

**Early movers**

Helping under-5s live active & healthy lives



# <sup>1</sup> **Early movers – An introduction to the guide**



BHF National Centre  
**physical activity+health**

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# Welcome to Early movers



## Acknowledgements

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Finally, thanks go to the BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health, especially Angela Newport and Sonia McGeorge for compiling this guide.

This book is intended as a guide for nursery workers who work with under 5-year-old children and who would like their setting to be more physical activity friendly. The suitability of activities for a particular setting or a particular child should be assessed by the user before being assessed before any programme is used and expert and specific guidance obtained, where necessary.



## What's Early movers?

We've produced the Early movers guide to help and support you plan and organise developmentally appropriate physically active play environments for children under five.

It aims to help you build on existing practices by supporting the adoption of a whole setting approach to physical activity and providing ideas to extend your physical activity provision.

It will also help you meet the learning and development requirements of the various UK curriculums, in particular for physical development.

## Why have we produced it?

In July 2011, the four Chief UK Medical Officers released new public health physical activity guidelines for early years children. This is the first time there have been UK recommendations for the amount of physical activity for under-5s.

The guidelines reflect the growing awareness of the benefits of physical activity for younger children, and follows the lead of other major countries.

Early movers helps to explain the guidelines and provides you with a wealth of information to help you apply them.

In 2010, the BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health (BHFNC) carried out a UK audit of physical activity provision in nurseries and children's centres in England<sup>1</sup>. Their findings, together with a growing concern among practitioners and teachers about poor motor skill development among increasing numbers of children starting school, showed the need for a physical activity guide with lots of practical ideas.

## Who's it for?

This guide is for early years settings who provide care to children from birth up to the age of five. It can be used by all regulated providers, irrespective of the time that children spend in their care, including:

- local authority maintained nursery schools
- private, voluntary and independent nurseries
- nursery classes within primary schools
- pre-schools
- children's centres
- registered childminders and nannies
- other early years providers such as playgroups and baby and toddler groups.

It's also useful for professionals who provide support to settings, such as health improvement officers or early years advisers, where physical activity may be one element of a focus on healthy lifestyles.



**Being regularly physically active is vital for all of us. It improves our health, wellbeing and helps us live longer, more active lives.**

**And, it's especially important for children. Being active from our earliest months, as a normal part of daily life, can establish a positive pattern for our whole lives.**

## What's in it?

Early movers is made up of seven booklets.

### 1. Early movers – An introduction to the guide

This booklet explains how Early movers can help you plan and organise appropriate physical activities for all your children, and develop your skills to help them live active and healthy lives. It also contains a wide range of resources for further information and support.

### 2. Introduction to physical activity in the early years

This booklet also includes the UK physical activity guidelines for under-5s, and explains how this guide supports UK early years curriculum areas of development.

### 3. Planning and organisation for early years managers

This booklet will help you develop both a whole setting approach to physical activity, audit your current provision and plan your physical activity policy.

### 4. Getting the best from your environment

This booklet will help you create environments for physically active play and make the most of your indoor and outdoor spaces. It also includes tips on reducing sitting time for your children.

### 5. Practical ideas for physically active play

This booklet will help you plan and provide activities for all stages of development from non-walkers to pre-schoolers. It also includes detailed skills cards to help teach specific skills such as catching and throwing.

### 6. Getting children involved

This booklet will help you provide the right balance of activities for individual children, and develop your skills for encouraging different types of play. It also covers how to ensure all your children can be included in activities.

### 7. Getting parents and carers involved

This booklet will help you encourage parent and carer support and build better partnerships with them. It also provides ideas for promoting family physical activities beyond your setting.



## Other resources in the guide

**Help your baby move and play every day (G609)** and **Help your child move and play every day (G610)** leaflets

For lots of tips and ideas for parents and carers on encouraging their babies and children to be active every day.

### Height chart (G612)

For parents and carers to log their child's height as they grow and developmental firsts as they progress by being active.

### Stickers (G613)

For you to reward children or use on play equipment or around the setting.

### Posters (G614)

Six A3 motivational physical activity posters for use in your early years setting.

To order any of these items, please visit [bhf.org.uk/teachers](https://bhf.org.uk/teachers) Or call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566. Or email [orderline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:orderline@bhf.org.uk). Please quote the order code number.

## Other BHF resources

### Artie likes to play (G38)

Encouraging active play with Artie and his friends. It includes a quiz and classroom ideas.

### Artie Beat's picnic reading book (G38b)

Artie and his friends get ready for a healthy picnic. It includes a quiz, classroom ideas and healthy eating advice.

### Artie Beat hoopla challenge (G177)

A sticker sheet to encourage children to eat their five-a-day.

### Artie Beat find the fruit colouring sheet (G475)

A colouring sheet for children under seven years old.

### Artie's Olympics (G117)

A fun activity scheme which encourages children to get active and raise funds for your setting and the BHF.

### The big heart book (G77)

This explains the heart and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. It includes teacher notes and activities for each topic.

To order any of these items, please visit [bhf.org.uk/teachers](https://bhf.org.uk/teachers) Or call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566. Or email [orderline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:orderline@bhf.org.uk). Please quote the order code number.

We are committed to promoting a heart healthy lifestyle to everyone, so our resources are free of charge. We would, however, welcome a donation towards our costs.

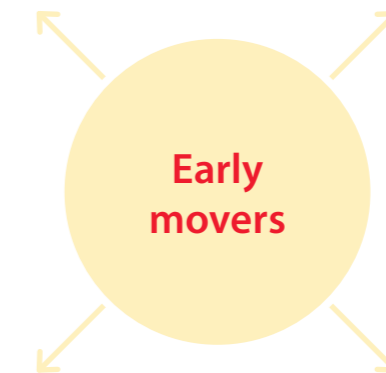
# How this guide can help you



Early movers is designed to help you support all children to achieve a solid foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity.

Provides guidance to help you with physical activity provision in your early years setting

Raises the profile of physical activity in your setting, the home and the wider community



Helps you meet the learning requirements of the relevant early years curriculums (particularly around physical development). See pages 22–27 in section 2

Helps you meet the requirements of early years policies, eg:

- Healthy Child Programme and reducing obesity – Child measurement programme [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- ‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’ (2010) – Government strategy [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- Early years physical activity guidelines (2011) [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- Getting it right for every child [www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright)
- ‘A fitter future for all’ – Framework for preventing and addressing overweight and obesity in Northern Ireland 2012–2022 [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

# Glossary



**Adult-led play** – Type of play where the learning is started by an adult, but then taken over by the child.

**Behavioural flexibility** – The ability to be able to adapt emotionally to new situations without getting stressed.

**Emotional wellbeing** – Recognising, understanding and effectively managing our feelings and emotions.

**Fine motor skills** – Movement abilities involving small muscles and precise movement, especially small movements of the hands, wrists, fingers, toes, lips and tongue.

**Free play or child-initiated play** – Play where a child leads their own play, with minimal interruption from an adult. It's often spontaneous and frequently unpredictable.

**Gross motor skills** – Whole body movements involving posture and larger movements, eg, in babies – head control, sitting, crawling, pulling to stand; in children – walking, running, climbing, kicking a ball.

**Midline** – An imaginary line that divides the body into right and left halves.

**Palmar reflex** – A newborn reflex – when you touch the palm of a baby, they automatically curl their fingers around your finger. This reflex generally disappears at about six months old.

**Physically active play** – Play that involves movements of all the major muscle groups, eg, legs. It can range from activities with small intermittent movements, eg, clapping hands, to large movements involving the whole body, eg, climbing and running. It tends to be used to describe young children's physical activity.

**Physical activity** – Any body movement produced by muscles that requires energy expenditure. The term is generally used to describe a young person or adult's physical movements. For young children, the term physically active play is more meaningful.

**Physical development** – Development of a child's control over their body, including control over muscles (gross and fine motor movements), and coordination of these movements.

**Physical literacy** – This can be described as 'the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the lifecourse.' Margaret Whitehead, 2010<sup>2</sup>

**Pincer grip** – Grasping an object between the thumb and forefinger.

**Resilience** – Being resilient can be defined as finding alternative strategies if things don't always go as planned.

**Structured physical activity** – This generally involves careful planning and is adult-led. It may take place at set times, have certain rules or need special equipment, eg, swimming lesson.

**Tripod grip** – A basic grasp where an object is held between the thumb, index finger and middle finger.



# Resources



## Engaging with parents and carers

The following resources stress the importance of early years providers working in close partnership with parents and carers.

### **Are you ready for your inspection? Ofsted's Childcare and Early Years Registers (England)**

Ofsted inspects how well providers work in partnership with others to ensure good quality early education and care. Download from: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare).

### **Supporting Families in the Foundation Years (England)**

A government document, published in 2011, which recognises the importance of settings linking closely with parents and carers to nurture their child's development. Download from: [www.education.gov.uk/publications](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications).

### **The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) (England)**

An early intervention and public health programme for families of children aged.

0–5 years. One of the core functions of the programme is to provide early intervention and support for parents and carers where additional support for their children may be needed. For more information go to: [www.orderline.dh.gov.uk](http://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk) and quote 297756/the Healthy Child Programme – Pregnancy and the first five years of life.

### **The Early Years Framework (Scotland)**

A 2008 publication which sets out the Scottish Government's vision for giving all children the best start in life and the steps the Scottish Government, local partners and practitioners in early years services need to take ensure this happens. Download from: [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

### **Principles for engaging with families: A framework for local authorities and national organisations to evaluate and improve engagement with families**

Produced by the Early Learning Partnership Engagement Group. Download at: [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk) (search 'A framework for local authorities...')

## Guidelines

### **Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Years (non-walkers) and UK Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Years (walkers) (British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health).**

Two leaflets for stakeholders, early years practitioners and health professionals to help them understand the physical activity guidelines for early years, and practical tips for implementing them. Download at: [www.bhfactive.org.uk](http://www.bhfactive.org.uk)

### **Start Active, Stay Active. A report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers (Department for Health).**

The full report, which updates the existing guidelines for children, young people and adults, and includes for the first time in the UK, guidelines for early years and older people. Download at: [www.dh.gov.uk/publication](http://www.dh.gov.uk/publication)

### **Help your baby move and play every day and Help your child move and play every day (BHF).**

Two leaflets for parents and carers to help with understanding the physical activity guidelines for early years and providing lots of ideas for implementing them at home and away from your setting. There are copies of both leaflets in this guide, and you can order more copies by visiting [bhf.org.uk/teachers](http://bhf.org.uk/teachers) Or call the BHF Orderline on 0870 600 6566. Or email [orderline@bhf.org.uk](mailto:orderline@bhf.org.uk) Please quote the order code number.



## Healthy eating

### **Eat Better, Start Better. Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England (School Food Trust).**

A practical guide to help early years providers and practitioners meet the Early years Foundation Stage welfare requirement for the provision of healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink. Download at: [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk)

### **Get Up and Grow (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing).**

A series of four booklets and leaflets for early years managers, practitioners and families. They provide information and ideas for promoting physical activity and healthy eating for the early years. Download at: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) (search 'Get Up and Grow').



## Outdoor play

### **Learning outdoors in the early years. A resource book (CCEA).**

A resource book which shows how the outdoor learning environment can be used for planning activities across all areas of learning. Download at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

### **Early Years Outdoor Learning – A Toolkit for Developing Early Years Outdoor Provision (Norfolk County Council).**

This resource offers lots of ideas for developing outdoor spaces to promote learning in all areas of the EYFS. Download at: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/outdoorlearning](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/outdoorlearning) and search 'Early years outdoor provision.'

### **Forest School Wales.**

For more information go to [www.forestschoolwales.org.uk](http://www.forestschoolwales.org.uk)

## Physical development

### **The Expression of Life (Chapter 1) in 'The Genius of Natural Childhood: Secrets of Thriving children'**

By Sally Goddard-Blythe. Published by Hawthorn Press. [www.hawthornpress.com](http://www.hawthornpress.com)

### **Developing Fundamental Movement Skills – Northern Ireland Foundation Stage Physical Development resource**

Designed to help teachers and practitioners plan, teach and assess physical development in the Foundation Stage curriculum. It includes a Teacher's Guide and booklets on balance, 'the sprint run', catching, hopping, jumping for distance and jumping for height. Download at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation-stage/areas-of-learning/physical-development](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/foundation-stage/areas-of-learning/physical-development)

### **Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

This provides non-statutory guidance on observing and assessing children, and planning across the seven areas of learning and development, including physical development for England. Download at: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) or [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)

### **Foundation Phase Child Development Profile (Welsh Assembly Government)**

This is to help practitioners observe children across all areas of learning, including physical development. Download at: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk) or Tel: 0800 083 6003.

### **Canadian factsheets (Canadian Sport for Life)**

1. 'Normal Childhood Development of Physical Skills'
2. 'Activity Milestones – the First Three Years'
3. 'Activity Benchmarks – For 4, 5 and 6 Year Olds'. Download at: [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)



## Physically active play ideas for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers

### **Start4Life and Play4Life (Department of Health (DH))**

This early years section of DH's Change4Life campaign is aimed at healthcare and childcare professionals. Active play resources are available to download and/or order from DH's orderline [www.orderline.dh.gov.uk](http://www.orderline.dh.gov.uk) or click on [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) (search Start4Life).

### **Move with me from birth to three family resource and activity cards (LEAP British Columbia (Canada))**

This includes activities from birth up to three years of age. Produced as part of the LEAP British Columbia (Canada) 2010 Legacies Now initiative. Download at: [www.2010legaciesnow.com](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com)

### **Active Movement resources (Sport and Recreation, (SPARC), New Zealand)**

A series of 14 booklets on how to encourage children 0–5 years to be more active. Relevant booklets for babies are: 'Tummy time, rolling and crawling' and 'Eyes need to move too.' All others are for toddlers and pre-schoolers. Download at: [www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz) (click on 'young people' then '0–5 years' to bring up list of available booklets.).

### **Move Baby Move (Queensland Government, Australia)**

A booklet with lots of ideas to incorporate safe, active movement into babies' daily routines from birth up to 14 months. Download at: [www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au) Search 'Move Baby Move.'

### **Active Start (Canadian Sport for Life)**

A number of downloadable factsheets and an online DVD on the importance of physical activity in the first six years of life. There are lots of activity ideas relevant to the different stages of a baby's and young child's development. Download at: [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)

### **Busy Bodies. Creative food and play ideas for pre-schoolers (ages 3–5) (Nutrition resource centre at the Ontario Public Health Association, Canada)**

Healthy eating and physical activity cards. Download at: [www.simcoemuskokahhealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahhealth.org)

### **Get Up and Grow (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing)**

A series of four downloadable booklets and leaflets specifically written for early years managers, practitioners and families which give lots of information and ideas for promoting physical activity and healthy eating for the early years. Download at: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) (search 'Get up and Grow').

### **I move we move. The guide (NSW Health Hunter New England Area Health Service, Australia)**

A physical activity resource for early years settings working with 0–5s. Download at: [www.goodforkids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.goodforkids.nsw.gov.au)

### **Start to Play resources (Youth Sport Trust)**

Aimed at those engaging with children aged between 0 and 5 years old, these resources encourage play and physical activity opportunities for young children and their parents and carers. Order at: [www.youthsportdirect.org.uk](http://www.youthsportdirect.org.uk) Training is also available, although not compulsory.

### **Start to Play inclusion activity cards (Youth Sport Trust)**

Designed to support the Start to play resources, these inclusion cards are aimed specifically at children with disabilities, but are also appropriate for all children. There are eight themes, each including three activity cards. Order at: [www.youthsportdirect.org.uk](http://www.youthsportdirect.org.uk)

### **Fizz and friends come out to play (toddler and pre-school sets) (Youth Sport Trust)**

As part of the Start to Play resources, these story books contain five activity cards aimed at developing moving, balancing and coordination skills. Order at: [www.youthsportdirect.org.uk](http://www.youthsportdirect.org.uk)

### **Active Play Everyday factsheets (Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in partnership with Australian Heart Foundation ACT)**

A series of five factsheets on various aspects of active play. Download at: [www.kidsatplay.act.gov.au](http://www.kidsatplay.act.gov.au)

### **Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers (HOP)**

This resource integrates physical activity, early language development and healthy eating for pre-school children aged three to five years. Published as part of the Canadian LEAP BC initiative. Download at: [www.2010legaciesnow.com/leap\\_bc](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/leap_bc)

### **Dance framework. Scheme of work for 3–5 years (National Dance Teachers Association)**

A framework which helps practitioners and teachers plan schemes of work for dance. It's part of a series of posters which demonstrates progression across the different stages from three to 19 years of age. Available in printed form, email: [office@ndta.org.uk](mailto:office@ndta.org.uk) or download at: [www.ndta.org.uk](http://www.ndta.org.uk)



## Songs, nursery and action rhymes

### Active Movement resources (Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC)).

A series of 14 booklets on how to encourage children 0–5 years to be more active. One of these booklets is 'Songs, Rhymes and Finger Plays.' Download at: [www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)

### The Genius of Natural Childhood. Secrets of Thriving Children by Sally Goddard Blythe (2011).

It includes many action songs and rhymes for babies to pre-schoolers. Published by Hawthorn Press. [www.hawthornpress.com](http://www.hawthornpress.com)



## UK early years curriculum document

### England

#### Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (Department for Education)

Download at: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) or [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)

#### Development matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department for Education)

This provides non-statutory guidance on observing and assessing children, and planning across the seven areas of learning and development, including physical development for England. Download at: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) or [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)

#### A Know How Guide. The EYFS progress check at age two'

Guidance to help practitioners with the EYFS progress check at age two. Both this and the EYFS progress check can be downloaded at: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk) or [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)

#### Learning, Playing and Interacting: Good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage. (Department for Children, Schools and Families)

Download at: [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk)

#### The Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) and Teacher Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (TARA) (Department for Education)

Booklets (for settings and schools respectively) which set out the statutory and reporting arrangements for the EYFS, along with how to submit data to local authorities (for those who require reporting of EYFS Profile data). It's reviewed annually and is available to download at: [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

#### Are you ready for your inspection? A guide to inspections of provision on Ofsted's Childcare and Early Years Registers (Ofsted)

This includes information on what inspectors look for when they're judging provision and gives some tips on the quality of provision. Download at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) or Tel: 0300 123 1231.

## Wales

### Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales (Welsh Assembly Government)

Download at: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

### Foundation Phase Child Development Profile Guidance

This helps practitioners observe children across all areas of learning, including physical development.

Download at: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

or Tel: 0800 083 6003.

### Physical Development

A booklet which provides guidance to support the physical development area of learning in the Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales. Download at: [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk) or Tel: 029 2037 5427.

## Scotland

### Pre-Birth to three. Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families

This replaces 'Birth to three: Supporting our Youngest Children' and gives guidance for students and staff working with or on behalf of the youngest children and their families in Scotland. Produced by Learning and Teaching Scotland. Download at:

[www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears)

### Curriculum for Excellence: health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes (Learning and Teaching Scotland)

Download at:

[www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk](http://www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk)

## Northern Ireland

### Understanding the Foundation Stage (Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA))

Download at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

### Learning outdoors in the early years. A resource book (CCEA)

A resource book which shows how the outdoor learning environment can be used for planning activities across all the areas of learning.

Download at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

### Learning through play in the early years. A resource book (CCEA)

This provides guidance on provision and progression in play and is intended as a starting point for practitioners in planning activities.

Download at: [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

## References

1. British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health (2010).
2. Whitehead, M. (2010). The concept of physical literacy. In: Whitehead M, editor. Physical literacy throughout the lifecourse. Oxon: Routledge; 2010.

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We are the nation's heart charity, dedicated to saving lives through pioneering research, patient care, campaigning for change and by providing vital information. But we urgently need your help. We rely on your donations of time and money to continue our life-saving work. Because together we can beat heart disease.

**bhf.org.uk/  
teachers**

 **Heart Helpline**  
**0300 330 3311**  
**bhf.org.uk**

Information & support on anything heart-related  
Phone lines open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday  
Similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers

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