiness: Physical Development Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS);
Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families to ensure that their children are healthy, safe, and engaged in daily physical movement. This Physical Development Tip Sheet corresponds to page 26 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- What games does your child play inside and outside the home?
- What activities do you notice that strengthen your child's hand and finger muscles?
- In what ways do you model good physical well-being for your children (e.g., talking about or eating vegetables)?



Cultural Considerations:

- Some refugee families may need help connecting to public recreation facilities in the U.S.
- If families are unfamiliar with playgrounds, they may not know how to monitor children using playground equipment.
- Small and large motor skills may be new concepts for some refugee parents. These may be skills that previously developed as a normal part of daily activity, but more sedentary lifestyles in the U.S. may affect and limit these skills and development.
- Children confined to apartments in cold climates may have less opportunity to develop large motor skills. Families from warmer climates may need help adjusting to colder climates (e.g., knowing how to dress children in cold weather and when it is safe to take children outside; accessing where children can play indoors during very cold months).

Remember to Mention:

- Physical development refers to large and small muscles (gross motor and fine motor skills), balance, coordination, and health (e.g., hygiene, sleep, nutrition, and maintaining a healthy weight).
- Gross and fine motor skills support all areas of a child's learning and development and help with school readiness.
- Daily physical activity (e.g., exercise) is important for muscle growth, weight maintenance, and the immune system. Good physical habits lay the foundation for lifelong, healthy living.
- In an 8-hour day, toddlers should engage in moderate active activity for 60 – 90 minutes while preschoolers should engage for 90 – 120 minutes.
- Families and other caring adults can be models to support children's healthy lifestyles, which include: healthy and nutritious meals, hygiene, regular sleep routines, safety practices, and daily movement.



Early Learning and School Readiness: Physical Development

Tip Sheet (cont'd)

Remember to Mention:

- Adults can observe how children approach and respond to physical challenges and offer them assistance and encouragement to persist.
- Adults can make physical activity appealing by providing a wide variety of games and everyday materials that children can use individually or in groups. (e.g., going on neighborhood walks, using rattles,

teething rings, or balls of various sizes; painting with fingers or brushes; drawing in the sand; using crayons, markers, and pencils; and playing with wheeled toys, climbers, cardboard boxes, etc.).



Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspss/1304>

- 45 CFR 1304.21 (a)(1)(i)(iii)
- 45 CFR 1304.21 (a)(5)(i)(ii)(iii)
- 45 CFR 1304.21 (a)(6)
- 45 CFR 1304.40 (b)(1)(iii)
- 45 CFR 1304.40 (b)(3)(i)(ii)

Resources on ECLKC:

Early Head Start National Resource Center

- **Early Head Start National Resource Center. 2012. "School Readiness Goals for Infants and Toddlers in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: Examples from the Early Head Start National Resource Center." Early Head Start National Resource Center.** [http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early Head Start/early-learning/curriculum/school-readiness-goals-infants-toddlers.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/early-learning/curriculum/school-readiness-goals-infants-toddlers.pdf)

National Center on Health

- **Growing Healthy Flipchart.** http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/healthy-active-living/HAL_Resources/NCHEnglishFlipChartF011514_7-7final508.pdf
- **Health Literacy & Family Engagement - Family Education Resources.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/health-literacy-family-engagement/health-literacy-and-family-engagement.html>
- **Parent Tip Sheets and Parent Cards: Welcome to Group Care.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/health-literacy-family-engagement/family-education/tip-sheets-cards.html>
- **Physical Health Tab.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/physical-health>

National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

- **Physical Health and Development.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/curricula/PDandH.html>

