**PAPRICA
PETITE ENFANCE**
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTION
IN PRIMARY CARE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
TIPS TO DO WITH YOUR
CHILD

18 months
to 2½ years

unisanté
Centre universitaire de médecine générale
et santé publique • Lausanne

CHUV Département femme-mère-enfant

**pédiatrie
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L'organisation professionnelle
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h e t s
Haute école de travail social
Genève
Filière Psychomotricité

**canton de
vaud**

Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz
Promotion Santé Suisse
Promozione Salute Svizzera

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

for a healthy development

You are probably fully aware of the fact that your child needs exercise to stay in good health. Children who get adequate physical activity are more even-tempered, sleep better and have a healthier appetite. Play and physical activity boost their self-confidence and help them express their emotions and build relationships. Research has shown that children who engage in physical activity are more skilful and sustain fewer injuries. Regular physical activity is good for their bones, heart and body weight and promotes learning (e.g. during language acquisition).

Children need exercise

Children seldom sit still for very long, and you might think that that's enough physical activity. In point of fact, children's physical condition has deteriorated in recent years. This is largely inadvertent and mainly a result of our modern lifestyle: Our days are busy, we walk and cycle less, we sit for long periods, surrounding ourselves with screens (TVs, smartphones, etc.), and our environment is less suited to physical activity (parks that are far away, dangerous roads, neighbours who are sensitive to noise). But children have a natural urge to move, and even simple activities are beneficial.

How can you support your child?

The suggestions on the following pages are intended to help you support the development of your child's motor skills in day-to-day life. Use your – and your child's – imagination to supplement these ideas.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HELPS ME TO...

... develop strength and dexterity

My parents can help me by:

» allowing me to do things by myself (get dressed, tidy up, etc.)
» encouraging me to walk (instead of sitting in the buggy)
» listening to me and taking me seriously
» setting rules and boundaries
» providing me with a safe environment

... build my self-confidence

... express myself

... engage in uninterrupted play

... learn my limits and avoid injuries

QUIET ACTIVITIES

Cat and mouse

Hide under the covers.
Can your child find your body underneath?

variation

Switch roles or let your child guess which part of your body they have discovered.

Everyone goes to bed

At bedtime, allow your child to put their dolls to bed or park their toy cars in the garage.

variation

From time to time, your child's favourite stuffed animal can help, too.

The little sculptor

Has your child ever played with play dough?
Explore all the things you can make together.

variation

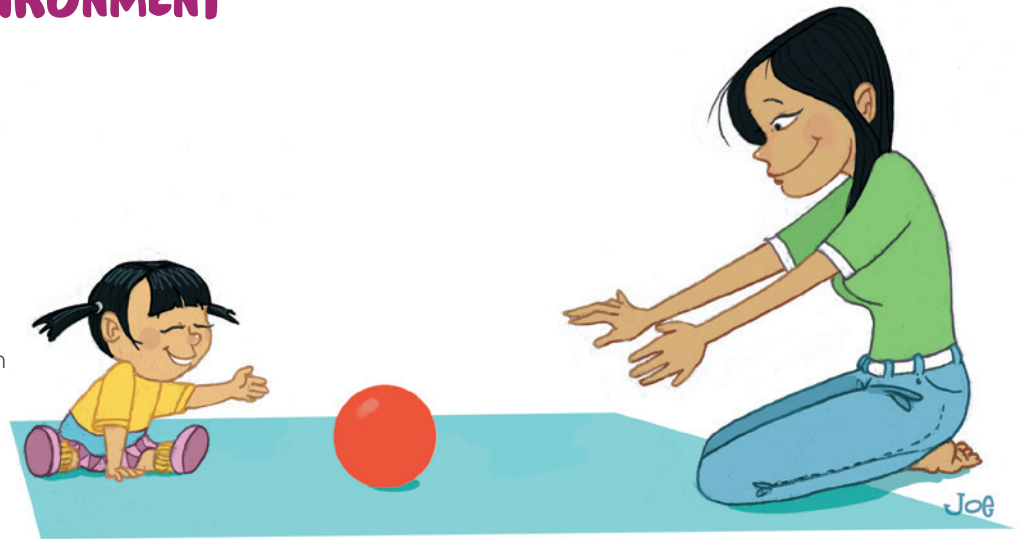Make animals or things together to feed your child's imagination and stimulate their fine motor skills.

IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Roll the ball

Roll a ball back and forth between the two of you.

variation

Throw a ball back and forth while standing outside.

What animal am I?

Imitate animals (tiger, rabbit, horse, turtle, etc.) by copying their sounds and movements (jumping, crawling, etc.).

variation

Pretend the animal is expressing different types of emotions, such as happiness, sadness or anger.

Obstacle course

Build an obstacle course with your child in the living room using chairs, tables, pillows, boxes, etc.

BAD-WEATHER ACTIVITIES

Let's dance

Turn on the radio or play some music that makes you want to get up and dance with your child.

variation

Nursery rhymes accompanied with gestures can help your child learn to talk.

Playing car

Hold your child's hands and pretend to be a car that's turning the corners.

variation

Use your fingers to mimic the various levers (start button, horn, indicator, etc.).

Into the great outdoors

Dress your child in a raincoat and wellies and go for a walk.

variation

Help your child discover new things: Guide them across various surfaces or over a fallen tree trunk.

WEARING THEM OUT

At the playground

Encourage your child to climb and slide and play with other children. Stay nearby and make sure they don't get hurt.

variation

Practise kicking a ball with your child and chase after it together.

Building a tower

Build a tower out of shoe boxes (or something similar) with your child. They will have fun toppling it, rebuilding it and toppling it again.

Mosquito bites

Go outside and pretend to be a mosquito. Chase after your child so you can catch them, "bite" them and tickle them.

variation

Switch roles.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find informational material such as brochures, videos and more with additional suggestions, ideas for games and advice at **www.paprica.ch** (website in French only).
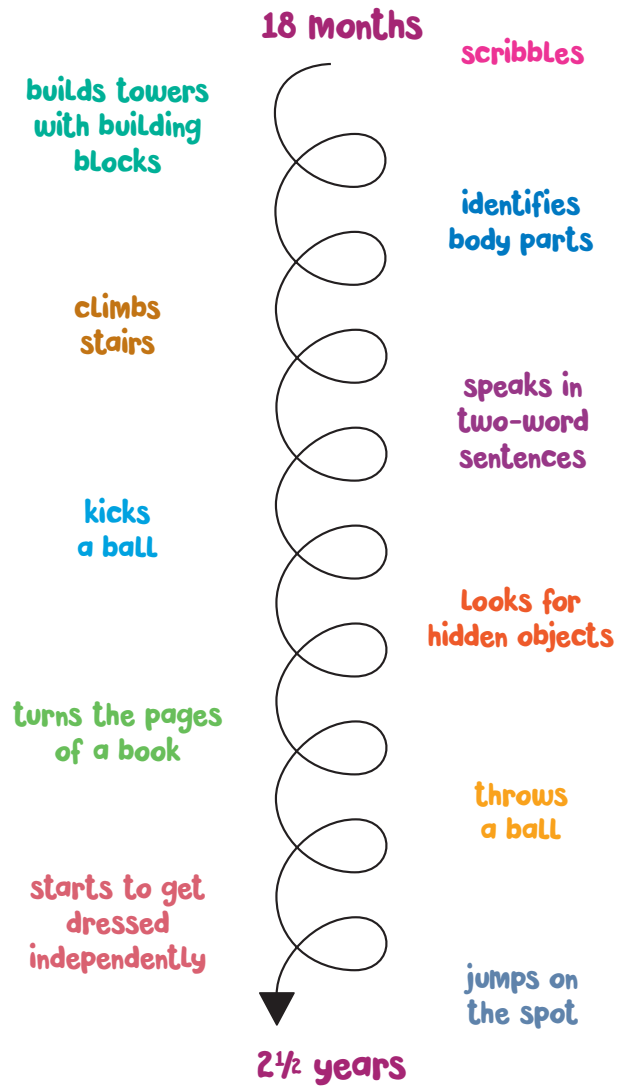
RECOMMENDATIONS

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Very young children need to get at least 180 minutes of physical activity (playing outside, crawling, walking, etc.) of varying intensity every day. These activities can be spread out over the day. For more information: www.hepa.ch

LESS SITTING

Keep to a minimum the time they spend sitting down, including screen time (TV, smartphone, computer, tablet, etc.). For more information: www.jeunesetmedias.ch

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

18 months

- builds towers with building blocks
- scribbles
- identifies body parts
- climbs stairs
- speaks in two-word sentences
- kicks a ball
- Looks for hidden objects
- turns the pages of a book
- throws a ball
- starts to get dressed independently
- jumps on the spot

2½ years