Preschoolers on the Go

Preschoolers are busy and active learners. They are learning large body movements such as jumping, running, and dancing. They also are exploring their environment through physical movement and play. It is important for children's development to provide them many opportunities to exercise and move their bodies.

Learning Guide: Supporting Child Exercise and Movement

Make sure regularly scheduled time is provided to encourage active child play and movement (indoors and outdoors). Look at the daily schedule of classroom activities to be certain that enough time is available to encourage children to exercise and move. Are there a variety of activities scheduled that encourage active child play and movement? Consider scheduling one hour of outdoor activity for the morning and afternoon. There are indoor music-and-movement activities scheduled for both the morning and afternoon as well.

Engage children in movement and exercise as part of everyday activities. Use a physical activity that is appropriate for the age level of the children intransiting from one activity to another. For example, you could encourage children to waddle like ducks during story time, or jump like frogs when it's time to line up for outdoor play.

Allowing children opportunities to move during an activity helps keep them engaged. Think about times during the day when children need to wait as a large group. Are there songs or finger plays that could be used to engage children in lots of movement while they wait for an activity? Are there enough opportunities for children to move while they are waiting indoors? It's important for children to be physically active while indoors. Children are developing motor skills and are doing movement, and you will encourage them to use other types of movement.

Use music, rhyme, and other activities to encourage child physical movement and exercise. Does the classroom schedule include time for children to engage in physical movement and play? Are there opportunities for children to move during a story or during a shared story book reading? Is there a music-and-movement area in the classroom where children know they can go to listen to music and dance?

Pay particular attention to children to be sure that the activities match each child's age and developmental level. Is there a need to use assistive technology or adapt an activity as a way to engage a child with a disability to be more active? Think about how each child is currently participating in different physical activities and what might be needed to support him or her in greater participation.

There are many opportunities for the teachers to observe children's physical activity. The teachers need to observe the children's movements during play, and movement activity and incorporate more movement opportunities into the day for the children to get physically active. It's not only been two days, but Ms. Toni and Mr. Dave have already begun to notice an improvement in children's behaviors.