

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-2 Years

The following illustrates connections between ITERS-3 and CLASS-Toddler quality measures and ways to promote physical activity in early learning settings.

Infants and Toddlers (0-2 years)		
Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Space and Furnishings		
ITERS-3 Item 1: Indoor space and Item 3: Room arrangement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space for active toddlers away from infants and other children engaged in quiet, sedentary activities. • Remove equipment that does not need to be in the infant room such as activity containers and bouncy chairs. Instead of placing infants in these containing pieces of equipment, place the infants on a blanket on the floor or other safe surface where they can experience freedom of movement, allowing them to explore their bodies and environments in physical positions they are able to get in and out of on their own. • Provide incline mats and other equipment that provides climbing opportunities for mobile infants. • Create open areas for physically active play. Place low bookshelves and heavy tables on lockable rollers so they can be repositioned to alternately discourage rough play in the classroom but then moved to create an open space for safe indoor physical activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through keeping the infant area free of unnecessary equipment it provides enough open space to encourage infants' movements. Create safe places where infants are free to explore their environment. Freedom of movement can aid infants in optimal development across numerous areas including gross and fine motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development. These movement experiences can help them feel confident in themselves while gaining interest in the world around them. • In addition to keeping the infant area free of unnecessary equipment, limiting time infants spend in restrictive equipment such as swings, stationary activity centers (e.g., exersaucers), infant seats (e.g., bouncers), molded seats, etc., if used, ensures infants have the opportunity to play on the floor in a safe open area to develop their gross motor skills. If infants are not given the opportunity for floor time, their development can be hindered or delayed. • Some young children need much more physical activity than others. Providing safe, developmentally appropriate physical activity choices within the classroom meets the need of these very active children without interrupting others' play in quiet areas.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Personal Care Routines		
ITERS-3 Item 7: Health practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have written policies promoting physical activity and include the expectation that children will go outdoors daily in all but extreme weather conditions. (See accompanying Weather Watch chart.) • Create written policies that specifically define the weather conditions in which infants and toddlers are to be outdoors. • Have extra clothing available so each children can be appropriately dressed for a variety of weather conditions. • Expect staff members to participate in and promote physical activities daily with the children. Staff members have appropriate clothing with them for a safe and comfortable experience while outside with the children. • Assist toddlers in learning how to put on and take off outdoor clothing before and after playing outdoors multiple times daily. Place outdoor clothing in the dress-up area to enable children to practice putting on and taking off winter and other outdoor clothing. • Share the benefits of physical activity and outdoor play with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written physical activity policies that are shared with all staff and families may potentially be helpful in maintaining consistency across time and personnel changes. • The availability of extra clothing (supplied by families or other sources) enables children who lack appropriate clothing for the weather conditions to still go outside with the rest of the group. At the end of each season consider asking families if they can donate clothes their children will be outgrowing. Then begin each season by assigning children with any needed outdoor wear to be sure all children can play outdoors no matter what their families have provided. Create a system to avoid the cross contaminating of clothing among children. • Staff members who are physically active with the children are modeling regular exercise as a good health practice. This is especially true when staff shows enjoyment of physical activity and explains its benefits to children. • Children learn to manage health practices independently when they begin to learn to put on and take off their own outdoor clothes. • Parents who are educated on the benefits of physical activity and ways to promote it have the potential to become valuable partners in ensuring that physical activities can also happen at home.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Personal Care Routines (page 2)		
ITERS-3 Item 8: Safety practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously supervises children engaged in physical activities. • Use only safe equipment. • Provide clear boundaries to indicate where children may and may not go. • Have toddlers practice cues for starting and stopping through leading physical activities such as dancing then freezing on cue when the music stops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be quick and clever in the way they place themselves in danger. Close supervision is essential. • The staff inspects the play area to remove any toys or equipment that are broken or pose a safety issue. • Play areas are arranged to avoid safety problems. • Safety is enhanced through teaching children to respond to cues for starting and stopping. • Toddlers can also begin to conduct their own safety checks related to physical activity such as checking that shoes are tied or fastened and there is nothing in the mouth.
Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Language and Books		
CLASS Toddler: Language modeling ITERS-3 Item 9: Talking with children ITERS-3 Item 10: Encouraging vocabulary development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with infants and toddlers describing the actions the children are doing, e.g. “You are walking to me.” “Look at you roll over!” “You crawled next to the table.” “I see you reaching for the block.” • Use language rich in movement concepts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spatial relationships such as here/there, on/off, over/under; “Step off the rug.” ○ Spatial awareness such as up/down, high/low; “Reach up high!” ○ Effort such as fast/slow; “See how fast you are moving!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s physical activity provides a rich opportunity to build their understanding of language. Staff can use language in a positive, encouraging tone to describe children’s actions as they are engaged in movement. The children can begin to understand the link between the words the staff says and the children’s actions. Using exact words to describe a variety of actions enriches the children’s understanding of language. • Physical activity provides an especially rich environment for promoting language around movement concepts including spatial relationships, spatial awareness, and effort. These movement concepts take on meaning when linked to children’s movements. • Saying “I see you walking to me. Now you are standing next to me. Hello!” provides a richer language learning opportunity than simply saying “Hello!” when the child walks over to the staff person.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Language and Books (page 2)		
<p>CLASS Toddler: Language modeling</p> <p>ITERS-3 Item 11: Responding to children's communication</p> <p>ITERS-3 Item 12: Encouraging children to communicate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold turn-taking conversations with children while engaged in turn-taking physical activities, e.g. "I roll the ball to you. What do you do now? (Pause to give the child time to respond) Yes! You roll the ball back to me." • Invite a child to play a physical activity when the child shows signs of restlessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The turn taking that occur while an adult and a child are engaged in a physical activity together can prompt turn taking in their conversation. • Physical activity provides the opportunity to model and strengthen language because of the opportunity to observe a person's actions and pair it with the descriptive language. • Physical activities also lend themselves to frequent opportunities to ask children what they plan to do or describe what they did before or after observing the children's movements. • When staff is responsive to children's verbal as well as non-verbal communication and gestures, such as restlessness and squirming, it further encourages young children to communicate with staff.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Language and Books (page 3)		
<p>CLASS Toddler: Facilitation of learning and development</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Language modeling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage children in physical activities as a simple way to promote children’s manipulation of materials, physical involvement, and verbal involvement. • Encourage children’s thinking skills and language by asking questions about the physical activity as the children are playing it. One example is to challenge the children to push safe objects of varying weights across the floor. As the children push, the staff can ask questions about which objects are harder/easier to push, what is needed to push faster/slower, how children’s muscles feel as they push hard, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing physical activities together provides the opportunity for staff to facilitate children’s learning and development as well as language modeling. During the physical activity staff can provide opportunities and guide exploration, embed information, and encourage thinking skills. • Playing physical activities together also provide opportunities for staff to model language skills and introduce new vocabulary through naming and describing children’s action as they occur. The staff can also ask questions that prompt the children to use the same language and vocabulary that was just modeled. • Engaging in adult-led physical activities as well as free active play typically prompt children’s oral communication. The excitement and fun of the activity as well as the large muscle movements may be particularly useful in prompting children, especially reticent children, to use expressive language. When engaged in imaginative and physically active play children often are able to communicate and perform at a higher level than otherwise evident.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Language and Books (page 4)		
<p>ITERS-3 Item 13: Staff use of books with children</p> <p>ITERS-3 Item 14: Encouraging children's use of books</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt children to act out the actions occurring in a story. • Encourage and assist older toddlers to express emotion as well as point to and move body parts when mentioned in the story. • Read books that encourage movement such as <i>Going on a Bear Hunt</i> and <i>The Hungry Caterpillar</i>, and <i>From Head to Toe</i> by Eric Carle; and <i>Oh!</i> By Kevin Henkes. Another reference is Story Walk (www.letsgo.org). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting out stories can help promote toddlers' comprehension while also providing the opportunity to be physically active during an otherwise sedentary story time. • Acting out stories provides an opportunity for staff to explicitly model and prompt language through encouraging children to act out and repeat certain words or phrases in conjunction with the movements.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities		
ITERS-3 Item 17: Music and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance to the music and encourages children to do the same. • Clap in rhythm with the music encouraging the children to also clap in rhythm. In addition to clapping, staff can gently tap on children’s bodies in rhythm with the music. • Provide safe instruments for infants to shake, bang, and play while listening to music, singing songs, or playing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants and toddlers are sensory motor learners. Music exploration is a great way to enhance their natural ways of learning. • Moving to music can help children develop rhythm and express the feelings that the music evokes. Developing a sense of rhythm is foundational to moving with coordination and fluidity. Rhythmically tapping on children’s bodies in time with the music can help children develop their internal sense of rhythm. The importance of rhythm extends beyond movement. A sense of rhythm is also integral to understanding speech. • Fujii and Wan (2014) explain, “Thus, rhythmic sounds and motor actions are fundamental for communication and social interaction throughout development. Rhythm is essential to the understanding of speech.” • Rhythmic activities combined with movement may help with self-regulation among preschool children. <p><i>Note: Item 18 is focused almost exclusively on music with only two indicators mentioning movement.</i></p>
ITERS-3 Item 18: Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for block play and building with hollow blocks to promote motor planning and gross motor and fine motor movements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross motor planning is a way to merge all areas of development. Lifting solid and hollow blocks of varying sizes and weights provides children with a variety of proprioceptive input, a sensory experience that is needed daily.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 2)		
ITERS-3 Item 19: Dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use dramatic play to promote and enrich physical activities. • Use physical activities to promote and enrich dramatic play. • Provide children with materials and opportunities for dramatic play outdoors as well as indoors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many adult-led physical activities with very simple rules can be designed to incorporate dramatic play in them. Both dramatic play and physical activity tend to be especially engaging for young children. Combining physical activity with dramatic play can enrich both aspects of the activity. • Providing materials and opportunities for dramatic play while outdoors enables children to engage in vigorous physical activity as part of their play.
ITERS-3 Item 20: Nature/science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design physical activities to also teach nature/science concepts. An example is an activity in which children imitate the movements of animals that eat other animals, e.g. birds fly around catching mosquitoes. • Imitate the movements and behaviors of a variety of animals, e.g. turtles and dogs, elephants, monkeys. • Promote physical activities involving sand/water with toddlers who are able to drag or carry objects as they walk. Vary the size (quart/half gallon/gallon) and weight of the jugs to match the children's abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging toddlers in an imaginative physical activity provides fertile opportunities to incorporate nature/science concepts. • Carrying half-gallon (or gallon) jugs of water or sand from place to place provides ample opportunity for toddlers to develop their muscular strength and endurance. Carrying jugs also provides opportunities to integrate math and science concepts such as asking toddlers questions about which jugs are heavier/lighter because they have more/less sand or water inside.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 3)		
ITERS-3 Item 21: Math/number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infuse physical activity into math/number activities. Examples follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Follow the Leader</i> in which the staff counts aloud while leading the toddlers in simple, repetitive physical activities such as marching/stepping in place. ○ For an advanced toddler, ask him/her to count aloud the number of times the group performs a physical movement. ○ Ask children to identify “more” and “less” as they throw socks over a barrier at a wall. Questions such as “Are there more socks here at our feet than over next to the wall? After we throw all of the socks at the wall, will there be more or less socks at our feet than next to the wall?” ○ Provide large and small balls to throw at the wall. Help toddlers identify which balls are large and which balls are small. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity can be helpful in promoting children’s focus, attention, and memory. Infusing physical activities into the practice of math/number learning can enhance children’s engagement with the concepts. • Carry games in which children carry something from one end of the open space to the other and back are a way to practice their locomotor skills while also rehearsing math/number concepts. • Concepts such as “more” and “less” are basic to understanding math concepts. Using concrete examples such as determining that a large collection of sock has “more” socks than a small collection of socks can help children begin to comprehend these basic math concepts. • Similarly, introduce the concepts of “large/largest” and “small/smallest” through using concrete objects such as various size balls children throw.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 4)		
ITERS-3 Item 22: Appropriate use of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider avoiding any screen time with infants and young toddlers. • If technology is used, show videos that encourage children to be vigorous active along with the characters/children/adults on the screen. • During screen time provide an alternative that encourages physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The American Academy of Pediatrics <i>New Recommendations for Media Use</i> recommends the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video chatting. Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high quality programming and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing. ○ For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them. • Problems begin when media use displaces physical activity, hands-on exploration, and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Too much screen time can also harm the amount and quality of sleep. Organizations like Common Sense Media can help parents evaluate media content and make decisions about what is appropriate for their family.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 5)		
ITERS-3 Item 23: Promoting acceptance of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote acceptance of children with varying skill levels and modes of moving during physical activity. • Display posters of both boys and girls, including children with disabilities, engaged in physical activity. • Modify the environment and task as needed to enable children with disabilities to participate in physical activities throughout the day. • Lead minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities, modified as needed, to enable children with disabilities to enjoy participating with their typical peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During physical activities children’s (and adults) varying skill levels are on full display for others to observe. This provides a rich opportunity to discuss individual differences and promote acceptance of people with varying skill levels and modes of moving. • Most minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities can be modified to enable children with disabilities to participate with their typical peers. • Including children with disabilities in physical activities with their typical peers sends the important message that children of differing abilities are similar enough that they can all enjoy playing together. • Staff is encouraged to examine the classroom arrangement and investigate adapted equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, gait trainers and mobile prone standers) to enable children with physical disabilities to participate in physical activity. Seek to consult with the children’s physical and occupational therapists as available.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 6)		
ITERS-3 Item 24: Gross motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote many opportunities for children to be physically active throughout the child care day. • Provide numerous opportunities for infants to be safely supervised as they are positioned on their tummies on the floor, not propped by bolsters or other equipment, while awake. Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition, Best Practice recommends “Initially place infants on their tummies for brief periods of 3-5 minutes. Extend the length of time as the infants increase their tolerance for tummy time.” Staff can get on the floor, face to face with the infants, to engage with them during tummy time, especially with infants who are initially fussy in this position. • Provide ample time for infants to engage in freedom of movement in safe spaces both indoors and outdoors. • Take infants outside 2 to 3 times per day (as tolerated) and allow toddlers 60 to 90 total minutes of outdoor play. • Provide numerous opportunities for toddlers to be physically active in both indoor and outdoor areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants’ participation in physical activity, such as tummy time is essential to their overall health, and the development of their neck, upper body and trunk muscles. Strengthening these muscle groups lays the foundation for developing efficient rudimentary movements and fundamental movement skills. Tummy time can also reduce the development of a flat back of the head caused by extensive time in a back lying position. • Infants develop from their head to their feet and from their core outward to fingertips. They have so many parts of their body they need to practice moving and learn to coordinate. It is important for infants to have time they are enjoying on the floor in order to develop control of their bodies’ movements. Time spent in positions they can get in and out of from their back is necessary for optimal developmental outcomes. When adults place or prop infants in sitting positions before infants are able to sit on their own, it can create situations in which the infants lose the motivation to learn to get into the sitting position on their own or are stuck in that sitting position due to fear of falling. While well intended, placing infants into positions they cannot get into on their own can disrupt the exploration and extensive practice needed for infants’ optimum motor development.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 7)		
<p><i>ITERS-3 Item 24:</i> <i>Gross motor</i></p> <p><i>(Continued)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants and toddlers require many opportunities to be physically active to develop and master their rudimentary movement skills such as rolling over, reaching, sitting, scooting, crawling, creeping, and eventually pulling to a stand and taking their first steps. As they become toddlers, they need practice learning to maintain their balance as they stand and squat, walk forward, walk backward, and walk while carrying objects. Physical activity both indoors and outdoors needs to be the default activity throughout the child care day in order for children to master these motor milestones that lay the foundation for subsequent gross and fine motor skill development.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction		
ITERS-3 Item 25: Supervision of gross motor play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiates, encourage and supervise infants' and toddlers' gross motor play. • Provide additional equipment such as wheeled toys and balls to minimize waiting and enable all children to be engaged in physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/3.1.3.4 Best Practice recommends that staff members participate, to the extent that they are physically able, in active play with the children. While doing so, the staff need to maintain their balance to avoid falling onto any children. They also need to maintain supervision of all children while participating in the physical activity.
ITERS-3 Item 27: Peer interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage toddlers in simple physical activities that promote positive peer interaction. Developmentally appropriate, non-competitive, inclusive, and cooperative physical activities are often the best choice for achieving positive peer interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the aspects of positive peer interactions can be supported through toddlers engaging in physical activities together. Playing and laughing together involves physical proximity while enjoying a shared activity. Children playing together toward a common goal can involve peer assistance; provide opportunities for matching affect by adopting facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that match the child's emotional state; and can spark social conversations. Active play has the potential to be a powerful way to build positive interactions among children.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 2)		
CLASS Toddler: Positive climate ITERS-3 Item 28: Staff-child interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-competitive, inclusive, cooperative physical activities, whether adult-led or free play, to support positive staff-child interactions. • Play developmentally appropriate physical activities together with the children. The physical activities mentioned as examples elsewhere in this document meet this criterion. • Lead physical activities that promote a positive climate. Developmentally appropriate, non-competitive, non-elimination, inclusive, and cooperative physical activities may be good choices for achieving a positive climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the aspects of a positive climate can be supported through adults and toddlers playing adult-led physical activities together. Playing and laughing together involves physical proximity while enjoying a shared activity. Leading non-competitive, inclusive, cooperative physical activities can involve peer assistance, opportunities for matching affect by adopting facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that match the child’s emotional state, and spark social conversations as adult and toddlers play together toward a common goal. Active play has the potential to be a powerful way to build positive relationships. Additionally, children who are learning to move are increasing their sense of competence. If children are given choices (color of ball to throw) within the adult-led physical activity they are also developing their autonomy. • Further, a positive affect can be strengthened through playing developmentally appropriate, inclusive physical activities together. Adults and children naturally smile, laugh, and show enthusiasm when playing fun adult-led physical activities together. • Having fun while playing physical activities together can be an especially powerful way for staff to demonstrate positive interactions with each child. It also provides fertile opportunity to develop and maintain mutual respect.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-2 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 3)		
CLASS Toddler: Negative climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead developmentally appropriate adult-led physical activities with minimal rules and low skill demands to avoid a negative climate. • Invite rather than require toddlers to participate in the adult-led physical activity. • Active play should never be withheld from children who misbehave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the aspects of a negative climate can be present during a poorly selected and conducted adult-led physical activity. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Highly competitive physical activities with complex rules that are beyond the children’s level of understanding and physical skills and pits children against each other to determine winners and losers can prompt negative affect. ○ An adult who is attempting to lead poorly organized, developmentally inappropriate physical activities can become overwhelmed and resort to punitive control, sarcasm/disrespectful comments, and severe negativity in a frustrated attempt to establish control. Peer disputes, escalating frustration, and negativity are also likely to be observed in adult-led physical activities that are beyond the developmental level of the toddlers. • In contrast, a well-organized developmentally appropriate physical activity has the potential to prompt a positive climate.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-2 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 4)		
CLASS Toddler: Quality of feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe children’s actions as they are engaged in physical activities. One example is to place many safe objects around the room and challenge the children to find them. The staff can describe the children’s actions, e.g. “I see you look up high to find an object.” The staff can also ask questions of children such as “Do you think one might be on the chair seat? Where else might you look? Can you look behind the chair? Under the table?” • Further encourage children’s physical activity through providing encouragement and affirmation of the toddlers’ efforts, e.g. “I see you are moving quickly to gather as many objects as you can!” “Great! You just found two red objects that were hidden behind the chair!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activities are ideal for providing quality feedback to young children because the children’s actions are easily observed. The staff can then comment on children’s actions to scaffold learning, provide information, and encourage and affirm their efforts.
CLASS Toddler: Behavior guidance ITERS-3 Item 30: Guiding children’s behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide frequent opportunities for children to be physically active. Design the physical activity environment and task to minimize toddlers wandering and waiting. • Use physical activities to teach social skills e.g. turn taking, sharing equipment, working together toward a common goal, and negotiating conflicts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children are designed to be physically active. Often potentially disruptive behavior can be averted through providing frequent opportunities for children to be physically active throughout the day. • Playing physical activities together, whether adult-led or free active play, provide ample opportunities for staff to help toddlers understand and develop social skills such as turn taking, sharing equipment, working together toward a common goal, negotiating conflicts that may arise, etc.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-2 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure		
ITERS-3 Item 31: Schedule and transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable infants to spend most of their day in safe spaces where they are able to experience freedom of movement. Assure that infants are not confined in containers such as ring standers, car seats, and high chairs during non-feeding times. • Provide supported tummy time for infants several times daily (3-5 min). Provide opportunities for freedom of movement while outside on a daily basis (2-3 times per day), weather permitting (see accompanying Weather Watch chart). • Provide at least 60-90 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity, including running daily for toddlers. • To achieve the recommended minutes of daily physical activity it may be most practical to intersperse short periods (5-15 minutes) of physical activity throughout the day. This could include multiple brief active transitions, three or more bouts of 10-minute adult-led whole group physical activities, and an hour or more of outdoor free play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, Best Practice recommends infants should have supervised tummy time every day when they are awake. Beginning on the first day at the early care and education program, caregivers/teachers should interact with an awake infant on his/her tummy for short periods (3–5 minutes), increasing the amount of time as the infant shows he/she enjoys the activity. • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, Best Practice recommends daily opportunities for both adult-led physical activities and child-initiated free play because these two types of activities offer complementary benefits for children. • Adult-led physical activities that accommodate children with wide-ranging skill levels and conducted in a welcoming, inclusive manner increase the likelihood that most if not all children will participate. The adult can plan activities that provide practice in a wide variety of motor skills. • Child-initiated free play gives children practice in planning and conducting their own creative physical activities. They also are developing their all-important executive functions. Free play also places upon the children the responsibility for setting and following the rules as well as determining how to handle the situation when a child breaks the mutually agreed upon rules. <p><i>Note: While the adult is not leading the activity during free play, adult supervision is still essential to assure the physical and emotional safety of all children and to help guide children in developing healthy skills for resolving conflicts.</i></p>

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure (page 2)		
ITERS-3 Item 32: Free play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise and interact with children who are engaged in both indoor and outdoor free play. Offer a commentary on the children's activities and acknowledge their efforts. Imitate what the children are doing or play along with the children but without taking control of their play. Allow the children to take the lead while asking questions to enhance and extend the children's experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically the nature of young children's free play is to be physically active with bursts of moderate to vigorous physical activity interspersed with brief periods of rest. This free play provides a rich opportunity for adults to supervise children in a way that encourages educational interaction. Free play provides opportunities for staff to help children think through solutions to conflicts, encourage children to communicate about activities, and introduce concepts in relation to play. However, it is important that the adult not step in and start directing the children's free play.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure (page 3)		
ITERS-3 Item 33: Group play activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersperse short periods (5-15 minutes) of adult-led small group activities, with two to six children in the group. Lead these small-group physical activities throughout the day to promote the fundamental movement skill development of toddlers. • Provide open space and equipment in the classroom for individual children to choose to engage in a variety of additional physical activities when they need it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental movement skills are basic movements such as run, jump, hop, (locomotor skills), throw, catch, kick (object control skills), and bend, stretch, and balance (stability skills). Toddlers who are up and walking need many, many opportunities to practice these skills in order to become skillful movers who seek to be physically active now and across their lifespan. Offering multiple adult-led whole-group physical activities daily provides children with the needed practice to develop these fundamental movement skills, the foundation of children’s skillful movement. Infants need many opportunities to engage in tummy time, explore movement, and strengthen their muscles. As infants refine their rudimentary movement skills (e.g. roll over, sit, crawl, creep) they develop the movement foundation needed to work on these fundamental movements skill when they become toddlers. • Adult-led physical activity with toddlers is usually more freely flowing than with preschoolers. The adult-led activity may begin with only one or two interested children. Other toddlers are then invited to join as they wish. It may be counterproductive for the staff to require the entire group of toddlers to assemble before instructions are given and the physical activity begins. Toddlers tend to join and leave a group physical activity as their individual interest waxes and wanes. Staff flexibility is essential. • Staff observe the children closely in order to end a small-group physical activity before children begin to lose interest. This will serve to maintain the children’s interest in playing the activity again another time and help keep children enthusiastically participating in small-group physical activities. • Note that whole-group activities with large groups of children often become overwhelming for infants and toddlers. Small groups tend to be more efficient for adults and less stimulating for children. Adjust the size of the group to fit the age and abilities of the children.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-2 Years

Citation:

Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R. M., and Yazejian, N. (2017). *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition*, New York: Teachers College Press.

CLASS Toddler: La Paro, K. M., Hamre, B.K., & Pianta, R. C. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Manual Toddler*. Charlottesville, VA: Touchstone Training.

This ITERS-3 and CLASS Toddler Crosswalk with Physical Activity was created by

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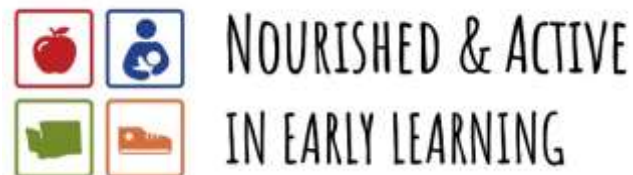
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