

The physical environment and play-based learning have always been the foundation of my teaching. I believe that children respond to open-ended, flexible play spaces that can be adapted to meet a range of physical abilities. This is especially relevant for the family day care setting given the range of ages and development of the children who share the one space.

When planning physical experiences I didn't often think about being intentional in my teaching. I looked at it as though I provided the resources, the space and the time to explore and the children did the rest, but since completing the *Munch & Move* training back in 2012 I began reflecting on my physical activity planning. I wanted to keep my unstructured play-based program but was keen to include the fundamental movement skills into every day. It was surprising to learn that with careful consideration and being an active role model for the children, we were well on the way to achieving this.

The outdoor environment comprises of many different services and levels, with pathways that connect each play space. There are river rocks to negotiate, pallet platforms to practice climbing, stepping or crawling from one level to another, and tyres and walking boards are used to create an obstacle course to develop balance and coordination. There are vertical pallet walls for storing sand play and water play equipment, requiring the children to have easy access but furthermore having to stand and use the crossing the midline action to select the equipment they need. The program caters for differing physical skills by allowing each piece of equipment to be used in a variety of ways.

This is where I can utilise the principles outlined in the *Move* component of *Munch & Move*. I can teach the children the fundamental movement skills as we play. By joining in on the obstacle course with the children I can role model how to balance by using our arms and scale the different surfaces while watching our feet. I can adapt walking along a board for the older children and sliding sideways along the board for the younger ones.

“Good work Deegan. Keep going, haha, keep going. That’s funny isn't it?”

We can practice our striking skills by using pool noodle bats and balloons hanging from the clothes line at varying heights. We can use the low, wide plank to jump off, role modelling how to push our arms up into the air as we jump.

Risky play is another area I am passionate about in my service. I use encouragement and excitement to spur the children on. When they struggle with the process of solving a physical problem I vocalize which part of their body they need to move that will help them. This gives them a focus to help strengthen their bodies and help with problem solving. The bikes and ride-on toys are available for all ages. With supervision and support, I believe that risky play experiences are an important part of children's physical activity in the early childhood setting.