

# Tocumwal Pre-School

**SECTION:** 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

**POLICY NO:** 2.4.4

**POLICY:** Physical Activity

**REVIEW DATE:**

**DATE OF APPROVAL:**

## **Introduction**

Early childhood is the ideal time for children to develop and practice healthy eating and physical activity habits; this includes learning a range of fundamental movement skills that will help children take part in and enjoy physical activity throughout their lives. Establishing sound eating and activity habits from an early age gives children the best chance of leading a healthy life and maintaining a healthy weight. A strong sense of health and wellbeing supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle provides children with confidence, energy and optimism that contributes to their ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn. Physical wellbeing contributes to children’s ability to socialise, concentrate, cooperate and learn. Physical activity and attention to fine and gross motor skills provide children with the foundations for their growing independence and satisfaction in being able to do things for themselves. (Early Years Learning Framework, page 30).

## **Goals – What are we going to do?**

Physical activity is vital for a child’s development and lays the foundation for a healthy and active life. Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and physical fitness, is integral to wellbeing and self-confidence. The Centre will foster the development of good physical activity habits early in life and encourage families to engage in regular physical activity. The Centre will offer a wide choice of play-based, physically active learning experiences that link to children’s interests, abilities, identity and prior knowledge. Physical activity in the Centre needs to be made up of both structured (i.e. intentionally taught) physical activity and unstructured, spontaneous activity. In addition, as active role models, educators will encourage children to participate in physical activity.

***National Quality Framework Standard 2.1 Each child's health is promoted***

***National Quality Framework Standard 2.2 Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.***

- 2.2.2 Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.

**Strategies – How will it be done?**

The Centre recognises the following important functions of physical activity for young children:

- Promotes healthy growth and development
- Builds strong bones and muscles
- Improves cardiovascular fitness
- Improves balance, coordination, posture and strength
- Maintains and develops flexibility
- Assists with the development of gross motor and fine motor skills
- Provides the opportunity to develop fundamental movement skills
- Helps to establish connections between different parts of the brain
- Improves concentration and thinking skills
- Improves confidence and self-esteem
- Relieves stress and promotes relaxation
- Provides opportunities to develop social skills and make friends
- Helps to achieve and maintain a healthy weight

The Centre is committed to implementing the key physical activity messages within Munch & Move and supporting the National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children Birth to 5 years as outlined below:

***Toddlers and preschoolers***

- Toddlers (1 to 3 years of age) and preschoolers (3 to 5 years of age) should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.

- Children aged 2 to 5 years should spend less than 1 hour per day watching television and using other electronic media

### ***All children***

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers should not be sedentary, restrained, or kept inactive, for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping.

### ***To promote healthy weight and physical development through physically active play in children, the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will:***

- Encourage educators to attend the Munch & Move program (a NSW Health initiative with support from the NSW Department of Human Services (Community Services) and the Local Health Districts) which aims to promote and encourage children's healthy eating and physical activity and reduce small screen recreation.

### ***Educators will:***

- remain up to date with current guidelines about healthy eating and physical activity by accessing Munch and Move newsletters and fact sheets, and by implementing discussions during staff meetings.
- Ensure children's needs are met regarding relaxation and rest (See Section 2, Policy 2.4.3 Rest and Sleep)

### **Promote children's participation in a range of safe physically active learning experiences.**

*Note: Physically active learning experiences include planned play (eg, action games/songs, intentional teaching experiences), spontaneous 'free' play (eg, child initiated, active play in the playground, dancing to music), intentional teaching experiences and everyday physical tasks (eg helping with gardening, setting up experiences, tidying up spaces).*

- Provide the opportunity for children to be active every day through a balance of planned and spontaneous physically active experiences (including everyday physical tasks), in the indoor and outdoor environments.

- Plan daily intentional Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) experiences to support children's physical activity and their FMS development. This includes the planning of FMS experiences for older toddlers and preschoolers that consists of a warm-up, FMS game and a cool-down.
- Foster the development of a range of FMS - including running, galloping, hopping, jumping, leaping, side-sliding, throwing, catching, striking, kicking, underarm rolling and stationary dribbling.
- Ensure physically active experiences are play based, varied, creative, developmentally appropriate and cater to a range of abilities and interests.
- Ensure all physically active experiences are safe by providing an appropriate environment - ensuring all equipment is developmentally appropriate and well maintained and supervision is constant.
- Encourage children's participation in physical activity of varying intensity (eg. lighter through to vigorous activity).
- Provide space, time and resources for children to revisit and practice FMS and engage in active play.
- Where possible, educators will involve children in the planning of physically active experiences.
- Encourage educators to actively role model to children appropriate physical activity behaviours.
- Encourage children and educators to drink water before, during and after physically active experiences.
- Provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood physical activity.

**Provide a positive physically active environment which reflects cultural and family values.**

- Positively encourage children to participate in a range of active play and physically active experiences.
- Provide children with encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Provide positive instruction and constructive feedback to children to assist them in developing and refining their FMS.
- Offer inclusive physical activity opportunities which cater for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those children with additional needs.

- Adopt a participatory approach to physically active experiences offered to children and emphasise fun and participation rather than competition.
- Invite and engage families and the wider community to participate in promoting physical activity with the children.
- Encourage children to be understanding and accepting of the different physical skills and abilities of other children.

**Promote lifelong enjoyment of physical activity.**

- Offer a range of physically active learning experiences.
- Encourage children to be as active as possible during daily active play times.
- Encourage all children to participate in physically active experiences to the best of their ability.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning about the importance of being physically active and reducing small screen time as part of their learning experiences.
- Assist children to develop daily habits, understandings and skills that support health and wellbeing.

**Limit time children spend engaging in small screen recreation (television, DVDs, computer and other electronic games) and sedentary behaviour whilst at the service.**

- Limit the amount of time spent in small screen recreation.
- Endeavour to limit experiences involving small screen use to those which have an educational component – including movement.
- Discuss with children the role of small screen time in their lives and support them in making healthy choices about their use of small screen recreation for both education and recreation.
- Encourage educators to model appropriate small screen behaviours to the children.
- In accordance with the national recommendations, monitor all sedentary behaviours that children may be engaging in at the service and encourage the promotion of physical activity as necessary.
- Ensure that an appropriate balance between inactive and active time is maintained each day.

**Encourage communication with families about physical activity, gross motor skills development, fundamental movement skills development and limiting small screen recreation and sedentary behaviour.**

- Provide a copy of the *Physical Activity and Small Screen Recreation Policy* to all families during orientation to the service. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- Request that any details of children's additional needs in relation to physical activity participation be provided to the service.
- Encourage families to share with the service links between cultural backgrounds and physical activity.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information, support and advice on physical activity, gross motor skills development, FMS development, everyday physical tasks, active transport and limiting small screen recreation and sedentary behaviour. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, noticeboards, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

**Fundamental movement skills**

Fundamental Movement Skills are a specific set of gross motor movements that involve different body parts such as the feet, legs, trunk, hands, arms and head. These skills are the building blocks for more complex skills needed to competently participate in games, sports and recreational activities in the future.

Early childhood educators will support children in the development of Fundamental Movement Skills. Children don't naturally learn these skills without some help.

There are three main groups of Fundamental Movement Skills:

- Stability skills such as stretching, bending, twisting and balancing
- Locomotor skills such as crawling, walking, running, jumping, galloping, hopping
- Manipulative skills such as throwing, catching, kicking, striking a stationary ball.

## **Active play**

Active play includes unstructured 'free' play, structured 'planned' play, active transport and everyday physical tasks. All four types of play will be implemented in the centre's program.

**Unstructured play** is creative and spontaneous play that gives children the freedom to move at their own pace and decide how they will play, what they will do and where it will take place. Examples include dancing to music and free play in playgrounds.

**Structured play** is planned play that may take place at set times, have rules and need special equipment. Examples include action songs and action games.

**Active transport** involves using physical activity, such as walking or pedaling to travel. Families can be encouraged to use active transport in place of car travel where possible. Physical tasks such as gardening and packing up are part of active play.

## **Sedentary (still) behaviour and screen time**

Limiting long periods of time where children are inactive is just as important as making sure they do enough activity. Screen time (TV, DVDs, computer and other electronic games) is an important consideration and the Department of Health and Ageing recommends that:

Children aged 2 to 5 years should spend less than 1 hour per day watching television and using other electronic media

## **Statutory Legislation**

- *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care 2011*
- *Education and Care Services National Amended Regulations 2014*
- *BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, 2009.*

## **Sources**

- *Health and Safety in Children's Services, School of public health and medicine, University of NSW, 2003*

- *Healthy Kids Service Policy, NSW Ministry of Health; NSW Department of Education and Communities and the Heart Foundation 2014, <http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>*
- *Munch and Move Fact Sheets for parents: Get Active each day*  
*[http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/MMFSLGetActive\\_Dec11WEB.pdf](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/MMFSLGetActive_Dec11WEB.pdf)*
- *Munch and Move Resources, Physical Activity and Small Screen Policy sample 2016*  
*<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx>*