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# Kiddie CATs on the Move Newsletter

## Welcome to the Newsletter!

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

*Kiddie CATs on the Move* is a fun, 30-minute physical activity program offered through a partnership between the University of Vermont (UVM) and preschool classrooms across Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle counties. Led by UVM students, each session is packed with fun games and movement activities that get children moving and connecting with one another. The program supports young children's physical health and motor development while promoting social and emotional skills. *Kiddie CATs* is all about learning together, with children and adults moving, laughing, and building connections along the way.



## Exciting Kiddie CATs Updates

We've been working hard this year to make the *Kiddie CATs* program even better. Building on our previous work, we've added new features and improvements to support children's learning and enjoyment. As always, our goal is to help children fall in love with being active and grow into lifelong movers.

### Here are a few highlights from the updated program:

#### Healthy Bodies and Minds



Each week, children explore simple, child-friendly ideas about how moving their bodies helps them feel strong, focused, and happy. These activities build physical literacy by helping children develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to enjoy being active.

#### Calming Cool Downs



Every session wraps up with breathing and stretching to help children relax, reset, and transition after all the *Kiddie CATs* fun.

#### Discover *Kiddie CATs* at Home

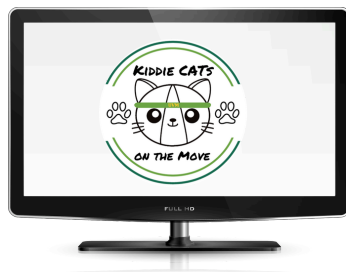


We are currently translating our *Kiddie CATs* storybook into families' home languages. This will make it easier for families to learn about *Kiddie CATs* and join in the fun together at home.

## Move, Play, Explore: Free Community Fun for Families

### Play *Kiddie CATs* Games at Home!

Videos include "how-to" tutorials for teaching motor skills to young children, interactive storybooks, quick 5-minute activities, and full-length *Kiddie CATs* sessions. All videos are available for free on our website ([www.uvm.edu/catsmove](http://www.uvm.edu/catsmove)) or scan the QR code below.



- Play games, walk, or run at a local park such as Oakledge Park (Burlington), South Hero Recreation Park (South Hero), or the St. Albans Town Forest (St. Albans)
- Hike the Hard'ack Recreation Area (St. Albans) or Red Rocks Park (South Burlington)
- Go for a family bike ride on the Burlington Greenway (Burlington), Island Line Trail (South Hero), or the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (St. Albans)
- Kids On The Ball offers free tennis at Roosevelt Park (Burlington)
- Camp SPLASH! offers free summer swimming lessons at the Greater Burlington YMCA (Burlington)



- Take a rainbow nature walk (look for something red, orange, yellow, etc.)
- Search for fireflies
- Turn on some music and have a dance party
- Play a game of tag or chase
- Visit your local playground
- Limit screen time to one hour or less each day
- Create a regular schedule for active family time and have fun!

### Power up Movement with Music!

Scan the code below to access the Kiddie CATs Spotify playlist



## Did You Know? Physical Activity Can Help Children Build Self-Regulation Skills!

You may notice that some children have trouble waiting their turn, thinking before they act, or finishing something when it feels hard. These are all part of something called behavioral self-regulation. Behavioral self-regulation is a child's ability to manage their actions, control their responses, and work toward a goal.

Researchers reviewed dozens of studies and found that physical activity is often linked to better behavioral self-regulation in young children ages 0 to 5 (D'Cruz and colleagues, 2024)! When children are active, especially during play with others, they naturally practice waiting their turn, controlling their bodies, and following rules. These repeated experiences help build stronger behavioral self-regulation skills over time.

It is common for young children to have big behaviors as they learn about the world around them. Adding physical activity to your child's day may help them build skills to manage their behavior.

**Below are some ideas of Kiddie CATs games that can help preschoolers stay active and build behavioral self-regulation skills!**



### Animal Moves



- This is a "Follow-Me" Game where the adult models animal-related movements for children to copy.
- Movement examples include:
  - Stomping like an elephant
  - Jumping like a kangaroo
  - Walking on all fours like a bear



### 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!



### Freeze Dance



- The adult controls the music.
- When the music starts, everyone dances. When the music stops, everyone strikes a pose!
- To restart the music, the group needs to do a movement together (e.g., jump three times).

Have questions about what you read or want to learn more games you can play? Email us at: [catsmove@uvm.edu](mailto:catsmove@uvm.edu).

#### Citation

D'Cruz, A. F., D'Souza, N. J., Downing, K. L., Smith, C., Sciberras, E., & Hesketh, K. D. (2024). Association between physical activity and self-regulation in early childhood: A systematic review. *Obesity Reviews*, 25(2), e13657.