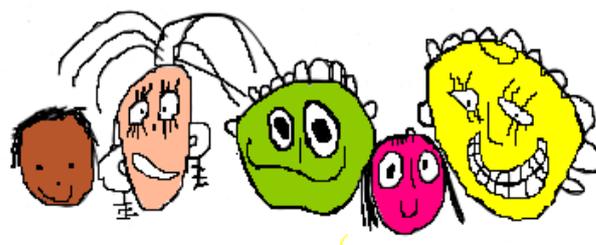


Hamilton Community Pre-School

"Where discoveries, learning and fun connect."



Information Sheets for Parents

Physical Activity

Most children find it fun to play and be active, and it is important to encourage physical activity in the early childhood years for two reasons. Firstly, early development of good habits may form a foundation for later years. Secondly, regular physical activity in early childhood can impact on immediate and long-term health outcomes.

Early childhood settings are the ideal place to develop good physical activity habits and influence the behaviours of families. For children under five years, active play is the best form of physical activity. Active play involves unstructured 'free' play and structured 'planned' play (both indoors and particularly outdoors), 'active transport' (such as walking to a destination, rather than driving or using a stroller) and certain everyday tasks.

The benefits of active play go beyond just the physical, and include the development of social, language and intellectual skills. Pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years) should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.

A child's job is to move freely and be active every day! The skills developed between one to five years of age range from learning to walk through to running and throwing a ball. In fact, at no other time in life will children learn so many physical skills.

Studies of children under five years of age have shown that active play helps them to:

- improve the health of their muscles, bones and heart
- develop new movement skills and imagination, and learn about their body
- build self-confidence and cope with stressful situations
- enjoy being active
- improve their communication skills, including how to solve problems and make decisions
- learn how to interact, share, take turns and care about others.

Active play

Young children naturally look for adventure and want to explore. The pace of activity can range from light actions (such as building or playing on the floor) through to vigorous actions (such as running or jumping). The ability and development of a child should direct what activities and play are appropriate and interesting to them. Young children like to show off what they can already do, and be regularly challenged to try new things.

Active play is incorporated in our program by the following types of play

- Unstructured 'free' play
- Structured 'planned' play
- Active transport (walking excursions)
- Everyday physical tasks
- Fundamental movement skills

All of these types of play are included at Hamilton Community Preschool, particularly unstructured free play.

Unstructured play

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 of unstructured play at preschool include:

- free play in playgrounds or sandpits
- dancing to music
- Imaginative play that incorporates the time of year (such as 'being a fish' in summer, or 'being a falling leaf' in autumn).
- 'Rough and tumble' play can sometimes be part of unstructured play, particularly for boys. Although boys may play differently to girls, both boys and girls need equal access to all play spaces and play items.

Structured play

Structured play is planned play that may take place at set times, have certain rules or need special equipment.

Examples of structured play at Preschool include:

- creative movement and dancing
- action games and songs, such as 'Hokey Pokey'
- Guided discovery sessions – problem-solving activities where adults prompt children to work out better ways to perform certain movements.

Active transport

Active transport involves using physical activity, such as walking, pedalling a bike or using a scooter, to travel. Families can also be encouraged to use active transport. Most young children are able to walk or pedal, even if it is just for a short time. As they get older and stronger, the distance and amount of time children walk or pedal can gradually increase. Active transport is also a good opportunity to teach children about road and pedestrian safety. Remember to supervise children when participating in active transport.

Some simple examples of children and adults using active transport include:

- Walking to Beaumont street for various reasons (mothers/fathers day shopping)
- Encouraging children to walk into preschool rather than a pram or being carried
- Children ride their bikes or scooter to preschool and leave it to ride home again in the afternoon.

Everyday physical tasks

Children enjoy helping adults with many everyday physical tasks. These activities do not need to be restricted to chores, and can also include spontaneous games.

Examples of everyday physical tasks include:

- Helping with the gardening
- Tidying up inside and outside play spaces
- Helping to set up activities and meal areas.

Fundamental movement skills

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are the building blocks for movement. They are skills children need to participate successfully in all types of games, physical activities and sports. Examples of these skills can be frequently seen in popular games played by children. Research shows that children who are competent in FMS are more likely to enjoy sports and activities and develop lifelong commitment to sport and physical activity. Here at Hamilton Community Preschool we aim to help young children develop these important skills.

Examples of Fundamental movement skills tasks include:

- FMS are embedded in our program with skill practiced in Outdoor play
- FMS are used as a form of transitioning from one activity to the next
- Children are always being shown the correct way to do FMS so they can practice anytime.

[Here](#) is a list of all the Fundamental Movement Skills we practice at Preschool