

# 9 Exercise Facts all Carers of Young Children Need to Know

You might think little kids are always running about and that keeps them fit. But you may be surprised just how much they need. The WWDC, MeENSA and many other health organisations are advising that children of all ages need to get more active. It's great to see Nurseries, Childminders and Primary schools being so active. We don't have to keep up, just join in and enjoy it.



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## 3 Hours Physical Activity a Day

Recent research from Canada including the Ottawa Childrens hospital now suggests under 4's need at least 3 hours physical activity including 60 minutes of energetic play. Thankfully, most children seem to want to do this anyway, and its only our inability to keep up that prevents it!

## Brain Health & Learning

Good fitness enables our bodies to produce an oxygen-rich blood more efficiently. The brain works better when the blood is oxygen-rich. So, children can learn more easily when fit and active. This is why forest schools in Germany spend so much of their time learning outdoors.

## Regulating Behaviour

Fight/flight hormones, adrenaline and cortisol build up in children's brains from little frustrations, general life stress and computer games, they don't dissipate naturally; they must be used up with exercise, or are likely to be expressed through acting out in anger, frustration, melt-downs or over excitement.

## Confidence

Kids develop confidence as they learn what their bodies can do and are frequently amazed by what they can achieve as they get stronger. Realising they can climb the stairs, walk all the way to nursery or the length of the woodland walk. Learn to pedal a trike...Every new milestone boosts self-esteem.

## Lower Stress in kids and carers

The best childminders say that regular exercise results in calmer children, particularly if it is done outdoors. Many parents report that their stress levels are reduced if they are out and about, being active with the children.

Even if it is raining, get wrapped up and wellied, and get out in the woods our on walks to the park every day and test the welly depth of puddles!

## Bouncing for Bone Strength

Jumping, bounding and bouncing are great bone strengtheners. A mini trampoline is great fun, or you could try a wake-up - shake up dance session at the start of the day to a favourite song. Its great for Parents too as you rekindle your fun!

## Babies Need Exercise too - Tummy Time

Research suggests babies need at least 30 minutes of supervised floor time to develop strength in their bodies to enable them to crawl and walk later on.

## Develops Skills needed for reading and writing

Physical exercise develops gross motor skills which then enable fine motor skills needed for writing. Children are often happy to sit with a book or have a story after a long walk or park outing. Active children may find it easier to learn to write.

## Daily Routine

Walking children to school or preschool, or a regular walk, yoga time or wake-up dance creates structure to the day and reduces anxiety as structure creates a feeling of safety and security for most children.

## Keep it Fun and Active

What ever you do with children when you are caring for them can be fun for you. Whether splashing in a pool, kicking a ball, or crawling through a playbarn, immerse yourself in the moment and let go...release your inner kid