

# SOUTH AFRICAN 24-HOUR MOVEMENT GUIDELINES FOR BIRTH TO FIVE YEARS

An integration of physical activity, sitting behaviour, screen time and sleep



## Using the guidelines at home: Some tips for parents

### BABIES (BIRTH TO 1 YEAR OLD)

#### Moving

- ✓ For babies not yet crawling, tummy time should take place for **30 minutes** per day on a safe, flat surface, e.g. a soft blanket on the floor, and should be supervised. For babies who struggle during tummy time (e.g. they cry after a short while), tummy time can be done a few times every day in shorter bouts, e.g. for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.
- ✓ Make tummy time more **fun and stimulating** for babies by holding or scattering age-appropriate toys (e.g. rattles) just out of their reach to encourage them to move, lift their heads up and look around them. This is good for babies' physical development, and helps them to build their strength and get ready to crawl while learning about their environment.
- ✓ For babies who can crawl, create obstacle courses with safe, soft toys like teddy bears or even bigger obstacles like pillows and blankets.

#### Sitting

- ✓ Instead of screen time, rather read, tell stories or sing to your baby. These activities support their development and will help you connect with them.
- ✓ When it is necessary to have your baby strapped in while they are awake (e.g. in a pram), try your best to give them safe tummy time breaks every hour between being strapped in.

#### Sleeping

- ✓ Establishing regular bedtime habits (e.g. calming babies down in a quiet room, singing to babies before sleeping) may help babies get the sleep they need, and help them to sleep better.

### TODDLERS (1 AND 2 YEARS OLD)

#### Moving

- ✓ Great activities to get your toddler moving and playing for **3 hours** every day can include games and activities such as 'hide and seek', dancing to music, jumping and climbing. Teaching children to move, play and do activities that take place over, under and around obstacles (e.g. chairs, jungle gym equipment) is good for their physical and brain development.
- ✓ Toddlers should play with toys (e.g. balls, bean bags) as they start learning skills like kicking, catching and throwing. Start with bigger balls (e.g. blow-up beach balls or soccer balls) as they are easier for toddlers to manage, and progress to smaller balls (e.g. tennis balls).
- ✓ Playing games and practicing skills with older siblings or a parent helps toddlers learn and develop skills, and helps develop healthy family relationships.

#### Sitting

- ✓ Toddlers younger than 2 years old should not be allowed to play with screens. In toddlers already 2 years old, establish some screen time **rules** (e.g. **no** screen time without adult supervision, **no** screen time during meal times). **Try your best to stick to these rules!**
- ✓ Unsupervised screen time can lead to language delays and reduce toddlers' ability to pay attention.

#### Sleeping

- ✓ Establish a sleep routine with your toddler by having consistent bedtimes at night and consistent wake up times in the morning.
- ✓ Avoid screen time before bed and rather read a bedtime story to your toddler. Singing and telling stories (make-believe or real) can be included in your toddler's bedtime routine.

### PRE-SCHOOLERS (3, 4 AND 5 YEARS OLD)

#### Moving

- ✓ Pre-schoolers can move for **3 hours** every day by doing **fun** activities like dancing, playing with different sized balls, and playing games like 'follow the leader' and 'hide and seek'.
- ✓ Doing these activities alone, with older siblings or with a parent are good for pre-schoolers' physical development and gross motor skills.
- ✓ Pre-schoolers need **1 hour** per day of **energetic play**. Running, jumping and energetic games will help their hearts, bones and muscles get stronger.

#### Sitting

- ✓ Reduce screen time to **less than 1 hour** per day by setting screen time **rules** at home (as you would with a toddler), e.g. **no** screens at the dinner table, **no** screens allowed in the bedroom, 15 minutes of screen time only allowed **after energetic play** outside. **Try your best to stick to these rules!**
- ✓ Encourage sitting activities that will help pre-schoolers get ready for school (e.g. drawing, painting, doing puzzles, playing with dough and different foods, and playing 'make believe').

#### Sleeping

- ✓ Establish a sleep routine and ensure that pre-schoolers have a safe, quiet place to sleep well. Well-rested pre-schoolers are more likely to behave better and concentrate at preschool.
- ✓ Avoid screen time before bed as this may make it difficult for pre-schoolers to fall asleep. Rather read to your pre-schooler, or get them to talk about their day at preschool.



DST-NRF Centre of Excellence  
in Human Development

Individual and Society

laureus 

SPORT  
FOR  
GOOD

SOUTH AFRICA