



Early Learning Digest

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M-O-V-E for Fun!

From running around the yard, climbing and balancing on playground equipment - and even jumping on the bed - young children demonstrate the range of motor skills they are learning. Children need to play, explore and move to promote healthy physical and mental development. Use the **M-O-V-E** formula to ensure your child is getting the variety of activities needed. Most children sleep better with enough exercise, too!

What is the **M-O-V-E** formula?

Motivation. Children need some reason to play actively. Often, the best motivation is to simply be with and play with a parent or other adult. Do you actively play with your children when they are moving? Do you provide ideas that make physical activities fun for them?

Opportunity. Children need room to explore and a place to play. Do you have a place for your children to be physically active and to sit and draw pictures? Are materials such as paper, crayons, scissors or modeling clay available and easy for them to get on their own? Do you have some balls and other physical toys? Provide the time, space and materials for your children to enjoy physical activities.

Variety. Children are naturally curious, so they need a variety of materials and physical activities. One child



will want to play tag outside while another may want to build a block tower. Get your children involved in a variety of activities that will help them use all of their muscles and skills.

Equipment, Encouragement and Enthusiasm. Children need a place for active play. They need to climb, push, pull, run, and pedal to develop their muscles. If you do not have a big enough yard or outside equipment, take your children to a park or recreation center. Children are more likely to stay involved in physical activities if parents are enthusiastic about what they are learning to do.

Source: "Use the M-O-V-E Formula to Promote Healthy Physical Development," Just in Time Parenting, www.extension.org/parenting.

Anger Management

As parents we sometimes get angry with our children's behavior, but how we manage the anger makes a difference. The everyday pressures of career, finances and health are compounded when a child loses a shoe, spills milk or throws a temper tantrum. All situations are handled better when we are calm. However when our frustration increases, we are not calm! Here are some things you can try to manage your anger and regain control.

Take a time-out for yourself.

Sit quietly and relax. Watch some television. Shoot some hoops. Even 5 minutes can help.

Think about what is happening.

Are you being overly rigid? Are you expecting too much from your child? Think about how you can prevent this problem from happening again.

Go for a walk with your child.

A change of scenery often helps. Take a ride in the car or a trip to the playground.

Turn on some music.

Children's songs are fun, especially if everyone sings along.

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Increase Your Toddler's Fiber

Fiber helps your child's digestion, keeps him from getting constipated, and makes him feel full longer. Eating fiber also reduces the risk of heart disease later in life. Children ages 1 to 3 years need 19 grams of fiber each day, and most toddlers do not get enough.

How can you increase your toddler's fiber?

At least half of the grains your child eats each day should be whole grains.

- Substitute wholegrain crackers for saltines or pretzels.
- Mix whole wheat pasta with white pasta.
- Replace white rice with brown rice.
- Serve whole wheat bread instead of white bread.

Serve whole fruits instead of juice.

- Instead of apple juice, serve apple or pear slices.
- Replace orange juice with orange slices.

Increase vegetables.

- Add veggies to your child's favorite foods.
- Mix green peas into macaroni and cheese.
- Add grated carrots or zucchini to spaghetti sauce.
- Fix vegetable soup.
- Serve raw vegetables with low-fat ranch sauce, and encourage your toddler to dip them.
- Try at least one fruit or vegetable at each meal.



Be a good role model.

- Eat high fiber foods - like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – with your child to set a good example. Your child learns eating habits by watching you.

Offer fiber-rich foods at regular meals and snacks, and encourage your child to try them without pressuring.

Source: "Toddlers Need Fiber Daily," *Just in Time Parenting*, www.extension.org/parenting.



If you have concerns about your child's growth and development, please talk to your child's health care provider or go to www.helpmegrowmn.org and find out how you can get connected with various resources in Minnesota.

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Read a book to your child.

Or read a book or magazine by yourself.

Call a friend.

Ask someone to take care of your child so you can have a couple of hours to yourself.

Get outside and get some fresh air.
Try physical exercise to relieve stress.

Keep a sense of humor.

Keep in mind that this is only a moment in time and it will pass.

Source: "Positive Parenting: Tips on Fathering," *Children's Trust Fund*, 2003.

Test Your Knowledge!

- 1) T F Playing, exploring and moving promote healthy physical as well as mental development in children.
- 2) T F Children ages 1 to 3 years need 8 grams of fiber each day.
- 3) T F When your frustration increases, taking a time-out for yourself is one way you can try to regain control.

Answers: 1) T, 2) F, 3) T