



Comfort Play & Teach:

A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Every Day

Supporting Your Child's Physical Development

Your child grows so quickly and explores new challenges every day. **Comfort, Play & Teach™** time involves ensuring that your child can practice emerging skills like crawling, reaching, grasping, throwing, walking, climbing and running. She will learn how her body works and discover all the amazing things she can do!



Comfort

If you do this:

- Show support and provide help as your child attempts new physical activities
- Make sure that your child has time for both relaxing and active play

Your child will:

- Build confidence in his abilities knowing you are there to protect him as he explores new skills
- Understand that resting, like exercising, is an important part of taking care of her body



Play

If you do this:

- Play creative movement games like *Simon Says*, demonstrating different ways to move
- Provide toys that encourage movement (e.g., pull toys, tricycles, crib gyms)

Your child will:

- Use his imagination as he explores how to wiggle his fingers, jump, stamp his feet
- Be encouraged to use different body parts and learn that she can make things happen



Teach

If you do this:

- Enjoy physical activities together like yoga, walking, playing catch
- Label different body parts and explain how they work (e.g., feet can run and kick a ball)

Your child will:

- Learn from your example that there are lots of ways to be active
- Begin to use these words to talk about her body and all that it can do



For more information visit www.investinkids.ca

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Ten Physical Development Activities to Do at Home

1. Read books together about exercising and using our bodies for creative movement. Books like *Children on the Move: An Active Living Alphabet* by June Elizabeth Le Drew help children learn different ways to stay fit. *Can You Move Like an Elephant?* by Judy Hindley invites your child to move imaginatively as she plays.
2. Walk in the neighbourhood with your child and take time to look at the things around you or make a game of listening to and identifying different sounds. Go to the park and explore the climbing equipment. These are great ways to get some fresh air, to burn off a little bit of energy and to just enjoy each other's company.
3. Play different kinds of music to encourage your child to move and dance around. Explore classical, pop, folk, or world music. Your child can walk, jump, gallop, twirl, march and tiptoe. Provide scarves that can be used for making rainbows, zigzags, circles, waves; the scarves and music will inspire creativity.
4. Children can strengthen the small muscles in their hands in a variety of ways. Assembling puzzles, building with blocks and connecting straws, lacing and stringing necklaces, doing up buttons and zippers, drawing and painting – all of these will help your child develop his eye-hand co-ordination.
5. Cooking together is an excellent way for your child to learn about nutrition and to explore the different food groups. Bake bran muffins, blend yogourt shakes, make tuna or egg salad sandwiches or create a colourful fruit salad. Your child can learn some valuable skills as she learns about healthy foods to eat.



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6. Encourage your child to develop self-help habits including brushing his teeth and bathing. This helps him understand what his body needs in order to stay healthy and teaches him necessary skills for taking proper care of himself.
7. Talk to your child and read picture books about health care professionals such as doctors, nurses and dentists. This will enable her to understand what she experiences when she goes for a checkup and to feel comfortable with the people whose special job it is to help children and grown-ups stay healthy.
8. Consider community programs where your child can make new friends while exploring different physical activities like music and movement, swimming, gymnastics, sports, yoga or dance. Participating in organized activities helps children learn valuable social skills while they are learning about their physical capabilities.
9. Invite some of your child's friends over to learn and play co-operative games such as *London Bridge* and *Farmer in the Dell*. This will help your child practice social skills like taking turns and will encourage him to enjoy games where he is not playing to win.
10. Talk to your child about safety. Explain the rules that will keep her safe at school, on the playground, in or near cars. Help her to recognize warning symbols on household containers so she knows which are unsafe.



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Comfort, Play & Teach™ Checklist: Physical Activities We Do at Home

Comfort

- I encourage my child to explore his physical capabilities and offer my help and support when he shows he is ready for greater challenges.
- My child and I take walks together. It provides a relaxing time for us to talk and enjoy each other's company.
- My child and I spend time together dancing to music, building with blocks, playing with pull-toys so she can practice using different physical skills.

Play

- I play games with my child such as knee bounces and *Simon Says* so that he can develop his physical skills as he plays.
- My child and I read books together that encourage creative movement and imaginative play.
- My child role-plays being a doctor to explore what she understands about taking care of people when they are hurt or sick.



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Teach

- I talk to my child about taking care of his body. He understands that he needs to eat well, wash his hands, brush his teeth and get rest.

- My child is curious about physical activities like dance, gymnastics, sports. We get books from the library to encourage her to explore her interests.

- I explain safety rules to my child so he will know how to play safely at home, at school or at the playground.



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Big Box Tunnel

Turn a big empty box into an interesting tunnel that your baby will enjoy crawling through. This is a **Comfort, Play & Teach™** activity that will encourage his developing physical skills.

Materials You Will Need

- A rectangular cardboard box, tall and wide enough for your baby to crawl through, with flaps removed

Instructions

- Place the box on the floor so your baby can crawl through it.
- Place a toy inside or at the end of the tunnel to attract your baby's interest and encourage her to go through.
- Place your baby at the entrance to the tunnel and wait for her at the other end.
- Talk or sing so she moves toward your voice and your smiling face.

Enjoy this more with **Comfort, Play & Teach™**:



Comfort: As your baby becomes more and more capable of moving, new challenges will help him to build confidence in his skills. Let him know how proud you are when he moves from one end of the tunnel to the other.



Play: Join in your baby's play. Wait at the end of the tunnel with a special surprise like a song or a big kiss from a soft puppet to add to your baby's enjoyment of the experience.



Teach: Describe your baby's actions as she moves. Is she crawling? Bum shuffling? Creeping? Is she moving slowly or quickly? Talking about what she is doing will help to build her language skills and awareness of her actions.

Things for Throwing

Your toddler may experiment with throwing various things. Create a collection of appropriate soft items that she can use for practicing this skill. Find a safe place to throw these things to enjoy this fun **Comfort, Play & Teach™** activity.

Materials You Will Need

- Sponge balls, soft toys, plastic dish scrubbers, rolled up scarves and other soft and unbreakable materials
- A space indoors or outdoors where nothing can be damaged by thrown items

Instructions

- Encourage your child to participate in throwing soft items by showing her how to do it.
- Ask her to throw something to you and then gently throw it back so she can practice catching it.

Enjoy this more with **Comfort, Play & Teach™**:



Comfort: Toss the objects back and forth to one another. Playing a game of catch is a lovely way to spend time with your toddler and to let him know how much you enjoy playing with him.



Play: Provide a basket or box so your toddler can try to throw objects into a container. Hold up a cookie sheet that your toddler can use as a target. Each time she hits it with something she will create an interesting sound.



Teach: As your toddler practices throwing things he may notice that some objects are big and small, and some may feel heavier or lighter. Can he throw some objects farther than others? Talk about each object to help your toddler learn words to describe them.

Wind-up Toys

Pretending to be something else is a great way to explore creativity and to exercise as well. This **Comfort, Play & Teach™** activity will provide hours of fun for you and your child.

Materials You Will Need

- Lots of indoor or outdoor space

Instructions

- Introduce the activity by asking your child to think about the ways that different things move (e.g., turtles crawl, balloons float, motorcycles zoom).
- Crouch down and ask your child to turn the invisible key on your back and wind you up. Do an action such as hopping like a rabbit. Ask your child to guess what you are.
- You and your child can take turns winding the key and demonstrating different actions. If your child has trouble deciding what she would like to be, suggest an action (e.g., slide like a slow snail, fly like an airplane or roll like a ball).
- Invite playmates over and play this game with a group of children.

Enjoy this more with **Comfort, Play & Teach™**:



Comfort: Your child will love receiving your special attention as you laugh and enjoy playing this silly movement game together.



Play: Role-playing different people, animals and machines helps your child to build his imaginative skills.



Teach: Simple movement games can invite your child to explore concepts like size and speed; for example, by pretending to be a small snail or a fast airplane.

My Body Can...

Creating a booklet using magazine pictures is a simple way to talk to your child about her body and about all the wonderful things it can do. This activity will invite you to spend some **Comfort, Play & Teach™** time together.

Materials You Will Need

- Construction paper
- Blank pieces of newsprint
- Stapler
- Pictures of different body parts (e.g., hand, ear, foot). Select pictures from magazines that reflect diversity in culture, ethnicity, age, ability.
- Glue
- Markers

Instructions

- Staple a few folded sheets of newsprint inside a piece of folded construction paper to make booklets.
- As your child explores the pictures ask, “What is the name for that part of your body? What can you do with that body part?” Encourage your child to demonstrate some of these skills, if possible.
- Offer to write your child’s words in his booklet for him (e.g., “I can wiggle my fingers” or “I talk with my mouth” or “My ears can listen to music”).
- Your child can glue the pictures into his booklet to illustrate the words. He can also draw his own pictures to represent his words.

Enjoy this more with **Comfort, Play & Teach™**:



Comfort: Talking about and demonstrating his capabilities lets your child express pride in his developing physical skills.



Play: Creating her own human body book encourages your child to tell stories about herself and to represent her ideas through drawing or cutting and pasting.



Teach: Your child can build his vocabulary as he learns the names for his body parts and words for describing different actions.