



TIPS FOR CREATING ENVIRONMENTS FOR ENERGETIC PLAY

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services play an important role in supporting young children to be physically active, healthy and developmentally on track.

The Australian National Quality Standards highlight the importance of children's health and safety (Quality Area 2), and describe essential features of the ECEC physical environment (Quality Area 3).

Use this evidence-informed checklist to see how supportive your ECEC space is for children's physical activity. It is aligned with NQS 2.1 and 3, so the more boxes ticked the better!

Based on research findings from the Heathway funded WA PLAY Spaces and Environments for Children's Physical Activity studies (PLAYCE), Telethon Kids Institute and the University of Western Australia, Perth, Western Australia (2015-2019). Collaborating partners: Minderoo Foundation – Collaboration for Kids, National Heart Foundation, Nature Play WA, WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, WA Department of Health, Australian Childcare Alliance, Goodstart Early Learning, Maragon Early Learning Centres, Sonas Early Learning & Care, Mercycare, Great Beginnings—Early Education for Life, Jellybeans Child Care & Kindy and Buggles Early Learning and Kindy. Thank you to all of the participating ECEC services, staff and families.

OPEN, SAFE PLAY SPACES

- Indoor and outdoor environments are **safe** for children to take part in energetic play and be physically active
- A **secure perimeter**
- Open unobstructed play spaces** that allow children to run, ride, scoot, jump, twirl, and play energetic games in
- Provide **more than the minimum outdoor and indoor space** required per child

FIXED AND PORTABLE PLAY EQUIPMENT

- Provide **indoor and outdoor portable and fixed play equipment** that can be **used in different ways** to provide **a variety of physical activity experiences**.
Play equipment supports the development of children's fundamental movement skills (hopping, kicking, throwing, catching, balancing), as well as their confidence to take part in energetic play
- Ensure **indoor and outdoor play equipment is developmentally appropriate** for children of different ages
Provide a variety of both portable (e.g., wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) and fixed (e.g., tunnels, swings, slides, climbing and balancing equipment) play equipment

VARIETY

- Outdoor play spaces **promote different types of physical activity**
Unstructured play in sandpits or water play areas; structured play involving ball games in open areas, gardening experiences, and tunnels or cubby houses for play where children can disappear/get lost; variety of surfaces and ground
- Connected paved tracks or paths**
Needed for bicycles, trikes, scooters and other wheeled toys

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Provide opportunities for children to **explore nature**
Trees and large rocks for climbing, slopes for rolling down and climbing up, gardens for digging and planting etc.
- Provide **shaded areas** to protect children from weather extremes
Large trees provide canopy, shade and are cooling; Provide indoor physical activity options

AND...

- Follow sun protection practices** (sunscreen, shade, hats, suitable clothing) when the UV index is 3 or above. *Visit Generation SunSmart for free online learning modules for educators*
- Make sure children **drink plenty of water** when playing outside, particularly in hot weather