

Planning Physical Activity Together

Supporting families to make a plan for doing physical activity together.



Authors: Kate Freire, Rod Pope, Kristen Andrews
With advice from children, parents and others



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Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respects to all First Nations Elders past, present, and emerging. We recognise the Wiradjuri people of Australia, who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which this resource was made.

We would like to thank:

- The children and parents who took part in research and advisory groups.
- Mrs Julie Rafter (child advocate) and Mrs Karen Paxton for research support during advisory groups.
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District and Riverina Paediatrics paediatricians, in particular Dr Megan Suthern.
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, in particular Dr Jason Bennie.
- Mrs Rebecca Barker (Yorta Yorta and Duduroa) and Mrs Rebecca Willis (Wonnarua) who gave advice on the cultural appropriateness of the original prototype.

ISBN 9781864674606

Charles Sturt University is an Australian University, TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018.
Charles Sturt University CRICOS Provider 00005F.

Charles Sturt University Three Rivers Department of Rural Health is funded under the Australian Government's Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program. <https://threerivers.csu.edu.au>

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Planning Physical Activity Together

Doing physical activity together can be messy and not everyone will enjoy it all the time. Planning together and discussing the activity before you do it may help.



Reviewing your activity afterwards to figure out what you and your partner liked, and how to improve it may help for next time.



This resource is based on the experiences and knowledge of primary-school aged children, their parents, researchers, and health professionals.



This resource may be used together with the blank plan which provides space for you to write your plan down on one page.

Who?



Families can do physical activity together in many ways.

- Sometimes everyone might join in. At other times it may be just one child and parent or carer, or other variations.
- Do plans need to be made with anyone who is not taking part? Do you need to arrange a play date/ child care?
- It is good to have different partnerships because people in the family may have different needs.

Now you have identified who is going to take part in the physical activity.

It is important **EVERYONE** who is going to take part is also involved in planning the activity.

You will be asked at the end of the resource if you made the plan together and if you are happy to try out your plan together.

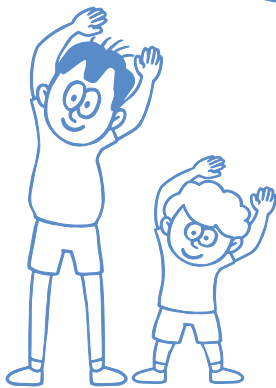


Where and what?

Physical activity is any activity where you are moving your body. It can sometimes make you breathe hard, like running and jumping. It could also be practising sporting skills, like throwing and catching, or playing a game. Physical activity could also be building your strength or balance, like climbing in a playground or using the monkey bars.

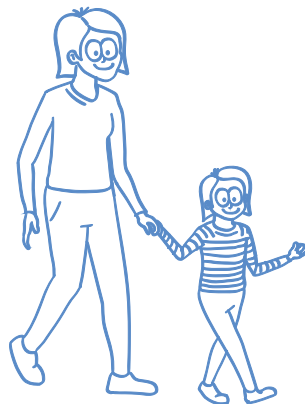
Physical activity can be done anywhere.





There are many kinds of physical activity you can do together.

Here are some examples, but you will be able to think of **MANY** more.

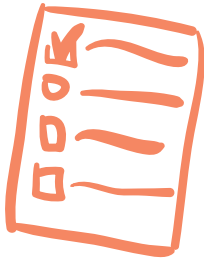


- **Inside:** human wheelbarrow races, dancing, online activities such as yoga, Wii Fit.
- **Backyard/driveway:** hopscotch, ball games (kicking, throwing and catching practice), cricket, football, handball.
- **Playground:** follow-the-leader around the playground, the floor is lava game.
- **Tennis court or oval:** ball games, shooting hoops, skipping, running games or races.
- **Swimming pool:** swimming laps, races, throwing and catching games.
- **Park:** walking, running, biking and chasies/tag games.
- **Active transport:** walking/biking/scooting to the shops or school.

How?



It is important you and your activity partner decide how you will do the activity together.



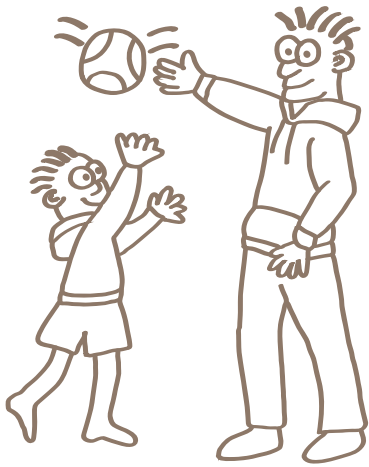
You may need to discuss the activity in some detail. For example, going swimming could be swimming laps or playing games in the pool, or a bit of both. Or you may need to agree on the rules for a game before you begin. Coming up with a clear plan together helps everyone prepare and manage their feelings during the activity.

This dad explains how his family does a weekend bike ride.

"Sometimes I or my wife starts with my son and then one of us will join them with our daughter later. Or I start on my own, they join me and then I take our daughter home whilst my son and wife carry on."



You and your physical activity partner are different.



- Because we are all different, it can take a bit of planning and experimenting to figure out how to do activities together.
- Are there any differences between you and your activity partner you could discuss to make sure the activity will be fun for everyone?
- For example, there might be a difference in size, strength, speed, length of time you can keep running, or how well you can catch, throw or hit a ball.

It is important to discuss this aspect of doing activity together, as both children and parents have told us going too fast or doing something too hard is not fun.

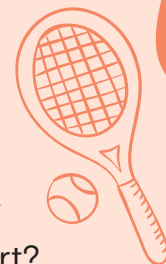
Here are some ideas you could try:

- Slowing down together. Or alternating between the slow pace and short distances at own intensity or speed.
- Do different physical activity but together. Such as, someone walks or runs whilst the other person rides their bike.
- Different rules in catching or throwing games for different members of the family. Such as, catching with one or two hands.
- Complex plans to accommodate whole family different needs and capabilities.



Is there anything you need to prepare for the activity?

- Do you need to pack a bag/ find equipment/ book a court?



When?



Day?

Looking at a calendar together may help you work out when you are both free

- **Saturday/Sunday:** A good starting point is to plan to do some physical activity together on the weekend.
- **Holidays** are also a time that you may have more time to spend together.
- You may be able to find other times too.



Time?

- Doing activity in the morning might be a good idea. It means you do it before something else takes your time, focus and energy.
- In summer, do it before it gets too hot.
- In winter, you might prefer to do it when the temperature has warmed up.

Remember

- Being active together does not need to take a long time.
- Sometimes 10-20 minutes is enough.
- Being active together, even for a short time, is better than nothing.



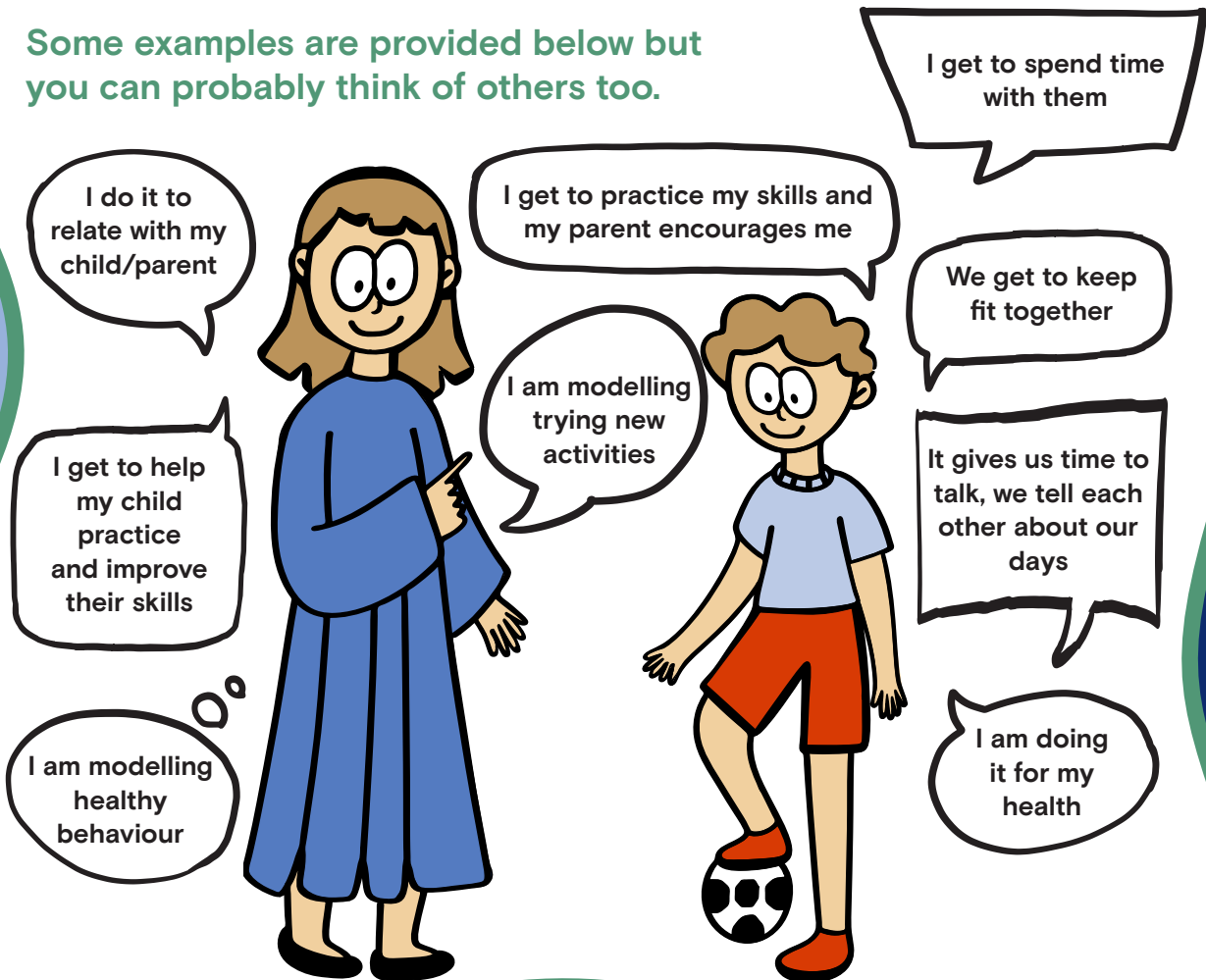
Why?



You may want to discuss why you are doing this activity together.

- Understanding why your partner wants to do an activity may help you understand more about them and gives you chances to support them.
- If you don't want to do that activity, you can say no, and find something you all want to do.
- You don't need the same reason for doing the activity.

Some examples are provided below but you can probably think of others too.



Keeping safe



Physical safety

It is important to check that the environment and equipment you use during physical activity does not hurt you.

There are many ways you can plan to keep safe. For example:

- It could include choosing level ground so you don't trip when your focus is on catching a ball.
- It may include choosing equipment that suits your body. This could include making sure a bat or ball is not too heavy; and making sure you have helmets or pads to protect yourself.





Managing emotions

Emotions can sometimes become big during physical activity for many reasons.

- For example, when something happens in an activity you were not expecting. When your partner cannot keep up with you. When someone isn't following the rules or wants to stop. Or when someone has a different idea on how the activity should be done. You might also become frustrated when learning something new or get cross if a game doesn't go your way.
- Learning to manage your emotions is an important part of doing activity with others, but it takes practice.

Planning how to manage big emotions together may help families manage and develop everyone's emotional regulation skills.

Some families may already have plans for managing big emotions at other times. If you already have a plan that works for your family, can you adapt this plan for when you do activity together?

A three step action plan to managing big emotions is suggested below:



- **Stop. Take slow breaths together:** Agree that when emotions get too big: everyone will stop, take slow deep breaths. Agree to use quiet voices.
- **Accept:** Acknowledge together that everyone's emotions (such as: excitement, anger, frustration) can become big during physical activity, especially when playing a game or practising a new skill.
- **Enact plan:** Agree on a plan about what to do next. Such as: Do you carry on with your activity? Do you decide to focus on keeping calm, such as walking instead of running? Do you stop keeping score? Change or adapt the game so everyone experiences success?

Stopping

Children have told us this is the area of physical activity that they feel they have the least control over, and they find this aspect frustrating.

Children explain their different experiences.

“My brother gets angry, and Dad does not want him to, so he puts a stop to the game. I feel angry because then I can’t play for something I haven’t done. It’s not fair.”

“Dad will finish it by saying, “when you get out, the game is finished”, so then I know it will be finishing soon.”

Sometimes it is easy to know when an activity is ending because you reach the destination. But when there is not an obvious ending, plan and agree how and when it will end.



- Talk through options for stopping like setting a time limit, or number of scores. For example: once you have scored 10 times, we will finish the game and pack up together.



- Create habits or routines together for activities which provide a timeframe.



- This helps you manage your emotions because there is a known end to the activity and not just an abrupt end.
- It also helps you fully engage in the activity because you know how long it will take.

Did you make this plan together?

Yes No

Are you both happy to try out your plan?

Yes No



Reviewing together



This mum talks about how doing activity can be fun but sometimes it can also be hard work.

“It makes memories and that’s what families do. Sometimes it’s great fun and sometimes it’s a disaster! Sometimes somebody falls off and grazes their knee or the rain comes down and whatever. But we go and do it again.”



- Doing physical activity together can be messy and not everyone is going to enjoy it all the time.
- But moving most days is important.
- Find out what each person thought after a session has finished, as this may lead to ideas about how to improve everyone’s experience for the next time.

How much did you enjoy doing this activity with your partner?

Child: 😊 😊 😐 😞 😡

You could tell your partner why you gave this score

Parent: 😊 😊 😐 😞 😡

You could tell your partner why you gave this score





How can you work together to achieve what each of you want?

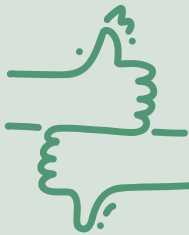
Child: *“Next time I would like to...”*

Think of a way to adapt the next session of physical activity to increase your enjoyment of it.



Parent: *“Next time I would like to...”*

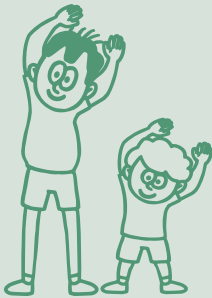
Think of a way to adapt the next session of physical activity to increase your enjoyment of it.



Should we do this activity again?

Child: Yes No

Parent: Yes No



How often? Is this an activity you want to do together regularly?

Establishing a regular day and time for doing something, making a routine for an activity, takes away some of the time and effort into planning these episodes.



When are you being active together again?

Date _____ Time _____



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