The Child Unplugged

PHYSICAL & MOVEMENT PLAY: MOVE, LEARN, GROW

Activity Book



@TheChildUnplugged
www.TheChildUnplugged.com

Introduction

Children love exploring through movement and active play. These activities introduce early physical skills like balance, coordination, body awareness, and simple movement patterns in a fun and engaging way.
Children move, stretch, crawl, jump, and explore while learning how their bodies work, following directions, and trying new challenges. It's not about doing movements perfectly, but about exploring, practicing, and discovering through play. This builds early gross motor skills, coordination, confidence, problem-solving, and body control simply and enjoyably.







Why Physical and Movement Play Is So Valuable

These activities encourage:

- Gross motor development and coordination
- Balance, strength, and body control
- Spatial awareness and movement planning
- Problem-solving and critical thinking
- Hand-eye and whole-body coordination
- Confidence and independence
- Listening and following directions
- Concentration, memory, and self-regulation
- Body awareness and healthy physical development

How to Support Play at Home

Create a playful space where children explore movement through active, hands-on play. They can crawl, jump, stretch, balance, and move in different ways while building confidence and body awareness.

Basic setup:

- Open play space
- Soft cushions, tunnels, balls, or stepping spots
- Music, scarves, or simple movement props

Simple steps:

- Show children a simple movement to try
- Encourage crawling, jumping, balancing, or stretching
- Invite them to copy actions or create their own movements
- Let them move, explore, and play freely

Helpful tips:

- Start with simple movements and repeat often
- Use familiar songs, games, and everyday objects







Ideas

Provide opportunities for movement through obstacle courses, dancing, ball play, animal walks, or balancing games. Encourage children to explore how their bodies move while playing naturally and confidently.

DANCE AND FREEZE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Music player or songs
- Open space
- Optional: musical instruments or scarves for movement

WHAT TO DO:

- Play music and encourage children to dance and move freely.
- Stop the music at random moments.
- When the music stops, children must freeze in place.
- Restart the music and repeat the activity...

BENEFITS:

- Builds gross motor skills
- Improves listening and attention
- Develops self-control and body awareness
- Encourages rhythm and timing skills
- Supports emotional regulation
- Boosts confidence and creativity



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with slow music and longer dance times.
- Use clear visual cues along with music stops.
- Add simple movements to copy before dancing freely.
- Introduce themed dances (animals, superheroes, nature).
- Allow children to lead and choose dance moves.

BALL ROLL & CHASE

WHATS NEEDED:

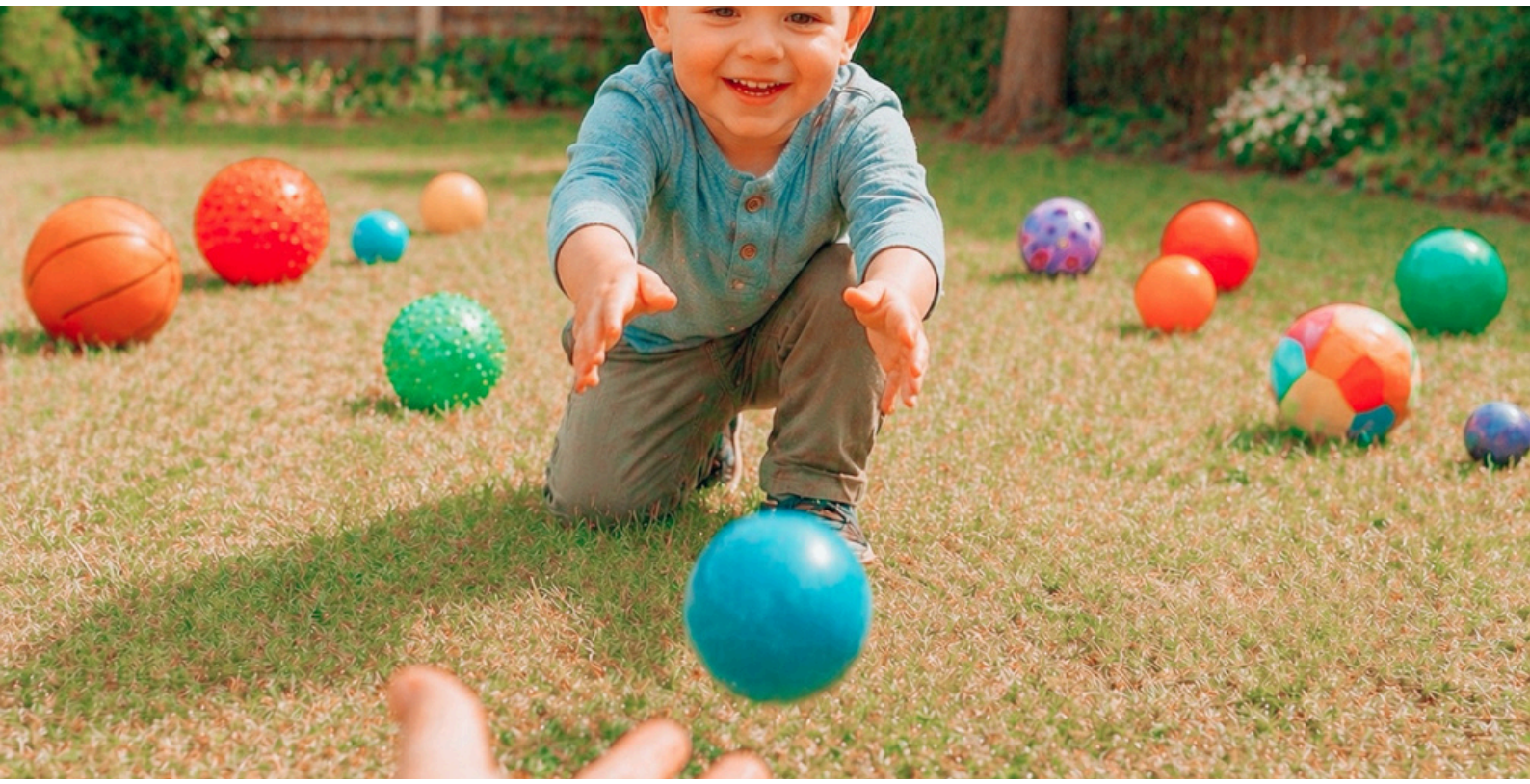
- Soft balls of different sizes
- Open space (indoor or outdoor)
- Optional: cones or markers to guide rolling direction

WHAT TO DO:

- Sit or stand facing the child.
- Roll a ball gently towards them.
- Encourage them to roll it back or chase it.
- Repeat the back-and-forth rolling and retrieving.

BENEFITS:

- Builds gross motor skills
- Improves hand-eye coordination
- Develops coordination and timing
- Encourages turn-taking and social skills
- Strengthens focus and attention
- Supports active movement and energy release



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with slow, close rolling for beginners.
- Use larger, softer balls for easier control.
- Increase distance as skills improve.
- Add targets or goals to roll the ball into.
- Play with multiple children for group turn-taking.

JUMP LIKE ANIMALS

WHATS NEEDED:

- Open play space
- Animal picture cards or toy animals (optional)
- Music for movement fun (optional)

TIPS:

- Take breaks if they get tired (little legs, big effort!)
- Repeat favourite animals—toddlers love repetition

WHAT TO DO:

- Name an animal and show how it moves.
- Invite children to copy the movement.
- Jump like a frog, stomp like an elephant, waddle like a duck, or slither like a snake.
- Take turns choosing animals to act out.

BENEFITS:

- Builds gross motor skills
- Strengthens balance and coordination
- Develops body awareness
- Encourages listening and following directions
- Supports imagination and pretend play
- Builds strength, confidence, and movement control
- Introduces animal vocabulary and action words



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with two or three simple animals.
- Use pictures for children to choose movements.
- Add sounds and animal stories for extra fun.
- Create an animal movement obstacle course for more challenge.

CRAWL AND EXPLORE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Tunnels, boxes, or chairs to crawl through
- Blankets or cushions for forts
- Soft toys or objects to hide
- Open safe space

WHAT TO DO:

- Set up a crawling path or tunnel.
- Encourage children to crawl through and explore.
- Hide a toy for them to find along the way.
- Let them repeat and explore in different ways like crawling races or fort play.

BENEFITS:

- Builds gross motor strength
- Improves coordination and balance
- Develops spatial awareness
- Encourages problem-solving and exploration
- Supports curiosity and confidence
- Enhances focus and persistence



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with short, open tunnels.
- Keep spaces wide and easy to access.
- Add simple “find and collect” tasks.
- Create themes like jungle crawl or rescue mission.
- Allow free crawling for younger toddlers without structured tasks.

REACH, STRETCH AND TOUCH

WHATS NEEDED:

- Open space
- Optional music or calming songs
- Teacher/parent demonstration

WHAT TO DO:

- Show children how to reach high to the sky.
- Encourage them to touch their toes.
- Stretch arms wide like a star.
- Twist gently from side to side.
- Repeat movements slowly and playfully.

BENEFITS:

- Improves flexibility and body strength
- Develops coordination and balance
- Builds body awareness
- Supports gross motor development
- Encourages focus and following instructions
- Promotes calm and controlled movement



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with one movement at a time.
- Use songs or rhymes to guide actions.
- Keep stretches short and gentle for toddlers.
- Add animal or character themes (reach like a giraffe, stretch like a starfish).
- Allow children to copy and explore at their own pace.

BEAN BAG TOSS

WHATS NEEDED:

- Bean bags or soft fabric pouches
- Baskets, boxes, or hoops as targets
- Open space
- Optional: floor markers or target lines

WHAT TO DO:

- Place a target a short distance away.
- Show children how to gently toss a bean bag into it.
- Encourage them to aim and try again.
- Move targets closer or further for variation.

BENEFITS:

- Builds hand-eye coordination
- Develops gross motor control
- Improves focus and concentration
- Encourages persistence and confidence
- Supports early maths concepts like distance and aim
- Enhances spatial awareness



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with large, close targets.
- Use underhand tossing for beginners.
- Reduce distance for younger children.
- Add different coloured targets for colour matching.
- Turn it into a fun game (points, treasure hunt, or team play).

PUSH AND PULL PLAY

WHATS NEEDED:

- Toy carts, push toys, or walkers
- Pull-along toys with strings
- Light boxes, baskets, or objects to move
- Open indoor or outdoor space

WHAT TO DO:

- Show children how to push toys forward and pull toys along a path.
- Encourage them to move objects from one place to another.
- Let them explore pushing and pulling in different directions.
- Repeat and allow free play with the materials.

BENEFITS:

- Builds gross motor strength
- Improves coordination and balance
- Develops spatial awareness
- Supports cause-and-effect understanding
- Encourages independence and confidence
- Enhances problem-solving skills



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with lightweight toys for easy movement.
- Keep distances short for beginners.
- Add simple goals like moving toys to a “home base.”
- Increase challenge with longer paths or slightly heavier objects.
- Introduce themed play (delivery driver, shopping, rescue mission)..

LITTLE BALANCE CHALLENGE

WHATS NEEDED:

Ideas for balancing:

- Balance Board
- Masking tape or chalk line
- Cushions, pillows, or foam mats
- Floor markers
- Any type of stepping stones
- Open, safe space

WHAT TO DO:

- Create a line or stepping path on the floor.
- Show children how to walk slowly along it.
- Encourage them to step on cushions or marked spots.
- Support them as they balance and move carefully.

BENEFITS:

- Improves balance and coordination
- Builds core strength and body control
- Develops focus and concentration
- Enhances spatial awareness
- Encourages confidence in movement
- Supports gross motor development



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with wide, straight lines.
- Use soft, stable surfaces for beginners.
- Add turns, zigzags, or stepping gaps for challenge.
- Hold a hand or offer support if needed.
- Turn it into a fun theme like “bridge crossing” or “adventure path.”

OBSTACLE COURSE

SET UP:

Indoor ideas:

- Cushions or pillows to step over
- Chairs to crawl under
- Tape lines on the floor to follow
- Laundry baskets to climb in and out of
- Sofa cushions for balancing

Outdoor ideas:

- Logs or stepping stones
- Slopes or small hills
- Chalk paths
- Cones or buckets to walk around
- Playground equipment

CAREGIVER TIPS

- Let your child choose how to move
- Avoid lifting unless invited
- Repeating the same route is valuable
- Pause the activity when energy shifts
- Falling safely is part of learning

Movement play should feel safe, joyful, and empowering.

BENEFITS:

- Gross motor development · Body awareness · Balance & coordination · Confidence · Emotional regulation · Planning & sequencing
- Obstacle courses and movement pathways allow toddlers to learn through their whole bodies. This type of play helps children understand where their body is in space, how to move safely, and how to build confidence through physical challenge — all at their own pace.



HOW TO ADAPT:

For a Child Who Loves Big Movement: Include jumping, climbing, pushing, and pulling. Use phrases like “Go!”, “Stop!”, “Turn!” Add ramps, tunnels, or balance challenges. Repeat the same pathway multiple times. Repetition builds strength, confidence, and regulation.

For a Child Who Is Cautious or New to Movement Play: Keep obstacles low and wide. Walk the course together. Hold hands if needed. Let them observe first. Confidence grows through success, not pressure.

For a Child Who Needs Heavy Work: Push a basket or box through the course. Carry a weighted vehicle or object. Pull a rope or scarf. Climb over cushions or soft blocks. Heavy work supports body awareness and emotional calm.

CLAP, TAP & MOVE

WHATS NEEDED:

- Open space
- Optional music or songs
- Teacher/parent demonstration

WHAT TO DO:

- Show simple actions like clapping hands, tapping knees, stamping feet, and reaching up high.
- Encourage children to copy each movement.
- Repeat the actions in different orders.
- Add music or rhythm to make it more engaging.

BENEFITS:

- Develops gross motor skills
- Improves coordination and body control
- Builds listening and following directions
- Encourages rhythm and timing awareness
- Supports body awareness and movement confidence
- Enhances focus and attention



HOW TO ADAPT:

- Start with one or two simple actions.
- Use slow, clear demonstrations.
- Add songs or rhymes for engagement.
- Increase speed or sequence difficulty as children progress.
- Let children lead and create their own movements.

MOVEMENT + MUSIC RIBBONS

WHATS NEEDED:

- Lightweight ribbon – Wave slowly or fast, trace shapes, or move to music.
- Scarf – Toss, twirl, or use in pretend play.
- Dish cloth – Shake, wave, or drag to explore movement and texture.
- Baby-safe streamer – Wave, follow a beat, or join a “ribbon parade.”

WHAT TO DO:

- Wave ribbons slow or fast
- Encourage children to explore different speeds, noticing how movement changes the visual effect and flow.
- March and wave at the same time
- Combine arm and leg movements to develop coordination and body awareness.
- ·Trace shapes in the air
- Use ribbons to draw circles, lines, or letters, building fine motor control and spatial awareness.
- ·Dance to a steady beat
- Move in time with music or a rhythm, strengthening timing, rhythm sense, and whole-body coordination.



DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS:

- **Encourages self-expression -** Children can explore their own sounds, movements, or patterns, expressing creativity and emotions.
- **Strengthens coordination -** Clapping, tapping, or moving with rhythm helps develop hand-eye and whole-body coordination.
- **Supports rhythm learning -** Repeating beats and patterns builds an understanding of timing and musical flow.
- **Great for sensory-seeking toddlers -** The tactile and auditory feedback from instruments or movements satisfies their need for sensory input in a safe, fun way.

PHYSICAL AND MOVEMENT PLAY

(+971) 0 564429917
www.TheChildUnplugged.com
Hannah@TheChildUnplugged.com
@TheChildUnplugged









Calm, creative physical & movement exploration play experiences for babies and young children

Using familiar, accessible materials