

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

WHY?

Thrive Group Tasmania recognises the importance of physical activity for young children.

Encouraging active play supports healthy growth and development; builds self-confidence and independence; promotes social competence; relieves stress and improves balance, movement and coordination skills.

Thrive supports children having opportunities to explore, to test own abilities and engage in positive risk taking experiences. These opportunities are crucial to building resilience and self-belief and creating a rich program full of creativity, challenge, excitement, novelty and fun.

WHO?

This policy applies to families, staff and Educators enrolled with, or working in the following Thrive Children's Services:

- Early Learning Services
- Outside School Hours Care Services
- Family Day Care Services

WHAT?

Guide for Practice

Thrive will use the following as a guide to practice:

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing: Guidelines for Healthy Growth and Development of your Child; 24 Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to five years of age) – see Appendix A.

24 Hour Movement Guidelines For children and young people (aged five to seventeen years) – see Appendix B.

Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood.

Move Well, Eat Well – Early Childhood Award Program managed by the Tasmanian Department of Health

Thrive's Family Day Care Services and all Thrive Centre Based Services are members of the Move Well, Eat Well Program. They are fully committed to implementing and sustaining active play and a healthy eating message.

H8 THRIVE GROUP TASMANIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Children's Services

Thrive Key Messages

- All children attending Thrive services will have frequent opportunities to engage in physical activity
- Physical activities will be both planned and spontaneous; balance safety and challenge; and support children's skill development and personal growth
- Screen based activities will be limited and carefully monitored
- Health promotion with families will be the focus and information/resources provided about the importance of physical activity for children.
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HOW?

Please refer to the Physical Activity Procedure (following this Policy).

WHEN?

Thrive actively encourages Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care and Family Day Care Educators to:

- Implement physical activity messages on an ongoing basis
- Offer active play experiences daily
- Plan for and incorporate physical activities in individual programs on an ongoing basis
- Maximise spontaneous opportunities for physical activity across each day
- Adopt a risk management approach to reducing the possibility of harm without denying/minimising the challenge on an ongoing basis
- Support children's skill development and personal growth on an ongoing basis
- Limit and carefully monitor screen based activities on an ongoing basis
- Promote the key physical activity messages with families on an ongoing basis,

Thrive will provide all employees covered by this Policy with the appropriate training, so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' who breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROCEDURE

HOW?

Providing Frequent Opportunity for Physical Activity

NCN supports all age groups (infants, toddlers and school age children) having daily opportunities for physical activity.

The Australian twenty-four Hour Movement Guidelines for Early Years (birth to five years) emphasises the importance of supervised floor play for infants (birth to one year); and recommends toddlers (one to three years) and pre-school aged (three to five years) having at least three hours of physical activity across the day; and children (five to twelve years) at least sixty minutes.

NCN encourages services to use these recommendations as a guide.

Providing Physical Activities

NCN supports services in offering a broad range of activities including active games, walks in the local community, indoor and outdoor movement and learning experiences; environmental exploration and dance or movement to music. The activities will be integrated into each service program as part of the focus on supporting children's development and minimising sedentary time.

Planning

At all NCN services:

- NCN recommends scheduling outside/active play two or more times a day per day for children aged one to five years
- Free and creative active play is part of the daily curriculum (spread through the day)

- Adult guided play experiences, such as dance, drama, moving to music, climbing and active games are planned daily and spread throughout the day
- Indoor or outdoor active play is not withheld as punishment
- Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers are not to be kept sedentary, restrained or inactive for more than one hour at a time, except when sleeping
- At least twice per year, NCN recommends services arrange and promote an age appropriate pedalling, riding or walking activity within the service community, with a focus on road and pedestrian safety (e.g. to the shops, around the block, to a part or vacant block and/or on the service premises (establish a circuit walkathon, bike ride/pedal track)
- Road safety education is supported and conducted at the service as part of the program
- Active transport such as walking or riding bikes as a form of travel is positively promoted in the service to children, families, education and support staff.

In planning active play experiences, staff/Educators will consider:

- Children's age, skills and abilities; past experiences; personal dispositions and specific needs
- The equipment and resources required i.e. fixed or portable, large/small, commercial recycled or natural
- The environment/location (space available)
- The set-up or placement of equipment i.e. to avoid overcrowding and/or blind spots, to make it inviting, creative and dynamic
- Individual staff/Educator responsibilities e.g. monitoring/supporting
- The voices and views of children.

Spontaneity

Physical activity opportunities may also present themselves in a spontaneous way throughout the day e.g. at routine care times or transitions. NCN encourages staff/Educators to capture these active play moments and maximise them with children.

Balancing Safety and Challenge

In providing a balance between safety and challenge in physical activities, services will adopt a risk management approach. Staff/Educators will identify which aspects of the environment, the activities and/or equipment pose as a hazard to children; which risks can be acceptably undertaken in light of the benefits of children's learning/development; and how the risks will be managed.

Management strategies will vary according to the level of risk i.e. supervision may be sufficient by itself with low risk activities, whereas a combination of measures will be required for higher risk, more challenging activities (such as climbing trees, bush based experiences, riding activities etc.) and include higher supervision levels, undertaking a particular activity in small groups, preparing children in advance through discussion around safety/responsible behaviour/negotiating potential difficulties etc.

Supporting Children's Skill Development and Personal Growth

Staff/Educators will show an openness and enthusiasm for physical activities which are fun, provoke children's curiosity, connect with the natural environment and incorporate elements of challenge and positive risk.

NCN encourages staff/Educators of each service to:

- Identify areas for skill development and to talk with children about the importance of active play and exercise for their health and wellbeing
- Role model positive active play behaviours and join in/be involved where appropriate
- Support children in creating their own opportunities for physical play
- Support children in trying new or unfamiliar activities and strengthen/extend themselves
- Emphasise fun and participation rather than competition
- Celebrate children to accept and respect each other's range of abilities
- Participate in training opportunities (in-house, self-paced or online) and maintain own up-to-date understanding of key considerations in the provision of physical activities.

Limiting Screen-Based Activities

Services will manage carefully the amount of time children spend on screen-based activities, particularly passive screen activities such as television and DVD viewing.

NCN acknowledges the role technology plays in service programs. However, NCN is also committed to reducing sedentary time and adopting a 'turn off – switch to play' approach is a priority.

The Australian 24 Hour Movement Guidelines for Early Years (Appendices A and B) provide a guide around the amount of screen usage for children i.e. not offering screen time for children under two years of age; limiting screen time to less than one hour per day for children two to five years; and limiting to two hours per day for five to twelve year olds. NCN recommends services follow these guidelines and take any screen based activities into careful consideration, as most children also have screen time at home, which may already be exceeding daily recommendations.

Where screen based activities are provided they will be purposeful and an integrated part of a service program. Each service will have agreed rules about usage and a system for monitoring time spent on such activities e.g. use of timers.

If screen time is included in the program at an NCN service, Educators will ensure the following:

- Screen-based activities for children under two years of age are excluded
- There are limited screen-based activities – less than one hour per day for children enrolled in Long Day Care (aged two to five years) that are planned for a minimal amount of time and which are age-appropriate
- Educators/staff/families/adults always sit with children to monitor what is being watched and respond appropriately to the content and children's reactions
- Screen-based activities are not used as a reward or an incentive
- Services will develop strategies to support swapping screen time for active time e.g. involving children in making lists of active things they can enjoy doing and allowing them to self-select from the list.

Promoting the importance of Physical Activity with Families:

- Staff/Educators will explain NCN's approach to physical activity to families at the time of enrolment and provide relevant information
- Families, Educators and support staff have access to regular information, ideas and strategies to promote and support physical activity policies, and families will be invited to training and information sessions around children's physical activities and development, where available
- Families, Educators and support staff have access to up-to-date road safety information i.e. pamphlets, newsletter articles, family information evenings.

These Procedures relate to legislation as detailed in the Physical Activity Policy.

BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

NCN retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. NCN will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those that the amendments apply to.