

Increasing Children's Physical Activity

Preschoolers love to move! But they need encouragement, instruction, and practice to develop basic motor skills. Use the following 12 tips to help preschoolers learn and explore different movement skills. By showing children the importance of physical activity, you are being a positive role model and setting children up for a lifetime of healthy habits.

1 Decorate the walls with photographs or pictures of young children being active.

3 Use ordinary objects as equipment (for example, wide masking tape as a balance beam).

6 Teach children how to use one piece of equipment in multiple ways (for example, rolling, bouncing, tossing, throwing, and dribbling a ball).

7 On the class word wall, list the names of skills and concepts that children have practiced.

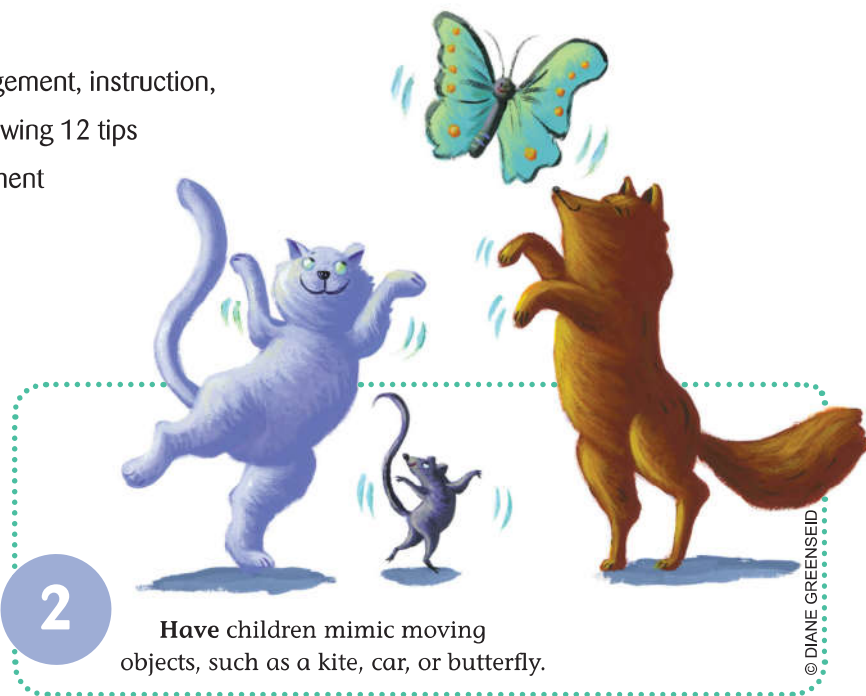
2

Have children mimic moving objects, such as a kite, car, or butterfly.

4 Use movement-exploration techniques, such as "How can you move from here to there?" and "Show me all the ways that you can move the ball."

5

Give very specific feedback (for example, "Remember that hopping uses only one foot" instead of "Remember to hop and not to jump").

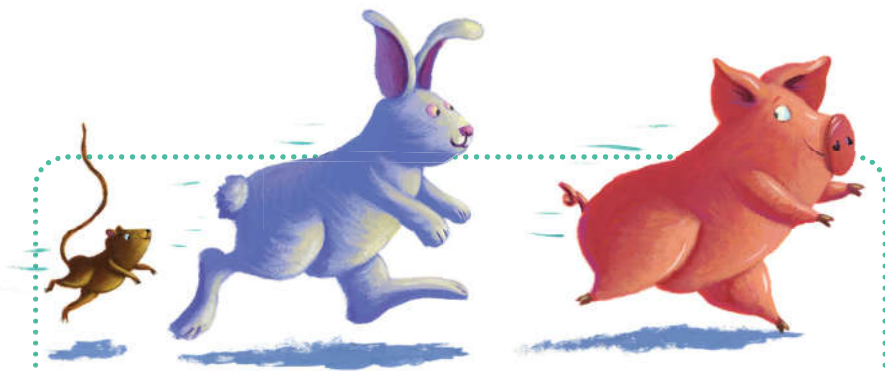


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8

Organize chase-and-flee games, when space allows, for children to raise their heart rates.

9

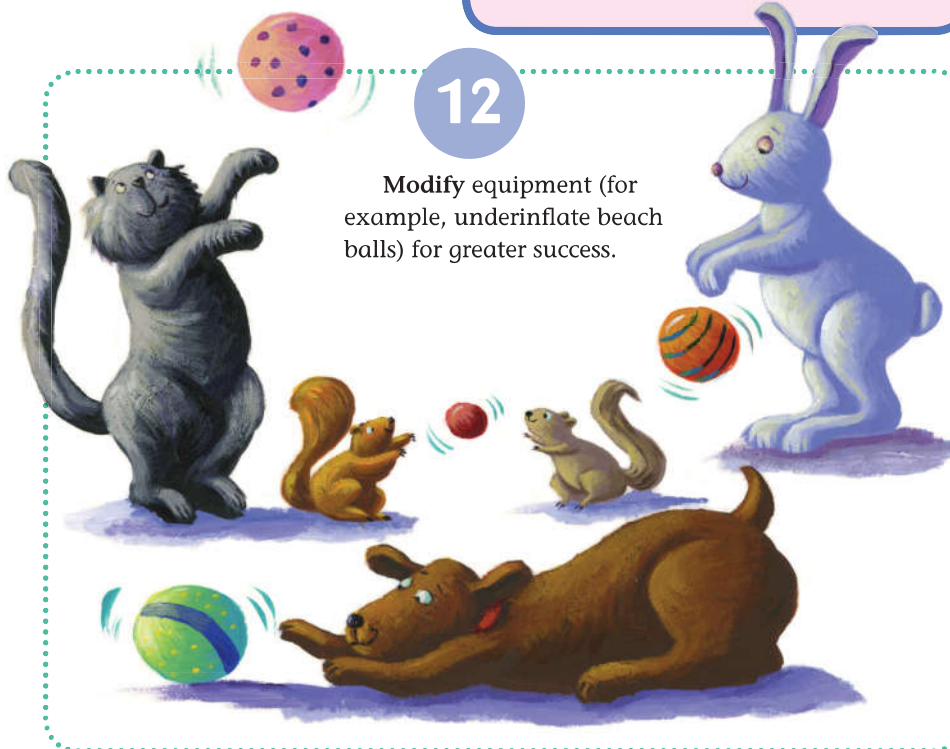
Include motor skill challenges during transition times (for example, “Please hop back to your seat”).

10

Ask the children what they enjoyed most, least, and why.

11

Remind parents that children should come to school with proper outdoor clothing (for example, heavy jacket, hat, gloves) so that they can play outside even in cool weather.



12

Modify equipment (for example, underinflate beach balls) for greater success.

Reflective Questions

Know yourself

- Make a list of physical activities you loved to do as a child. Recall the times you felt strong and in charge of your body. How can you share these joyful experiences with the children in your group as you use the tips offered here?
- What is your reaction when you see children use big movements that include power, adventure, challenge, and risk? How might your reaction enhance or detract from their physical development?

Seek the children's point of view

- Observe children to see the different ways they move. What do children love about moving their bodies? What physical skills do they already have? For example, how many ways can they jump, climb, or use a ball?
- Generate your own list of activities using the children as your inspiration. Use the list to reinforce joyful, active dispositions to move!