Everyday Family Learning Activities

Curious preschoolers actively explore their world, both indoors and outdoors. They naturally want to run, climb, tumble, and dance, trying to discover all its interesting possibilities! Be sure your home environment provides your young child plenty of space for active exploration and learning.

Environment for Active Learning Make space indoors where your child can move and play freely. Is there room to crawl,

Learning Guide: Arranging the Home

- climb, and dance, or to push, pull, and roll toys? Is the floor hard or soft? A few mats or pillows for tumbling can add to the interest and fun of an open play space. Does your child know which areas are okay for active play and which are off-limits? Consider
- placing a special rug or blanket in an area to "tell" your child it is a place where he can tumble, dance, and climb. Such a play space can be temporary for special play times—such as using sofa cushions to build a hideaway on a rainy day. Do you have space for him to throw or toss soft items—such as tossing rolled-up socks or stuffed animals into a laundry basket? These are all great activities to encourage your child to move, and are especially inviting when playtime must be indoors on bad-weather days. What does your child like to do outdoors? Does she enjoy throwing or rolling a ball?
- Does she enjoy rolling down a hill or playing on a slide? Does she enjoy digging or scooping? Perhaps she would enjoy digging in a box of dirt using a large spoon or cup. Sidewalks and walking trails provide pathways where children can push, pull, and ride toys or equipment. A local parks department can direct you to playgrounds adapted for use of mobility
- equipment—wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, etc. Arrange an outdoor play area with materials and equipment that promote active play. You might find room in your yard for a simple climbing structure and/or play equipment such as a swing set or slide that encourages physical movement. An outdoor storage bin or

small shed is a great place to keep small items

like kickballs and other games equipment and riding toys like wagons and tricycles. Keep in mind that there are many ways to arrange your home to accommodate any special needs your child might have. Assure that your child's play settings provide the widest range of interesting opportunities to move, explore, and learn. Start with your child's interests and movement strengths and

arrange your home and yard for the greatest possible freedom of movement and access to

Watch a video of

Your child spends more time being active.

throwing a ball, or raising her arms up and

Your child enjoys lots of physical movement.

Your child is more active—whether it's walking,

this Learning Guide You'll know the practice is working if ...

fun and learning.

down.

A Quick Peek

places where

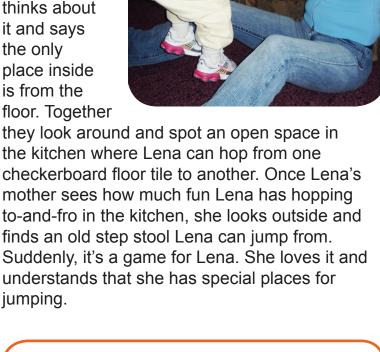
it's okay for Lena to jump indoors

Four-year-old Lena loves to climb, jump, dance, and twirl. Her mother tells their early

jumping from the furniture. The EI asks Lena's mother if there are

interventionist (EI) about a problem she's having lately—Lena doesn't respond when her mother tells her to keep her feet on the floor and stop

or outside. Lena's mother thinks about it and says the only place inside is from the floor. Together jumping.



For more ideas, ask an early interventionist, teacher, therapist, home visitor, or another experienced parent. Click here to visit a webpage about "Big Body Play" from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).



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