

After spending over four years in the preschool room working with three to five year old children, I've recently moved into the naught to two years room.

My passion is and has always been promoting healthy eating and physical activity, and in the preschool room I found it easy to incorporate move, physical activity and fundamental movement skills into everyday practice with the preschool age children.

Since moving into the baby and young toddler room I have realized that I need to adapt my way of planning physical activity experiences, and I need to be more aware of spontaneous moments throughout the day to also promote more physical activity for the younger children.

The first day in the room I planned an exciting physical activity experience for the children to participate in and I was excited to see how they would react to the experience. Well it didn't take long for me to realise that my expectations of the experience were way too high for the age of children that I was educating.

I reflected on what I planned and what my goals were, and I needed to make some changes. I realised that when I first started planning for the babies and toddlers I wanted them to achieve all these goals I'd put in place, but now I realise it's all about exposure of physical activity and making it fun.

Instead of playing games with particular fundamental movement skills included in them, it's all about breaking the components of the fundamental movement skills down and going from there.

For example one of the components for jumping is bending the knees so I now plan experiences such as dancing, to practice bending down low and the standing up tall, so they're still practicing the fundamental movement skill components but through a dancing experience.

The children also have lots of fun practicing the fundamental movement skill, side sliding. This all started with a child who was balancing along the line of the masking tape that I'd placed on the ground. I then noticed he was trying to walk around the edge of the sandpit. I thought, what a perfect opportunity to practice side sliding.

I was right beside him practicing side sliding around the sandpit. Now a few months into working with the babies I can see there are so many ways to engage physical activity both indoors and outdoors. The most important thing is to role model.

As soon as you start moving, dancing, running, balancing the children are more likely to join you and do the same. For example we find transition times a perfect opportunity to promote physical activity. We crawl along the floor with our babies who are crawling or we pretend we're animals moving around the jungle.

It's all about being enthusiastic and energetic and showing the children that you're having fun, that moving is fun.

If I can give any advice to anyone who works in the baby and young toddler room, I would say don't overthink it.

Physical activity is not just running, climbing, jumping, etc.

It's any type of movement. It is about looking at an experience, both planned and spontaneous, and seeing how you can incorporate more movement into it, but always ensuring it is fun