

Implementing Physical Activities with Children in Mixed-Age Groups

Brianna Holmes: Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. Just wanted to welcome you to the Implementing Physical Activities with Children in Mixed-Age Groups webinar. My name is Brianna Holmes. And I am the technical trainer with the National Center for Early Childhood Health and Wellness. I am located in Washington, DC. So, I am very excited to be with everyone, just to kind of talk about different activities, and hopefully provide information, tips, and strategies for you as you work with children in mixed-age groups.

Just a few housekeeping items. Please make sure your phone is on mute for any outside noise. And then, we do -- We want the presentation to be interactive. So, when there are some poll questions that I encourage you to participate in throughout the webinar, and just be able to provide your information. So, again, thank you for joining us, and I hope you enjoy the presentation. So, today, this webinar. We want to look at describing the best practices for physical activity for children birth to 5. One of the things that we really want you to take away from the webinar is understanding that physical activities can be implemented in groups of children of all ages. Sometimes it may seem a little bit challenging. But hopefully, by the end of the webinar, you will feel confident when you are working with the children.

So, let's think about what is physical activity. Physical activity is any level of movement in a variety of settings. So, when we're thinking about it, one key thing to notice is that physical activity does not have to occur during a certain time that's blocked off throughout the day. We want to make sure that we're supporting children's physical development by providing them continuous movement opportunities. But they're not just limited to scheduled times. When you look at the movement activities, think about how the activities provided on the screen can be done by the child individually, as well as with you, the provider. So, early childhood is such a critical time to shape and build healthy habits in children. In the beginning, when children learn these habits, they are easier to maintain, as opposed to making changes at an older age. Think about the children in your program. What are some healthy habits you've observed based on the different age groups? By observing the children, you are able to get an idea of what habits you can work on and the best way to approach them and support them.

So, why is it -- Why is physical activity important for our children? When a child is born, their innate need to interact with their environment. These interactions lead to learning and knowledge. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers interact with their environment through play. Play usually enhances attention, memory, self-regulation, and overall academic achievement throughout childhood. So, in short, physical play is necessary for learning. Self-regulatory skills develop rapidly between the ages of two and five years. As children enter preschool settings, programs that target self-regulation skills have also been found to lead better health outcomes. This would include weight loss maintenance, and healthier food choices among children.

So, when we're thinking about how the body and brain works together, we understand that they interpret the world around us. And the preschool years represent a period of rapid growth and development in both cognitive and motor skills. A recent systematic review found a weak to strong relationship between processes associated with the self-regulation and motor skills in pediatric populations, also concluded that preschoolers' motor and cognitive skills are related in the early learning and development.

So, compared to a 30-minute sedentary activity, an acute 30-minute movement and physical activity-based intervention resulted in preschoolers demonstrating better sustained attention. Physical activity begins prior to birth. So, a traditional view has been that early infant movements is primarily reflexive, involuntary, and relatively unrelated to specific abilities related in life. Now, new research does challenge this notion.

So, it basically states that from the first minutes after birth, children engage in significant motor activities that impact later development. So, we've seen a change from previous research, the traditional view up

until now. American preschoolers may be more sedentary than in past decades. Even when the children have time to play outdoors, research shows that they do not engage in active play. In study, researchers found that the children enrolled in urban preschoolers engaged in sedentary behavior on the playground. Almost 90 percent of the time, children were sedentary.

It has become evident that many young children do not participate in sufficient physical activity to remain healthy. And just under half of children age 2 to 6 years achieve 60 minutes per day in physical activity. Given that this is the minimum recommendation in this age range, it's still a serious concern.

Focusing on physical activity promotion in this age range is important as physical activity behaviors established during early childhood may track into later childhood and adolescence. So, the question to think about is why. Why are the children engaged in sedentary behavior when they have prime opportunities to move around freely? As child care providers, it is important that we are promoting these movement activities. When children move, it helps them get their energy out. It's a break from their environments, and a place to just have fun and move around. Children look to you for guidance in what to do, and it's our job to support them while meeting their needs. Many of you working with infants may find it a little challenging to provide them with the recommended time for engaging in physical activity.

Holding infants is probably something that many of us love to do. We enjoy the bond and the trust that it builds in order to effectively provide care for them. But, we want to make sure that we're supporting their physical development, developmental needs. Infants birth to 12 months should engage in tummy time for three to five minutes.

In the beginning and with younger children, this may look a little strange, as you may even be uncomfortable because it looks a little odd. But don't worry. It is good for them. Tummy time challenges them to use their muscles to raise their head, move their feet and arms, push themselves up, and eventually crawl. Additionally, we want to leave infants in restricting equipment to no longer than 15 minutes at a time. This can also be challenging. If you are providing care to children of multiple ages at one time, using this equipment may be helpful as you assist the other children. And understand, using them appropriately is okay. But leaving them in the equipment for long periods of time can restrict their movements, ultimately impacting their development. Now as we know, toddlers are in the stage of moving and exploring. Many of them are just becoming aware of different things, and ways to get them.

So, we want to use their desires to our advantage. We want to keep them moving. Encouraging daily active play should be for 60 to 90 minutes and provided through structured and unstructured play. Have fun with the children. Get them moving and begin teaching them new skills that they can use when moving their bodies. Now as children grow into preschoolers, it is very important to keep them active. Plus, it seems that their energy level increases out of nowhere. Providing movement activities to 120 minutes daily will help support and regulate their energy level. So, when providing movement opportunities, make equipment visible and accessible to children so that they can learn to play with it when they would like. Creating a physical activity learning center is a great way to incorporate physical activity into your child care setting. Remember a physical activity learning center does not just have to include balls but be creative. Look For materials that you already have, and that can be used indoors and outdoors. Also, provide and encourage families to introduce moderate to vigorous play opportunities with their children.

When we think to moderate to vigorous play, these opportunities are when children have breathless play. For example, racing from one end of the open field to another. We want to get the children breathing, breathing and moving. So, there are many benefits of physical activity. We want to encourage physical activity to prevent weight, excessive weight gain and obesity. We talked about promoting young children's motor development, and we want to improve fitness and cardiovascular health. Healthy b o n e

development and improved sleep are probably the best thing. Improved sleep also helps during nap time. Improved moods and sense of well-being, and tummy time helps to prepare infants to crawl.

So, there are types of physical activity in group care settings. We have the structured or teacher-led activities. And then, we have the unstructured, child-led activities. It is important to make sure that we are balancing between child-led and teacher-led activities. We want to model appropriate movement and activities, but we also want to allow time for the children to move on their own. So, when we think about some structured activities, we look at dance experience. movement games, sports, integrating things into the curriculum.

So, during story time. Having the children act out different activities, or different characters in the story. And then, the child-led can be opportunities when they are outside, or just free play activities when they are indoors. When you think of infants, think of how we can support them crawling, walking for toddlers, running, jumping, rolling. Just trying to allow those children to explore their body and movement opportunities on their own. So, we have a poll question. What are some of the barriers to integrating movement into the learning environment? As we move to integrating movement in the learning environment, I want you to really think about a common barrier that you have observed. And I want you to think about what are some other challenges that you have seen. If you don't think about your barrier, please feel free.

We encourage you to feel free to put it in the -- to select the activity or the common barrier that shows up on the screen. So, I'm going to give everybody a couple of minutes to respond. And I see that there are a lot of responses, so I am excited. And then, we will share the results and go forward. [Silence] Alright. So, I'm going to close the poll. I think we have a lot. Even though, I think it's still going. I'm going to close the poll so we can see some of the results. And the most common result as we can see is time. One of the barriers that families, that families are facing is time. Because we think about all the different schedules. We have families that are dealing with work. They have all their children, and then, trying to take care of the household. So, these are some common barriers.

And I think it's very important that as you are working with children, you also continue to think of these things when you're working with families, as well. Resources are another way that families need some extra support, as well as ideas for activities. Well, what can we do? And it takes us as early childhood providers. We are a resource. So, thinking of things that we can do to support them is very important, as well as providing them different resources and information based on our knowledge. So, thank you, everybody, for participating in this poll. So, now, while we're working with children in mixed-age groups, it's important to think about all the factors that influence the physical activity. When you're grouping children, think about the physical environment. So, what does your environment, your physical environment look like? Are there areas for children to engage in active play? A lot of time in centers we see exploratory or discovery centers that create the physical environment.

So, you have more of an open space and different places for children to play. But in family child care, it might look a little bit different. It might be a larger area for physical opportunity. And that's fine. When you're setting up your child care area, think about creating a space that can support active movement. In some areas, you might have challenges do to size, and this can be a little bit challenging when you're thinking about working with children.

If you have infants in preschoolers in the same room for the family child care providers. How can you allow for movement without anyone getting hurt? So, it is okay to create separate spaces for the different aged children. Sometimes we want to create a special, a separate place for the infants to allow them to have their tummy time without having to worry about the toddlers, or the preschool children, or any running over each other, or having any incidents occurring with the other children. Thinking about equipment.

What equipment do you have? Are these equipment appropriate for all ages of the children that you serve? As your children change, your equipment should change. So, think about the children you're providing care for. And include equipment and materials that are appropriate for them. If you previously had infant, toddler, and preschool children in your care, and then at the beginning of the new school year, you only have toddlers and preschoolers, it is okay to put infant equipment away and have more room for the older more active children. So, you want to make sure that your monitoring and swapping out the different equipment for their children, because you do want to meet the needs for all children.

Thinking about the age range and skill level. As mentioned before, think about the children in your care. What are the skills they possess? And are they appropriate for their age? Think about what you can do to support these skills. Staff/child ratio. So, this can be a challenge for many reasons. We may believe we have more children and not enough support for core staff. And this is probably very accurate. So, think about how you can utilize the children that you have. Can some of the older children help to set up activities, and help younger children learn new activities? Sometimes our bigger, our biggest helper may be in the smallest size.

And supervision. This is very important, because we do want to make sure that we're ensuring the safety and well-being of the children. So, what are some ways that you can appropriately group children while also maintaining appropriate supervision? And as we just mentioned, older children love to take the lead on things and be considered helpers. So, use these skills and desires. Allow them to help others, which will also help them to -- which will also help you to control and manage the supervision of the children. So, benefits of mixed-age groups for younger children. Mixing children allows younger children an opportunity to engage in and learn from activities that they may be couldn't do alone, or with children of the same age. Younger children, especially those of older siblings or other family members, look up to these older children. They want to engage in the same activities and learn the same thing that they're learning. So, they innately learn new and appropriate behaviors.

They receive a lot more emotional support from the older children. And then, they like to watch those around them. When they see the other children engaging activities, then they have more of a desire to try new things. They're more willing to because they see the different things that are available, and they want to engage in the activities with them. Now, looking at the benefits of mixed-age groups for older children. So, when older children are in mixed-age groups they are more likely lead other children. They like to become those examples, those role models, and help the children see the appropriate behaviors. They have a stronger understanding of different concepts. Become more creative.

So, sometimes in -- It's interesting. Because we hear sometimes parents are little hesitant about mixing an older child with younger children in the classroom. But it is important to help them see the value in it. Inform them that there are some skills that they learn that they may not learn while working with just their -- playing with just their peers. So, we want the older children to learn by teaching. And it's very effective. The children love to teach younger children. And they also learn the skills because they want to be able to show them. Core strategies for, to engage mixed-age groups. Now, these -- We want to make sure that we are providing the children a physical activity that involves older children helping younger children. This could be dribbling a ball, throwing a ball through a hoop. And as we just kind of discussed, children love -- older children love to support and show younger children what to do. So, we want to make sure that the activities are promoting modeling. Some of the activities listed on the slide are great ways to engage all children. You can start with the older children, giving directions, modeling the activity, then encouraging all children to participate. And as you conduct these activities, don't forget about your participation. You can help the younger children do the activity, and even the infants. So, make sure that you're supporting the children, but as well as getting engaged with them. The next couple of slides provides activities that you can do with children of each age group.

As you are looking at the activity, think about what adaptations you can make to include the other age group. So, for example, one of the activities listed is the texture crawl. This texture crawl can be used for all children. Toddlers and preschoolers love to feel different textures and feel different types of materials. So, if you're doing this activity, with preschoolers, try timing them to see how fast they can get through each area. You can even encourage them to do a special movement when they touch a certain material or texture. For example, if they touch scarves, they must twirl around in a circle before they move on to the next material. Having children also wait their turn promote self-regulation. While the children are waiting have them cheer and encourage the other children to move across the materials. That allows the children to feel more encouraged to move through for those children who may be hesitant. But it also gives those children who are waiting their turn an opportunity to still engage.

So, with some activities for the toddlers, we know that toddlers are in the exploratory phase where they are learning their body and how to move. These activities focus on supporting toddler development. But they can be adapted to include all children. Follow the leader is a great opportunity for the older children to leave, and even have infants do some movements with your support. Beanbag toss is another activity all of the children can do.

Have toddlers practice tossing the beanbag to have them work on their arm muscles, and even encourage them to identify different colors of the beanbag their throwing, including preschoolers is having them throw into a specific object. Maybe you have a basket that you want them to try to toss it into. That helps them with more of their skills, but it still allows them to participate with the toddler. And as we mentioned, all of these activities can engage all children. Although they are separated on the slides by specific ages, we wanted to get you thinking about how each activity benefits the specific age groups. Engaging multiple developmental levels in one activity. When you are engaging children in an activity, think about what you could do to support them, whether it is indoors or outdoors.

When we think about scaffolding, we think of the ability to push children to reach a certain developmental level, or accomplish a specific skill. We want to encourage physical development without pushing the children too far, where they can lose confidence in themselves for not accomplishing that task or activity successfully. Pushing children through cheering from the other children is a great way to encourage them to complete an activity. Children love to hear praise and encouragement from you as well as the other children that they are playing with. Supporting child-initiated activities are the best way children can learn. They problem solve and learn to identify their own bodies and ways to use them.

So, providing them with an activity to do on their own can also give you a break from leading the activity all the time. Make the best of technology. Now in this era, we see technology everywhere. A lot of children are using iPads, iPhones, computers. So, when we say make the best of technology, we want you to use it when it's needed. You know, put on a CD with music and allow the children to move arou -- move around. So, technology can be used in ways to support and encourage physical develop -- physical activity and movement. But we just want to make sure that we're not over utilizing, and really making sure it's for educational purposes. So, adding physical activity to your day. One key thing to adding physical activity is having a backup plan. In child care, no day is the same, and although you may want to do one activity, you should be flexible enough to prepare and adjust to a new one if needed. Make sure your activities are being implemented indoors and outdoors.

Part of the best practices we recommend is for children to engage in physical activity indoors and outdoors throughout the day. These breaks are good for children, and they provide a change of scenery. Sometimes the children just want to get out and see something different. Also, have a visible schedule. The schedule is always helpful with classroom management. Older children are able to see and identify the change of time and activities. And even for toddlers, you can add pictures for them to learn and understand the different routines.

Use movement as method of learning. As we mentioned before, movement during circle or story time is an opportunity for children to use their imagination and act out what they know and have learned. And encourage parent and family involvement as much as possible. We want families to understand the value of physical activity and different things that they can do with their child. So, some of the activities listed are some activities you can share with families, and as well as do within your classroom. So, with inclusion and physical activity, you want to make sure that you're thinking about how physical activities can be flexible and adaptive to include all children.

I really want to stress how important it is, because I want you to think about the children that you provide care for and what their needs are, and really want to make sure that we are being sensitive to the needs of the child. So when we think about some adaptations, we think about frequent visual or verbal cues; smaller, more simple instructions; partner children with a friend; having routines; and then providing any adapt -- adaptive equipment if needed. Transitions. Transition can help meet the recommended time for teacher-led active play.

A lot of times we think of transitions of, okay, we're going to move one child to the bathroom. Or we're going to move all the children to the bathroom, and they have to wait their turn while the other children are using the bathroom. So, how can you make this fun? How can you have the children engage in different activities? Have them move. Ask each child to give an example of a healthy food, and make a move for it. This way they can engage in activities and moving, while they're waiting for the children, other children to use the bathroom. But they also are not even realizing they're waiting. Also, provide simple instruction. It sounds hard, sometimes. It sounds very simple for us, but we want to make sure that we are providing very simple instructions for the children. Because a lot of times when we think about it, children -- you may give two different instructions. But sometimes children only hear one step.

Another idea is to use an activity ring. So, create an activity ring with different activities on it that the children can pick a transition activity. So, you can even make that as a helper for the classroom, or a job title. You have somebody who chooses the activity. When they choose the activity, then all the children can participate. But it allows the children to be excited and to be encouraged to do an activity because they get an opportunity to actually select the activity. And of course, model the activity before it begins. We want to make sure that the children are doing the activity appropriately. But we also want to make sure that they're seeing the benefit of it and they understand what they are doing.

So, different obstacles and challenges that some of you may face. In the earlier poll, we talked some barriers to integrate physical activity into the day. And one challenge included -- One challenge can include the size of your child care area. It's important that you use the equipment and materials that you already have to avoid creating extra space. So, for child care centers, you can use -- or even homes -- you can use hallways for activities and think about what you have in your area. Many of you may have tables or chairs. So, have children pretend it's a mountain, that they can march around, or a bridge that they have to climb under. Or even a maze that they have to move through. Don't stress about how you can add space. But think about the space that you already have. Children love to use their imaginations, so be creative. So, some challenges that you may face is modifying activities. Here are some more examples that can be done with children. But the activities don't have to look the same.

So, we just want to get children moving and doing similar activities. But because they're different age groups, and they are all at different developmental levels, and they have those different skill levels, we want to make sure that we're not making them do the same thing, to look the same way. So, for infants and toddlers, we want to make sure that we're providing an open, safe play surface for babies to move around freely. Putting age-appropriate materials on a blanket to encourage movement. And that goes back to our tummy time for three to five minutes a day or have three to five-minute intervals. Hold the baby while you sing and dance to a beat. Music is your best friend. Play music, and every child wants to

get up and get moving. And babies love it, too. Use it as an opportunity to move their arms, move their legs, and have them move to the beat. Another obstacle or challenge that you can think of in order to engage children in physical activities. Thinking about the age and skill level.

So, with preschoolers, it's important to assign children to younger buddies who they can help with movement. Engaging activities should include all children. But the type of activity should be developmentally appropriate. So, think about and have a sense of where each child is developmentally, and then this will allow you to choose the appropriate activities. Of course, we would like all children to participate. So, we want them to enjoy but not lose interest. Having the children and working with the children to have them, to help set up a safe indoor or outdoor obstacle course for younger children. Again, we keep reiterating, we want older children love to be helpful. So, help them to create these activities for everyone to participate in. And then, when they're even doing an activity, challenge them to keep moving longer. This could include challenging them to run a race, but they have to beat a certain time. Or having them to hop on their foot longer than another child's -- a younger-aged child may hop on their foot.

And then, have them demonstrate their physical skills to younger children. You can even have children participate in a relay race. But instead of dividing up the children in teams, you can have all ages on the same team. And then, when they're racing, you have -- you call out what each child has to do based on their skill level. You can have preschool children skip while toddlers practice running. This is a way each child is participating and developing skills that are age appropriate. And when you're doing assessments or observing children, this is a great way to see where the children are in meeting their developmental needs and their skills.

This resource is the Nemours Best Practices for Physical Activity guide. This guide, this guide is a great resource that provides a lot of information on why physical activity is important, practical advice for intentional planning of physical activity. Recommendations by age group. Practical ways to support recommendations. It has sample policies for those of you who would like to develop different policies in your program. It has tip sheets for families that you can share, and even use in a way to include them in the different activities that you're doing. And then, it also has a list of tools for the classroom.

So, some different tools that you can use to continue to make sure that you're implementing physical activities in the class. Alright. We're at our next poll. So, what is the most common barrier to integrating movement into the learning environment? We have space, time, lack of activities, class size, or other. So, I'm going to ask everybody to click on the activity that they feel is the most common barrier that they find. And we will look at the results when we get them in. Alright, we have them rolling in. So, I'm going to get everybody just a couple more seconds to submit their responses. Alright. I'm going to close the poll so we can look at the results. Space. [Laughter] I think this is a challenging one. How can we use space?

And I think, you know we discussed it in the previous slide. But really knowing how to utilize the space that already exist. Other ways that you can put different materials away, or use, or have storage areas to remove some items to allow more space. Or really use the space that you have and be creative. Thinking about those things. As I mentioned with the table and chairs. We don't want you to move the tables and chairs all the time. But how can you use those tables and chairs to create a fun interactive environment. We also see class size, which is another challenging thing. Class size, because a lot of times there are a certain number of teachers that are required to be in the classroom with the children.

So, trying to manage this can be a little bit challenging. One good way to utilize, to be able to manage this is maybe separating the children into different groups, and having different groups do different activities. That way, it may not seem so overwhelming whereas all the children are doing one thing at a time, but every group will have an opportunity to participate in an activity. Time is also another thing, where we also want to mention that integrating movements does not have to just be a scheduled time frame. A lot

of items when our schedule as child care providers, we have an outdoor place, slot. So, let's say we have outdoor play from 11–11:30. But remember, movement does not have to be only from 11–11:30.

So, think about other ways that you can incorporate it throughout the day, whether it's during story time, or circle time, whether it's during free play opportunities, encouraging different movement through free play and exploratory centers. So, when we're thinking about time, just think about how little things, those transition activities. Those are opportunities to get children moving, and they still do count as meeting those best practice recommendations. Alright. Now. For this next

question: how will you engage staff or your caregivers about implementing physical activity with mixed-age groups? So, how would you approach the topic in the staff development? Whether it's a staff development meeting, or things like that. So, if you could provide some answers in the chat box. I would love to see some of your responses, and I'm going to share them with everyone, once we kind of, I get some things going. And thinking about, promote, approaching the topic in staff development, it can be challenging just because there may be a lack of knowledge about the different physical activities, and being comfortable.

A lot of times, teachers may not feel comfortable in implementing an activity, where they may not be able to -- they do not have the knowledge to implement the activity. One good recommendation I see on here is identifying an ambassador for the school, for each classroom. Having somebody be able to lead. That's a great way to have the staff get engaged, but to also teach the other staff. Sometimes, we really want to make sure that we're connecting and we're communicating all staff members so that they have an opportunity to find out what each other learned. You could do a staff challenge, where the staff are required to come up with an activity and share with the rest of the other staff members in the center. You could also have it where during a staff meeting -- if you do staff meetings. Have -- There are times throughout the staff meeting where you have physical activity breaks. And you can choose a staff member to lead the physical activity break.

So, that's really helpful because it gets all the staff moving, and it helps increase the staff wellness. But it also allows them to show the different activities that they learned and their comfortable with to share with everyone else. So, I'm looking at some of the other chat, and I apologize I I don't get to everybody's, because there are a lot of wonderful responses. Couple of them that I do see is discussing the benefits of physical activity, which is always a great thing to do. And then doing icebreakers at physical activity time. That's awesome.

And, you know, as I mentioned, using those times to be able to help staff learn is by what they see, and learning from their peers is a great way for them to approach the topic and get more information and feel comfortable. Another one was at staff meetings to create long lists of short transition activities with the activity ring. We kind of mentioned this before, which is great for staff, because they don't have to really think and sit down and say, "Okay. What can I do during this transition?" They have a quick activity ring that has quick things that they can do, that they don't have to take time to think about.

Because, sometimes it is challenging when you have children moving around, and you have a lot of things going on, and you're trying to figure out what can you do. But just taking that quick activity that's available on the ring is very helpful. So, awesome. Like I said, I do apologize. I couldn't get everybody's response in. But I do appreciate all the feedback for it. So, hopefully I was able to answer some of your questions, and some of your responses. So, adult engagement is critical. We want to make sure that we are engaging all adults and helping them to achieve motor intensity. We want to make sure that you're active, much as you are outside, much as you are indoors. So, we want to make sure that you're teaching skills and guiding play. One important role is to identify children who are sedentary, and encourage them to move more.

What could you do? Providing new equipment, suggesting games, and asking their peers to invite inquiring children to play are all important strategies to increase active play.

The modeling of motor behaviors by caring and encouraging appears to be one of the most effective ways to inspire practice and learning of the basic motor behavior. So, you're more complex movements, however, may require direct guidance and instruction, particularly for those children with disabilities. As with all learning, a blend of instruction, indirect guidance, modeling, and child center play appear to be optimal. Alright. And I think we talked about this, but what are the barriers families in your community in or program face? Family and parent engagement is so critical in getting children moving. So, wanted to kind of get feedback to see what are some barriers that your families are facing. You can type in the responses. I see a couple coming through. A lot of them. Time. Yes. And we talked about this.

Absolutely. A big one. Money or lack of resources. We really want to make sure that we are encouraging the parents and families to understand that there are activities that they can do at little to no cost. Time, again, I see is a very common theme. And resources. So, figuring out how we can support these parents in doing activities to engage the children, but on a smaller scale. And we're going to talk about that in the next couple of slides. So, some tips for the families. What can families do to engage their children?

This is very -- a lot of these activities are very simple. Time is very hard for families to provide, to do structured, implemented activities. So, having a park and walk. When children and their families are going to the grocery store, encourage them just to park a little further from the store entry than they normally would. This just gets them moving. It has them walking a little bit more, getting some exercise, and then children can march, or hop, or skip to make it a little more fun. Example: moving and grooving in the kitchen. So, while cooking, play fun music. Ask the children to make up dances for different foods that the families are cooking. So, wiggling like pasta, or jumping like jumping beans. This is a great way for children to get interactive. But they are also able to enjoy and spend time with the families. A great way also to inform the families of different activities, is that you can hand them a quick index card.

So, in the evening, a lot of times, it's challenging, because you have multiple families and parents coming in. A lot of times, it's hard to speak to everybody as much as we want to. So, maybe providing an index card with an activity, and quick instruction, and have it as a weekly challenge that families can do at no costs. So, some of these tips on here are great ways, things to put on your index cards for the families to use, and have them challenged to see if they can do that at home. So, engaging families. We want to make sure that we're partnering with the families to support our children's health and development. Share resources like Family Tip Sheets.

Even these things, as I mentioned with the index cards, you can put different resources on there, or tips for them. So, it's just some quick things that you can provide to them. If you do email blasts with your program and your families, send out a quick email tip for the day. If you do text messages, send out a quick tip through those types of avenues. But be creative. It doesn't always sometimes, that handing the parents and families paper may not be as effective, because a lot of times, time wise, they may not have time to sit there and read through the whole paper. So, think of quick things you can provide them to get, to share the information, but to also get feedback from them, and have them engage their children. Ask families for ideas.

That's probably the best thing that we can do, is ask families what it is that they're doing, what do they like to do, and what are some suggestions that they have. Because they know their children. They know what their children like, and they know what they can do to help get them involved. So, when they know that you're also promoting physical activity based on things that they like, they may be more inclined to do the same activities because the children are talking about it. They're saying how much they enjoy doing that activity.

Putting information in the newsletters, bulletin boards, notes, things like that. And then, create challenges where the program and families work together on achieving the behavior. And because we think of resources as being such a challenge, materials don't have to be expensive. So, we have movement materials that may require -- a lot of times, we think, "Oh, we have to go buy this. And we have to buy that."

But a lot of times we can use the stuff that we already have. So, what type of homemade materials can you think of? You know, in child care we have very limited budget. And we want to make sure that we want to have enough materials for everyone. So, be creative. Think about what you have. But ask for support. You can also use this as a way to include your families by asking them to bring in low-cost items to create fun activities. So, parents can donate paper towel rolls. Then, you can use them, and, with the paper towel rolls, attach paper plates to them, and they can create a little paddle for the children to hit light objects such as balloons in the air from one side to the next. So, these are certain things that families can provide, and that you can also use to help create a fun environment for the children.

So, as you're thinking, think about what resources currently exist in your community that can help facilitate changes, and incorporate and support physical activity in your program. A lot of times, there are a lot of resources, but we want to be creative. Think about what's out there. Are there yoga instructors that we can bring into the program? Is there some type of different community helpers that can come and work with the children? Are there family members who really enjoy doing different things? Are there families that have a mom or a dad that teach certain classes, that may even teach yoga, or that may like doing physical activities, and want to come in and share that with them? So, think about the resources that you have within your center and in your com -- and outside of your center. And as you're thinking about these resources, community asset mapping is a great way to help you organize resource that are available in your community.

So, when you're looking at, kind of, mapping out what resources are there, think of the strength of your community. Instead of the areas that need improvement, you know, community asset mapping helps you to ask questions and to gather information, and to help build those relationships with the community. So, I think there was some comments that are mentioning including school gym teachers, professional athletes, local colleges. These are all great resources outside of the center that can help you to implement these activities. But it builds relationships with your community. Alright. So, I want to give everybody some time. If you have any questions to ask. I'm very, very thankful that everyone participated. I love having polls, and I appreciate all of your participation. So, if there are any questions, then we will take them at this time.

Administrator: Awesome information, Brianna. Thank you so much. It looks like we do have a few questions coming in. So, we'll go ahead and start with the first one. The first one is what is the best way to include all children that have different developmental levels in one activity.

Brianna: So, when you're including children of all developmental levels, you know, it's important that we kind of go back and think about how we encourage children to reach a certain level or accomplish a certain skill. I love to reiterate having the older the children help the younger children. Because it helps them to support the younger children and allows them to engage in the activity as well. And then, we're supporting that child-initiated activity. So, we want to make sure that we're giving them the opportunity to do activities on their own, but with still smaller scale of support. So, those child-initiated activities will allow the children to really engage in different activities, but utilize the children that you have. I think that's very important. And it also helps with, you know, when you think of things like supervision, because the children are, kind of one area. But it also, it helps with supervision, and it kind of helps you when you see what the children need different help in, or assistance in. So, it really will help to support those additional skills.

Administrator: Awesome. Thank you for that. And we've got another question. "I'm a little new to the early childhood area. What's the best way to group children?"

Brianna: So, grouping children can be a little bit challenging. But some of the key things that we mentioned before. You know, really thinking about your physical environment. The equipment that you do have. The ages of the children that you are trying to group together. And then, the number of children. These are all a lot of factors that influence the way that you're implementing activities, and they also impact the dynamics of the program. So, you know, thinking about all of those factors will really assist in how you can do implement activities, how to group the children, and being able to manage the activities in the classroom successfully.

Administrator: Thank you. That's great. And we have a lot of people have asked about -- I just changed the slide to this, this book. A lot of people have asked about it. Is it available online. Do you know?

Brianna: It is. The Best Practices for Physical Activity guide is actually located on www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org. It is the Health Kids Healthy Future website, and it is on there, as well as abundant amount of information on physical, of different physical activities that you and do in the classroom, and different activities that you can -- information you can learn about as administrators or directors, and staff members. The, again, I'll repeat the website. Again, just in case anybody missed it. It's www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org. And that's all one word.

Administrator: Alright. Any other questions -- We can send that link out. There will be a follow-up email, so we'll put the link in there for those that are asking for it.

Brianna: Awesome.

Administrator: And, it looks like we're just about. Oh. There we go. Someone has typed it out for us. But we'll get that in a follow-up email so that everyone can get it. There are a few more questions that have come in. But there are some that are very specific about what specific resources we can supply about X,Y, and Z. And we can answer those via email, so we can email you the link and the PDFs to the resources. And so. So, I just want to say a big, big, thank you Brianna. This was a great presentation. It was a wealth of information. And we're so thankful for it. And, to everyone online, I know some of you have asked about certificates. When we close the webinar, the certificate, excuse me, the survey will pop up, and if you take the survey, you will get a certificate within about a week. If for some reason you're having issues with the survey just give us a minute, and we'll email it to everyone. So, you should get the survey in two different ways. Either it will pop up on your screen immediately. And if you don't, give us a few minutes, and we'll email the link to everyone, along with a PDF of the slides. I know a lot of people have been asking about that, too. And some links and resources that will supplement the content that you've heard today. So. Again, thank you, Brianna, and that is the conclusion of our webinar.

Brianna: Thank you, again. And I hope everyone really enjoyed all the information that I provided. And I -- good luck to everyone implementing different physical activities in their programs. [End video]