

June 2006 Teacher FITNESS Activity PLANNER



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Use this "sample activity plan" as a guide for planning activities that you can do in your classroom. Adapt it to suit your schedule and physical activity preferences.

Remember:

-Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes a day of "structured*" and unstructured** physical activity. The structured play/exercise could be conducted in shorter increments throughout the day.

-Preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time (except when sleeping). They should also develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks (i.e. roll, kick, throw, catch).

-Encourage them to get moving with positive comments that focus on effort: "Wow, you zoomed down the slide!" "You almost made a basket!"

-Think about safety. Help children remember hats and mittens during cold weather.

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Provide children with positive encouragement, both verbally and physically. NO matter what their level of skill, help them see fitness as fun and enjoyable. Praise children for participating in an activity - Building confidence is more important than skill at this stage (e.g., I'm glad you enjoyed playing that game vs. you played that game really well).

4 Family Walk Building Forts	5 Spidey Stretches Outdoor playground climber	6 Class Walk Balloon Tennis	7 Bouncing Relay Ribbon Dance	8 Choo Choo Train Jump the Trap	9 Follow the Music Maker Balance Beam	10 Backyard Detective's Scavenger Hunt Sprinkler Fun
11 Family Bike Ride Bandanna Tag	12 Stretching & Moving Exercises Ball Toss	13 It's Hip to be Square Gardening	14 Crab Walk Soccer Parachute/Blanket Game	15 Hula Hooping Outdoor playground climber	16 Class Walk Jungle Animal Tag	17 Family Walk Trip to the Park
18 Obstacle Course Wash Family Car	19 Pantomime Stretch Big Ball Bounce	20 Giggles & Wiggles Car Wash	21 Nature Walk Outdoor playground climber	22 It's Hip to be Square Frisbee Toss	23 Big Snake Row, Row, Row Your Buddy	24 Family Bike Ride Gardening
25 What's Round Throw for Distance	26 Yoga Tug of War	27 Class Walk Silly Animals on Parade	28 Stop & Go Outdoor playground climber	29 Fitness Freeze Aerobics Gardening	30 Treasure Hunt Fun with Bubbles	

*Structured Activities: Activities you direct or do with your preschooler to keep them moving. Also include activities that you might take your preschooler to like dance class or soccer.

**Unstructured Activities: Supervised free time for children to play actively on their own or with other children (e.g., outside on play structures, building forts, running and jumping)

Fun Fitness Planner Classroom Activities

Balance Beam

If you don't have a balance beam in your class, tape a piece of yarn on the floor and have the children walk on that. It's fun, and they fall less often.

Balloon Tennis

Gather some wooden paint stirrers or a cardboard wrapping paper tube and taped them to sturdy paper plates to make a racket. Then blow up balloons and have the children try to keep the balloons from falling to the ground. Also, each child can have a balloon and see how long he/she can hit the balloon before it touches the ground. It gets out a lot of energy and uses those muscles.

Ball Toss

Hang hula hoops at different heights. Give the children footballs and balls to practice throwing

Big Snake

The children start by stretching out on their stomachs and holding the ankles of the person in front of them to make a two-person snake that slithers on its belly. They soon connect up with other snakes to make a three-person snake and so on. The children may want to attempt to turn the whole snake over on its back without coming apart. The snake can go over "mountains" or curl up and go to sleep.

Bouncing Relay

Divide children into two lines that stand opposite each other. Use colored chalk or masking tape to mark off where children should form their lines. Explain that the first child will bounce a ball to the first child in the other line, and then go to the back of the other child's line. Continue until all children are on the opposite side from where they started.

Car Wash

Get out the trikes, wagons and scooters and have the kids have their own "car" wash. Invite the children to suggest the props and materials they will need. Caution children will be getting wet!

Choo-Choo Train

Two or more children form a train and chug around the yard, maintaining contact by keeping both hands on the hips or shoulders of the child in front of them. Cars begin to link together until there is one big train moving in unison. The train can go up a steep hill really slowly, swoosh down the hill, go backwards, make train noises and squat down to go through a low tunnel.

Crab Walk Soccer

Two teams sit on two goal lines a short distance apart. Team members are numbered. A soccer ball sits in the centre. An official calls a number. The members of that number from each team crab walk to the ball and attempt to get the ball over the opponent's goal line.

Fitness Freeze Aerobic

Do one or more of the following activities for ten to twenty seconds each: march, racewalk, skip, run, run on all fours, balloon or beach ball relay, jog slowly, run backward or sideways, hop on both feet, dribble a ball with your hands or feet. While you and the children are doing the suggested activities listed above, you or someone else yells "Freeze!" or blows a whistle. Everyone stops and stands still. Then someone yells "Go!" and everyone starts moving again until someone gives the next command. Note: If anyone tires, have them walk until they are ready to start the activity again. *Contra Costa Child Care Council*

Follow the Music Maker

First, line up the kids. Next, explain that this is a special, musical version of "follow the leader," in which everyone gets a chance to be leader. The leader can skip, move faster, act silly, stop suddenly, or do whatever he likes. Everyone must do as the leader does. Here's the twist: You are the D.J. for the day, and when you stop the music, everyone freezes in place until the music starts again. Then the leader must go to the back of the line, and the next person in line moves to the front. Now it's time to get the party started! Choose some lively children's music and have fun watching your little ones parade around the place, clowning all the way.

Fun with Bubbles

Kids love to make and chase bubbles. There are so many things you can do with bubbles, such as using bubble blowers or bubble wands. Bubbles are inexpensive and always a fun outside summer activity. Put your bubble mixture in a dish bin or a small blow-up wading pool. Bubble wands can be created by cutting shapes out of paper plates or using a strawberry basket. Make giant bubbles by creating a wand out of two straws and some yarn. Thread the yarn through the two straws and tie the ends together. Using the straws as handles, dip the straws and string into the bubble mixture. Carefully lift it out the bubble mixture and the large bubble will form. Make your own bubbles by combining one quart of water with eight tablespoons of dishwashing liquid and 8 tablespoons of glycerin (from a drug store). Shake mixture together and enjoy!

Gardening

Gardening not only increases a child's knowledge of nature and nutrition, but it is also a wonderful form of exercise with children. Decide whether you want to plant a square-foot garden, raised garden, or a conventional garden with rows, or a container garden made from empty milk cartons or flower pots. A garden need not be extensive or have dozens of kinds of plants. Parents or local organizations may even contribute soil or fertilizer to the project.

Here are some fun garden ideas to start with:

➤ **COLOR GARDEN**

Plant colorful flowering plants such as yellow marigolds, red geraniums, white daisies, and purple petunias. As the plants blossom, enjoy the colors together.

➤ **PIZZA GARDEN**

Plant a tomato and the herbs needed to make pizza sauce. Try a tomato plant (any variety that grows well in your area, except cherry) in the middle of your garden, surrounded by oregano, basil, and thyme.

➤ **BUTTERFLY GARDEN**

Attract butterflies to your home with plants that provide food and shelter for them. Plants that are inviting to butterflies include the butterfly plant, asters, black-eyed Susans, coreopsis, purple coneflowers, sweet alyssum, and verbena.

➤ **MR. MCGREGOR'S GARDEN**

Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter before planting this garden with your child. Be sure to include carrots, lettuce, radishes, parsley, potatoes, and beans in this storybook garden.

Whichever type of garden you choose, consider the climate and growing season before planting. Use sturdy, well-made tools and equipment. Shovels and hoes with short handles are easier for children to use than full-size tools. Adapt projects to adults' level of experience and children's ages. Encourage children to do a share of all the garden chores with you: feeding plants, moving mulch, thinning, staking, weeding, and edging. Leave room for good old-fashioned digging too. Visit your

garden with your children every day to make sure you don't miss its rewards: opening flowers, the first zucchini, fresh strawberries, buzz of honeybees, and whirl of hummingbirds.

Giggles and Wiggles

Jog in place doing the following activities. One teacher signal, the students being to wiggle their fingers, then their wrist. Go to forearms, elbows, should and ribcage, hips, knees and then head. Start from toes and work your way up, toes knees, hips, rib cage, shoulders, elbows, forearms, wrists, and fingers.

Hats On A Fence

Gather some old hats, 3 or more beanbags, and a board (2x4 about 5' long). Place the board between two tables and place the hat on the board. Mark a line on the floor for the children to stand on while trying to knock off the hats with the beanbags.

It's Hip to Be Square!

Square-dancing is a great way to get moving. Play songs like "Oh! Susanna" and "Thank God I'm a Country Boy." Call out steps while you demonstrate how to bow to a partner, hook arms and swing, and do-si-do (pass each other right shoulder to right shoulder and circle back to back).

Hula Hooping

Allow 6-8 children to use hula hoops in any way that they like, making sure that the hoops are used safely. After the children have used the hula hoops in their own way, the teacher will show them different ways to use the hula.

- a) Around the waist - setting it right to your back, then spinning it around with your body.
- b) Make the hula hoop go round and round on the ground.
- c) Make hula spin on arm
- d) Arrange hula hoops on ground and jump over them

Jump The Trap

Tie somebody's shoe to the end of a 5 to 8 feet long rope. One player holds the shoeless end of the rope and spins around--not too fast--so that the rope sweeps in a circle. The weight keeps the rope fairly near the ground. Players must jump over the rope as it passes them (this is easiest if kids spread themselves around the circle so they're not all in one clump). Don't make it an elimination game--just have everyone take turns jumping and spinning. Also, using a repetitive jump-rope rhyme can make it easier for kids to get a feel for the duration of each turn of the rope. Have the center turner spin the rope progressively faster so that it rises higher and the jumping gets a little more challenging.

Jungle Animal Tag

Choose the first child to be "it." Now, have everybody start running around. "It" will try to tag them. If a child can stop and imitate a jungle animal before "it" touches her, she's safe. For example, can she grab a tree branch and be a sloth? Hiss like a snake? Hop around and "ooh-ooh-aah-aah" like a little monkey? If "it" touches another child before she has a chance to make like a jungle creature, she becomes the new "it." Repeat until exhausted!

Nature Walk

Go on a nature walk in your neighborhood or a nearby park. Allow the children to pick up objects from nature such as rocks, bark, grass, leaves, flowers, nuts etc., and put them into their plastic bags to take back to the class. As you walk along encourage children to talk about what they see and hear in nature. Allow them to observe and ask questions. When you return set out the art tools and let them create a collage of their nature walk.

Outside Animals

Have an open space to run, hop and slither. Once you have talked about animals, go outside and have children stand in a line facing the way you will run. Then explain that they will go down and come back as an animal. Tell youngsters an animal and see if they know how it gets from one place to another. If they don't know help them. Ex: bunny - hops, tiger - on all fours, and snakes - slithers.

Pantomime Stretch

As a cool down and "calm down", parents/caregivers and kids sit on the floor and act out silly stories such as opening arms and legs like an alligator's jaws and eating up healthy food that kids suggest. Close legs and arms in front as if to gobble up the food. Invent your own scenarios and let the kids give suggestions along the way.

Ribbon Dance

Give children a scarf or a long, trailing piece of crepe paper. Play music and dance with your ribbon.

Row, Row, Row Your Buddy

Have an area rug or carpet and pairs of children. Invite the children and their partners to climb into an imaginary boat (an area rug or blanket will work fine) and float off on an adventure while singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Show each two friends how to sit facing each other with legs out, knees slightly bent, and feet touching. Then have them hold hands and row by moving back and forth (in a push-me, pull-you style) in rhythm to their singing.

Silly Animals on Parade:

Create silly animal walks with your children: waddle like ducks, scamper and squeak like mice, lumber like bears. Encourage your kids to suggest humorous specifics: *Let's pretend we're ducks that oink like pigs. Let's pretend we're bears who want to be ballet dancers*

Spidey Stretches

Arrange the children in a large circle (ten feet between children) with one child in the center. Spiderman or Spiderwoman (the child in the center) thinks of different ways to stretch (touch toes, overhead, to the side, wind-mills, etc.), while the rest of the group jogs around the circle. When Spidey calls out "Spiderman stretches" or "Spiderwoman stretches", all stop and copy the stretch Spidey is demonstrating. Spidey joins the circle, and the group jogs again. As Spidey joins the circle, he or she selects the new Spidey who begins the process again.

Statues

To get your children moving, put on a piece of up-tempo music and invite them to move while the music is playing and to freeze into a statue when you pause it.

Stop & Go

Play stop and go. Color the front of a paper plate green and the back red. Attach a popsicle stick. Then have the children run around outside, turn the sign to red and yell "Stop" then flip it to green and yell "Go". For older children you can play without talking.

Stretching & Moving Exercises

- ***Lazy-Day Rest***

To relax the body.

Position: Lie on your backs on the floor, legs slightly apart, and arms limply at your sides.

Action: Take a deep breath, hold, relax. Pull your toes towards and then away from your bodies, hold, relax. Pull your tummies in, hold, relax. Pull seats together, hold, relax. Make a tight fist with your hands, hold, relax. With your hands at sides, shrug your shoulders, hold, relax. Smile while turning your head from side to side. Frown and repeat action.

- ***Small Ball***

To relax the body and stretch muscles.

Position: Kneel on the floor with your legs together.

Action: Rest your seat on your legs, lower your head to the floor, and tuck your hands to your side on floor, pointing backward. Take two or three deep breaths and blow it out. Relax.

- ***Wash the Dishes***

To stretch the shoulder muscles.

Position: Stand facing your child, holding her hands.

Action: "Wash the dishes, dry the dishes, turn the dishes over." Swing your arms side to side while singing the rhyme. On the word "over", swing your arms up overhead and turn your child around in a full circle so your arms are crossed. Repeat arm swings and rhyme and on word "over," return your child to original position (arms uncrossed). Repeat several times.

- ***Angel-in-the-Snow***

To stretch the muscles of the arms and legs.

Position: Lie on your backs.

Action: Pretend to be in the snow and move your arms and legs "in" and "out" several times like an angel.

Treasure Hunt

You will need small plastic gold coins, inexpensive beaded necklaces, small rings, play money, and a treasure box decorated by the children. A map made by the teacher for the children to follow. Inexpensive treasures that can be found in any party store.

The teacher must first hide the treasure filled box in a good hiding place in the yard. Next, the teacher will prepare a creative map for the children to follow, i.e. outside, start at the tree in the bike area. Look up and find another clue. The second clue might have a rhyme or just say now walk twenty-five steps until you come to the playhouse. Repeat with other stations. Finally when the kids come to the place where the treasure is buried or hidden, they will open it and take turns sharing the treasure inside. It's great fun and always a success!