### Child Care Centers: Healthy Activities

What can you do to be sure the children in your center are engaged in healthy activities?

#### Indoor & Outdoor Game Ideas

1. **OUTDOOR—Hop, Skip, and Crawl Relay Race** — have children line up in groups of 3 and set up cones to mark starting/stopping points. One child will hop to the stopping point and come back to tag the next child who will skip, and the 3rd child will crawl. You can vary the game by changing the activities (e.g. walk quickly, walk sideways, march).

2. **OUTDOOR—Freeze Racing** — Find a tree, jungle gym, or bush that children can run or dance around and turn on lively music. Have the children run or dance quickly around the tree. When the music is turned off, children should freeze in their positions. Encourage them to have fun seeing what strange or funny positions they end up in. Then repeat the game again.

3. **INDOOR — Balloon Volleyball** — use one or more large balloons and set up a barrier (e.g. a chair or table) for children to hit the balloon across. Or, simply let the children hit at the balloons in a free space in the room.

4. **INDOOR — Animal Limbo** — get a stick or foam pool noodle and position it on two chairs 3.5' apart. Use pillows/books to stack on the chairs to change the height of the stick. Choose a caller and have the child call out the name of an animal. The children take turns walking like the animal (e.g. bear, duck, seal, monkey) under the limbo stick. Moving and fun are the objects of the game and there’s no right or wrong way to move.

#### Structured Activities

5. **Classroom tasks** — Children can get exercise by helping carry items for classroom activities and by helping clean up toys/materials after an activity. Arrange for everyone to have a task that gets them up and moving. To make these helping activities fun, add a song that everyone can sing as they “work.”

6. **Obstacle Course** — use jump ropes, balls, chairs, swings, and other items available to set up your obstacle course. Have children go over and under things, bounce balls, or jump over a rope. Be sure and try it yourself before having the children go through it.

7. **Adventure Walk** — Lead children on an “Adventure Walk” indoors or outdoors. You can make up the walk in any setting (e.g. on a mountain, in the city, the jungle, forest, the moon) and describe what you see and have the children follow you as you pretend to avoid puddles, climb mountains, go up stairs. Don’t forget to have children use all of their senses as they walk. Preschool books are good inspiration for making up Adventure Walks.

8. **Hula Hoop Games** — children can roll the hoops to each other, lay hoops back to back on the ground and let children hop from hoop to hoop, or set up cones/plastic bottles for children to toss hoops over.

#### Promoting Unstructured Activities

9. Give children sports equipment (e.g. balls, jump ropes) and allow them to make up games to play alone or with others.

10. Give children props (e.g. dress up clothes) and encourage them to use their imaginations to make up stories/plays indoors or outdoors.

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