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KIDDIE CATS ON THE MOVE NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the Newsletter!

We are excited to share updates from the Kiddie CATs project along with other important information about physical activity. Thank you to our incredible community partners, teachers, children, and families who make this work possible!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS IMPORTANT FOR PRESCHOOLERS AND THEIR FAMILIES!

TIPS FROM THE KIDDIE CATS TEAM FOR STAYING ACTIVE

- Go for a 15-20 minute walk/jog
- Turn on some music and have a dance party
- Play a game of tag or chase
- Visit your local playground
- Set up a backyard scavenger hunt
- Limit screen time to one hour or less each day
- Create a regular schedule for when your family will exercise together and HAVE FUN!

SCAN ME



CHECK OUT OUR KIDDIE CATS "HOW-TO" VIDEOS FOR FUN LESSONS ABOUT BUILDING MOTOR SKILLS!

Videos include "How To" tutorials for teaching and practicing motor skills with young children. Also available on the website are interactive physical activity story books, 5-minute activity videos, and full-length Kiddie CATs program videos. Videos can be accessed for free on our website: <https://www.uvm.edu/catsmove>



NEED MORE IDEAS FOR STAYING ACTIVE THIS SEASON? TRY THESE FREE LOCAL ACTIVITIES!

- Try Preschool Yoga at Fletcher Free Library (Burlington, VT)
- Join the preschool playgroup at Winooski Memorial Library (Winooski, VT)
- Go for a family bike ride at Johnson Trailhead (Johnson, VT), the Island LineTrail (South Hero, VT), or the Burlington Greenway (Burlington, VT)
- Splash around at Leddy, Oakledge, or North Beaches (Burlington, VT)
- Hike the Hard'ack Recreation Area (St. Albans, VT), Bolton Valley Resort (Bolton Valley, VT), or the walking trails at Shelburne Farms (Shelburne, VT)
- Read as you walk through the BTV StoryWalk at Leddy Park (Burlington, VT)

Did you know?

Motor skill development in preschool is tied to Kindergarten school readiness. The Kiddie CATs games are designed to help kids develop motor skills!





START MOVING EARLIER WITH ITTY BITTY KIDDIE CATS!

Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs is a downward extension of Kiddie CATs, meaning that it is adapted for younger children from birth to 3 years of age. Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs is run in partnership with Family Connections through Champlain Valley Head Start. Through this program, we aim to teach parents and their young children ways to engage in physical activity from the beginning!

What About Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs Works Well for Younger Children?



We use brief, visual instructions to help keep kids engaged.



Kid-friendly equipment is used to help make games fun and engaging!



Games are simplified to be shorter with fewer transitions.



Children can take turns helping the leader!

Learn more about the Family Connections Program through Champlain Valley Head Start here: <https://champlainvalleyheadstart.org/family-connections-program/>

PRESCHOOLERS' FAVORITE KIDDIE CATS GAMES



WHAT TIME IS IT, DR. FOX?



- The leader is the hungry "Dr. Fox," and the children are the mice!
- The mice call out "what time is it Dr. Fox?". The mice move forward the number of steps Dr. Fox calls out.
- When Dr. Fox calls "dinner time!", the mice have to run back to home base before they are caught!

Adapt for Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs:

- Call out small numbers, and count together!

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT



- The leader is the traffic light, and the children are the cars!
- The children line up at home base, and the leader stands opposite.
- When the leader calls "green light!", the children can run towards the leader. When "red light!" is called, the children must stop. If "yellow light!" is called, the children must move slowly.

Adapt for Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs:

- Hold up red, yellow, and green circles for the different color lights!

HUNGRY BEARS



- The leader is the hungry bear, and the children are the squirrels!
- The hungry bear pretends to sleep in the play space.
- When the hungry bear yells "1, 2, 3, hungry bear!", the squirrels must run to avoid being tagged!

Adapt for Itty Bitty Kiddie CATs:

- Let the children be the hungry bears! Children can "sleep" for short bursts, then wake up and chase the leaders!

BENEFITS OF MOTOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Jones et al. (2021)

For some kids, the transition from preschool to Kindergarten can be challenging. "School readiness" is a term used to describe a child's preparedness to enter the formal education system. When we think about school readiness, we think about a child's cognitive (e.g., following directions), emotional (e.g., managing emotions and behavior), social (e.g., making friends), physical (e.g., balancing) and academic (e.g., reading and math) abilities. Together, these domains influence the degree to which a child can effectively participate in school.

In a recent study performed in England, researchers explored the relation between motor skill development and school readiness during early childhood. For children aged 4-5 years, they found that more advanced motor skills predicted better school readiness. This finding suggests that by teaching kids fine and gross motor skills, we can set them up for more success in school!

CITATIONS

Jones, D., Innerd, A., Giles, E. L., & Azevedo, L. B. (2021). The association between physical activity, motor skills and school readiness in 4-5-year-old children in the northeast of England. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(22), 11931.

Have questions about what you read or want to know more games you can play? Email us at: catsmove@uvm.edu.

