

## Early Play & Exercise Benefit Children

Encouraging your child to get involved in play activities can have a positive long-term effect on his/her physical health and psychological well-being. According to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education ([www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org)), “children should be encouraged to be physically active from the beginning of life.”

Among their recommendations include the following guidelines for infants, toddlers and preschoolers:

### \* Infants:

- Adults should play with infants daily in activities that help children explore their environment
- Infants should be placed in safe settings that facilitate physical activity and do not restrict movement for prolonged periods of time.
- Infants' physical activity should promote the development of movement skills.
- Infants should have an environment that meets or exceeds recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.

### \* Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Toddlers should be involved in 30 minutes of structured physical activity; preschoolers at least 60 minutes.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours per day of daily, unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
- Toddlers should develop movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks; preschoolers should develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should have indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large muscle activities.

---Furnished by Ingham County Great Start Collaborative ([www.inghamgreatstart.org](http://www.inghamgreatstart.org))