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Eat well - play well

A guide for parents



Department of
Education



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From the Minister

Research indicates that eating well and being active are critical to children's health and wellbeing in both the short and long term. They also have a direct impact on children's performance at school. This new booklet for parents has been developed to help tackle the increasingly serious issues of childhood obesity and inactivity.

As your child's most important role model, the choices you make at home are crucial. It can be challenging, given the busy lives families lead, to provide nutritious food choices and be active every day.

This booklet is written specifically for parents of children aged three to six years. It has practical tips on how you can incorporate exciting activities and wholesome foods into your children's daily routines. Children soon learn that not only is living healthily good for them, but it is also fun.

The booklet also includes delicious recipes and stimulating play activities. Involving the whole family is a great way to ensure children embrace good eating and physical activity habits that will stay with them throughout life.

I encourage you to keep *Eat well – play well* handy as a helpful reference for your family.

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA

Minister for Education



Being active and healthy really does matter

Early childhood is an important time for your child's development as this is when lots of physical, cognitive (thinking), social and emotional growth takes place.

During these early years your child's basic movement skills are also developed – for example, balancing, walking, running, jumping, throwing, catching and kicking.

Children who are encouraged to be active throughout early childhood are likely to develop other skills more easily and have greater coordination – and these benefits last a lifetime.

As a parent you are in a great position to provide fun opportunities for your child to grow and develop their physical skills; and to give them a healthy range of food and drinks.

In this booklet you will find suggestions, hints and tips to encourage physical activity and healthy eating for children from three to six years old.

Take time to read through the ideas and try the recipes and activities with your child – you'll be amazed at how many opportunities there are each day to enjoy nutritious foods and be active!





Physical activity begins at home

Being active allows your child to grow and develop:

- social skills including learning how to interact with others
- language and communication skills
- movement skills
- good muscles, bones and heart
- balance and flexibility
- good posture
- self-esteem and self-confidence.

The benefits of being active go beyond physical benefits. For example, walking and riding with your child help develop street sense; and letting your child play team sports encourages them to form friendships and understand boundaries and rules.

Playing active games regularly with your child also allows you to set a good example and shows that being active is part of your family's daily routine. Being active with your child is a time to bond while having fun together.

What are movement skills?

Movement skills are the building blocks your child needs to participate in physical activities.

There are basic movement skills. Some are about controlling objects such as:

- catching
- throwing
- kicking
- batting.

Others are about moving the body such as:

- balancing
- line or beam walking
- running
- hopping and jumping
- skipping
- galloping
- dodging.





Did you know?

It is impossible to play sport and be involved in physical activity without using at least one of the basic movement skills.

Every sport involves at least one, if not many, of these skills. For example:

- netball and basketball involve running, catching, throwing and jumping
- football involves catching, kicking, jumping, throwing and bouncing
- cricket involves running, batting, throwing and catching
- soccer involves running, kicking and rolling... the list goes on!

Why are movement skills so important?

Learning movement skills at an early age helps your child to be confident and capable of joining in games, sports and activities.

Movement skills are an essential part of your child's growth and development, and can also help improve fitness, strength and self-esteem. That means the better your child's movement skills the more confidence they have.

By practicing and learning movement skills your child's physical, cognitive (thinking), social and emotional development is enhanced.



Did you know?

Children who have good movement skills are more likely to be involved in physical activities as teenagers and adults – and are more likely to be a healthy weight.

When should I start teaching my child these skills?

Many parents believe that if they let their young children play in the garden or at kindergarten and pre-primary they will naturally develop movement skills. But these skills actually need to be taught and practiced over time.

The pre-school years are the best time to start helping your child develop and practise their movement skills. This is the time when your child's movement patterns can be influenced and they enjoy being active and moving about. The skills encouraged in these early years will support your child throughout their life.

How can I help my child develop movement skills?

Like learning any new skill, children best develop and learn movement skills through practice and praise.

Each movement skill is divided into a number of steps. Some of the steps are outlined in the activities in this booklet to help your child correctly learn the different movement skills.

To help make learning new movement skills fun and enjoyable, try these 10 tips.

Did you know?

Teaching movement skills from a young age will benefit your child for a lifetime!



10 tips

Putting it into practice!

Think of being active as an opportunity to improve your child's health and have fun together.

1

Try lots of different activities in different places – in the **garden**, at the **park** and on the **beach**.

2

Vary the length of each session as children's attention spans vary.

3

Start with **simple skills** like rolling a ball on the ground before going on to **catching**.

7

Praise and encourage your child's efforts.

6

Have fun!
Keep it light-hearted and be patient.

5

Encourage development in all skills not just those your child is good at.

4

Encourage your child to swap sides of their body (for example, hop on their left foot and then swap and hop on their right foot).

8

Include activities you know your child can do – **success is a great reward.**

9

Include activities that your child suggests.

10

Do activities together
– it's more fun for your child and brings you closer together.

Balance

Balance is essential to almost all movement.

Practising balance activities with your child helps them with other movement skills including catching, throwing, kicking, hopping and jumping.

You and your child can practise balancing together by:

- holding on to a surface while standing on two feet then lifting one foot off the ground
- standing on one foot (eyes open and arms in any position).

You may need to steady them by holding them at the waist for a few seconds. As your child's balance improves you can make changes to the activity such as:

- balancing on one foot with hands on hips and eyes closed
- balancing on one foot for more than 10 seconds.



Did you know?

As your child's balance improves, you will notice improvements in other skills and a general increase in confidence when doing daily activities.



Checklist for balancing on one foot ...no wobbling!

1. Keep one leg still and straight with your foot flat on the ground.
2. The other leg should be bent and not touching the supporting leg.
3. Keep your head still and eyes focused forward.
4. Keep your body still and upright.
5. Keep arm movements to a minimum.

Balance challenges

Balancing: Can your child balance on one foot for 20 seconds or more?

Walking the plank: Get your child to travel along a line on the ground balancing on one foot and then the other.

Space walking: Put paper plates on the floor between one room and the next and ask your child to balance on each plate as they make their way to the next room.

Do the limbo: Hold a pole at a height and encourage your child to move under it.

Your local park

Local parks usually have great play equipment suitable for young children to help them develop coordination and balance skills, while they also develop large muscles and body strength.

Swings: Help coordinate movement and build leg and upper body strength.

Slides: Children learn to climb and build confidence in balancing.

See-saws: Help with balance and coordination.

Ropes and ladders: Climbing and swinging on ropes can help build balance and coordination and upper body strength.

Healthy eating begins at home

Schools and their canteens support healthy eating and play a vital role in helping reduce the worldwide epidemic of childhood obesity. Your role as a parent is vitally important too.

Poor nutrition and physical inactivity in childhood are associated with increased risk of chronic disease including obesity and raised blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar. Good foods give your child all the nutrients they need to:

- grow and develop
- concentrate and learn well at school
- stay healthy throughout childhood and in adult life.

What foods should be avoided?

Fatty, sugary and salty foods should be avoided. These include crisps, hot chips, pastries, biscuits, chocolates and lollies as well as fizzy drinks. These foods and drinks lack adequate nutrition, are high in saturated fat and sugars, and can contribute excess energy.

A poor diet robs children of their vitality and makes it hard for them to concentrate at school. Too many high kilojoule foods and large portions combined with little exercise and physical activity can lead to children becoming overweight or obese.



Healthy food and drink choices

Pull out these pages and place them on your fridge for lunchbox tips and healthy recipe ideas.

The school day is busy, filled with learning, concentration and physical activity. Food is fuel for our bodies and healthy food provides your child with energy and nutrients to get them through the day.

These five simple steps help your child get through the day:

1. **A healthy breakfast**
2. **Plenty of fruit and vegetables**
3. **Dairy products – two to three serves of milk, cheese or yogurt to meet their daily calcium needs**
4. **Water – the best thirst quencher**
5. **Readily available healthy snacks.**



Tips for packing healthy lunchboxes

What you pack in your child's lunchbox is really important. Include as many healthy foods as possible – and definitely keep junk food away from school. Keeping your child's lunchbox healthy and interesting can be a challenge, so it's important to find

food that will stay in the lunchbox and out of the bin!

Avoid foods that could go off, especially on a hot day – take care with foods such as rice (a high risk food in terms of food safety).

Pack a frozen drink or an ice brick

to keep food fresh and safe to eat. Use a thermal flask to keep food warm – place rice/noodles on the top and vegetables or chicken in another compartment. Add fresh fruit that is in season for example apples, oranges, grapes, mandarins and bananas.

Recipes for creative lunchbox ideas

Roast vegetable frittata

This makes two serves and is a yummy alternative to a sandwich. Get your children to help you make it – there aren't too many ingredients and it's quick and easy to put together. It can be eaten hot or cold so it's ideal to slice up and put in your child's lunchbox.

Any combination of roasted vegetables can be used, for example red capsicums, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and parsnips. Try other left over cooked vegetables.

Ingredients

4 eggs
¼ teaspoon dried basil
salt and pepper
1 cup cooked roast vegetables, cubed
1 tablespoon parmesan cheese

Method

1. Whisk eggs with basil, salt and pepper.
2. Heat roasted vegetables in a non-stick frypan for two minutes. Pour over eggs and reduce heat. Cover and cook until almost cooked.
3. Sprinkle with parmesan and place under the grill. Grill until browned and set.
4. Slice into wedges and serve.

Banana loaf

This simple recipe doesn't require beating or whisking. Get your children to have a go! It makes 12 slices. Freeze slices individually and pack into lunchboxes.

Ingredients

2 cups self raising flour
¼ cup raw sugar
2 ripe bananas, mashed
2 oranges, juice and rind
1 egg, lightly beaten
¼ cup vegetable oil

Method

1. Combine flour with raw sugar in a large bowl.
2. Mix mashed bananas, orange juice and rind with egg and oil.
3. Stir into flour and sugar. Pour mixture into lightly greased loaf pan and bake at 180°C for 45 minutes or until cooked.
4. Let loaf cool. Serve dusted with icing sugar.



Green Examples: Fill the menu with...

Breads	A variety of bread types
Cereals	Wholegrain cereals, pasta, noodles, rice
Vegetables	Vegetables and salads (reduced fat dressing only), all salad mixtures
Fruit	Fresh, frozen and tinned (in natural juices)
Legumes	Tinned (eg bean mix, kidney beans), cooked
Reduced fat dairy products	Reduced fat milk (plain or flavoured), yoghurt (fresh, frozen, plain or fruit), cheese
Lean meat, fish, poultry and alternatives	All lean meats, chicken (no skin), fish (eg tuna, salmon, sardines) and egg

Sandwich fillings	All lean meats, chicken, fish, creamed corn/corn kernels, egg, canned spaghetti (reduced salt), salads, baked beans, low fat cheese, hommos, vegemite, yeast spreads and fish spreads
Hot food	Jaffles/hot rolls/toasted sandwiches, baked potatoes, rice, soups, toast, English muffins, crumpets (wholemeal), raisin toast, and meals such as curry and rice and pasta dishes
Snacks	Yoghurt, scones, raisin or fruit bread, piklets, cheese sticks, bread sticks, bruschetta, water crackers, rice crackers, popcorn (plain/low fat/flavoured), dried fruit, seed packs, trail mix based on breakfast cereals
Drinks	Water, reduced fat milk, fresh milkshakes, soy, 100% fruit juice (small size), plain mineral water

Green Lunches



Corn and bean tortilla

Makes 2 portions and try other tasty fillings such as tuna, reduced fat ham, egg or hommus.

Ingredients

- ½ cup of canned corn (reduced salt)
- ½ cup canned chilli beans (or kidney beans) (reduced salt)
- 2 slices of red onion
- 2 wholemeal tortillas
- 2 cups lettuce
- 2 tablespoons grated reduced fat cheese

Method

1. Combine corn kernels, chilli beans and onion.
2. Assemble lettuce and cheese on tortillas, top with corn bean mix, fold up the bottom and enclose.
3. Cut it in half if desired and wrap tightly in cling wrap.

Fish cakes

Makes five portions (two cakes/portion), Add capsicum sticks, cherry tomatoes and cucumber pieces with each portion of fish cake.

Ingredients

- 5 medium potatoes
- 400g of tinned salmon or tuna in spring water, drained
- 2 eggs beaten
- Pepper to season
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup breadcrumbs (best to use stale wholegrain bread, then process)

Method

1. Scrub potatoes, cut into quarters, then boil until soft, drain the water and mash.
2. Drain tuna/salmon and mash.
3. Mix together potato, tuna/salmon, egg, onion and pepper.
4. Roll two tablespoons of the mixture in breadcrumbs, then slightly flatten.
5. Spray fry pan with oil and cook for five minutes on each side.
6. Serve with cherry tomatoes, capsicum sticks and cucumber pieces.

Tip: Make into a tuna burger by placing patty in a wholemeal roll and adding salad vegetables such as; tomato, cucumber and lettuce.

Amber: Select carefully

Breakfast Cereals	Refined cereals with added sugar
Full fat dairy foods	Milk, yoghurt, custard, low fat dairy desserts and cheese
Savoury commercial products	Products such as ovenable fish/chicken/potato portions should be chosen because they are lower in fat/salt
Snack food bars	Products such as breakfast bars, cereal bars and fruit bars
Savoury snacks	Products such as oven bake vegetable chips, garlic or herb bread lightly spread
Cakes, muffins and sweet biscuits	Products such as cakes, muffins or biscuits (reduced fat and/or sugar based on wholemeal flour)
Ice-creams, ice-blocks, fruit based icepoles, slushies	Ice-creams, milk based confectionary, frozen yoghurts and rice cream
Drinks	Fruit drinks, mineral waters flavoured with fruit juice, low joule cordials

Red: Off the menu

Sugar and artificially sweetened drinks	Soft drinks, artificially sweetened soft drinks, energy drinks, cordials, sports drinks and mineral waters flavoured with sugar, high caffeine drinks (eg drinks containing guarana)
Confectionary	All types, caramelised popcorn
Pastry items	All types such as eclairs, cream puffs and strudels
Sandwich meats	High fat sandwich meats including polony and salami
Deep fried foods	All types
Savoury snacks	Crisps, chips and other similar products
Ice-creams	Chocolate coated and premium ice-creams
Sandwich fillings	Honey, jam, chocolate spreads, confectionary sprinkles
Cakes, muffins and sweet pastries	Croissants, doughnuts, cream filled buns, cakes, sweet pastries, slices



Breakfast Muffins

Makes 12 portions.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups plain wholemeal flour
- 4 wheat biscuits, crushed
- ½ cup corn or rice flakes
- ½ cup sultanas
- ½ cup reduced-fat milk
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 tub low-fat yoghurt (200g)
- 1 egg
- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Mix flour, crushed wheat biscuits, corn/rice flakes, sultanas, spices and baking powder together in a bowl.
3. In a separate bowl, mix milk, apple juice, mashed banana, beaten egg and yoghurt.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients together until they are just mixed and no more. Place in greased muffin tins and bake for approximately 15 minutes.
5. Once cooled, wrap individually in cling wrap and store in freezer until needed (take out in the morning before school).

Acknowledgement of recipes.

Osborne GP Network Ltd, Lunch Right Menu Planner, Healthy Weight Program (Original concept and preparation by Dr Erica Davison, DEd, MSc, Post Grad Dip Hlth Promo, Bed 2004. Revised and updated by Cancer Council WA, Osborne GP Network, WA School Canteen Association, Child and Adolescent Community Health and Department of Health, 2009).

Fruit Loaf

Makes 12 portions.

Ingredients

- 1 cup grated carrot
- ½ cup dried apricots, chopped
- ½ cup sultanas
- 1 medium apple, chopped
- ½ cup apple juice
- ¾ cup water
- ¼ cup raw sugar
- 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- ½ cup plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 bananas sliced thinly

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Line loaf tin with baking paper.
2. Place carrot, apricot, sultanas, apple, juice, water and sugar in medium saucepan.
3. Bring to boil then simmer uncovered for 15 minutes.
4. Cool to room temperature.
5. Stir in sifted dry ingredients and banana. Spread mixture into loaf tin and bake for an hour.
6. Once cooled slice loaf and store in airtight container, or freeze individual portions in cling wrap.



Healthy food and drink choices in schools

Schools and parents have a vital role to play in helping reduce the worldwide epidemic of childhood obesity. It is important to reinforce messages being taught in the classroom by modelling healthy food and drink choices in canteens, tuck shops, on school camps and excursions, and as classroom rewards.

Support healthy food choices in schools by:

- talking with your children about the importance of healthy food choices
- packing healthy food in lunchboxes and only providing treats occasionally
- providing ideas for your school canteen
- helping out in the canteen or on the committee where you can
- joining in healthy fundraising activities at school.

An easy-to-follow traffic light system is used in public schools to plan canteen/food service menus with healthy, nutritious and affordable food and drinks. You can use the GREEN AMBER RED system at home – it's fun and easy to follow:

- **GREEN** foods should be the majority of a healthy diet, so try filling meals at home with these healthy foods.
- **AMBER** foods should be selected carefully and eaten in moderation.
- **RED** foods and drinks are not available in public schools. Try limiting your child's consumption of these foods and drinks at home too.

Your school will also have a policy about nuts and nut spreads.

Minimising exposure to particular foods such as peanuts and tree nuts can reduce the level of risk of anaphylaxis. You may be requested by your school to not include nut spreads in sandwiches or products containing nuts in your child's lunchbox. School canteens have been advised to not include products containing nuts on their menus.



Activities to do together

Here are some quick and fun activities for you and your child to enjoy together. Most can be played in small spaces or indoors if the weather is bad.

The best thing about these activities is that they cost nothing or very little – and any equipment you need can usually be found in and around your house or garden.

Balloon volleyball

Equipment: Balloon, string or masking tape

Tie a piece of string between two chairs to create a volleyball net or put a strip of masking tape or markers along the ground. Blow up a balloon and practise catching with your child by tapping the balloon over the string. Once they have caught it, they tap it back. See how many times in a row you and your child can catch the balloon.

Remind your child to:

- keep their eyes focused on the balloon
- reach out and bring it in – like a frog's tongue!

Target practice

Equipment: Cardboard/paper, crayons/pencils and blue tack

With your child, create a target using cardboard and paper, and stick the target on the wall. With ping pong balls or light bean bags, practice under-arm and over-arm throwing to try and hit the target. Increase the distance from the target as your child improves.

Remind your child to:

- keep their eyes forward
- stand side on to the target
- step as they throw.

Hop print

Equipment: Paper, crayons/pencils, scissors and masking tape

Use paper and crayons/pencils for your child to trace around your feet. Make 10 or more tracings, cut them out and place them on the ground in a trail for your child to practice hopping to each footprint. Change the pattern of the trail so they practice hopping further distances, inside, outside and around corners.

Remind your child to:

- keep their eyes forward
- keep one foot up
- keep the foot that is up behind their body.

Did you know?

You are your child's best role model and can encourage and support your child's efforts to be more active simply by being active yourself!

Activities to do together

Rainy day activities

For those rainy days when you can't get outside, try some of these indoor activities:

- Collect boxes of varying sizes and build a space ship or make a castle.
- Play your child's favourite songs and make up dance routines together.
- Using masking tape, mark out a hopscotch square in the garage.
- Make an obstacle course and include some or all of the following:
 - **jumping** over a rope on the floor
 - **sliding** under a rope tied between two chairs at about adult knee height
 - **climbing** over a pile of cushions
 - **rolling** under a low table
 - **crawling** through the legs of chairs (make a tunnel out of chairs with a sheet draped over)
 - **playing** leapfrog from one carpet square to another
 - **tapping** balloons off a wall to keep them in the air.

Family fun time

Being active doesn't mean you have to make lots of changes to your family's lifestyle. You can begin by making some small changes in your daily routines.

- On family outings, fit in some physical activity by stopping at a park on the way home.
- Have a box of play equipment such as balls, frisbees and a kite in the back of the car so you and your children can be active anywhere.
- Carry a small, soft ball in your bag so you can grab it at anytime to practice throwing and catching with your children.
- Give your children gifts that increase physical activity such as skipping ropes and balls – and even books on activities.
- At your child's next party or gathering, include active games and dancing.

- Encourage your child to move like different animals:
 - **zig, zag and zip** like a bird
 - **slither** along the ground like a snake
 - **stomp** like an emu
 - **hop** like a kangaroo that never stops
 - **crawl** like an echidna carrying all its spikes
 - **climb** like a possum up a tree
 - **gallop** like a horse crossing a paddock.



Activities to do together

Garden activities

- Collect boxes, ropes, tyres, planks of wood and blankets to create a cubby or obstacle course.
- Set up a treasure hunt and hide clues and/or non-food items such as stickers, sequins and bouncy balls.
- Plant a herb or vegetable garden and teach your child about growing healthy foods.
- Fill up a paddling pool or fill water balloons to throw at a simple target – or to sit on and burst!

Out and about activities

- Visit new, local or favourite parks or ovals and take along bats and balls.
- Go on a bushwalk with your family.
- Visit a beach and take a ball along for a game of beach volleyball; use two sticks and a piece of string as a net or simply draw a line in the sand.
- Go to the pool and have fun swimming and splashing.
- Walk to your child's school or the local shop as a family.
- Go for a family bike ride.



Games to play with friends

Have you ever been stuck for ideas for party games or activities when your child's friends come around to play? Try some of these activities – they help all children develop movement skills while they are having fun and burning energy!



End ball

Equipment: Balls

Divide the group of children into two and get each group to stand in a line facing each other about four metres apart. Give each child a ball and on the signal of 'Go' ask them to throw their ball past the opposite group. Children must catch the ball and throw it back, again trying to get it past the opposite group. When all the balls are gone, the side with the least number of balls behind them is the winning group.

Streamer swirling

Equipment:

Fabric and/or streamers and sticks

Get children to tie strips of fabric or coloured streamers to sticks. Play music and encourage children to run with the streamers and swirl them in different motions including down low, up high, to either side, and in a circle above their heads.

Kick at targets

Equipment:

Plastic bottles, buckets, bins and other household items

Gather a range of targets like plastic bottles and buckets and place them in two groups in front of a fence or wall. Divide children into two groups and give each group a ball. On the signal 'Go' each child has a go at kicking the ball at the targets. The winning group is the first to knock down all the targets.

Lily pad jump

Equipment:

Large pieces of paper/cardboard (green or coloured/painted green)

Cut out some lily pads from large pieces of green paper/cardboard. Mark one with something special such as gold paint. Place the lily pads on the ground and put on music. Children must jump from one lily pad to the next without stopping. Once the music stops, they must stop jumping. The child on the special gold lily pad wins.

Limiting screen time

Too much screen time can take away valuable time that you and your child can spend together being active.

Here's how you can decrease screen time in your home:

- Set family rules about screen time such as the amount each day and times when screen time is not allowed.
- Write the rules together as a family and put them on show for everyone to see.
- Swap screen time for active time by making a list with your child of all the active things they love doing. Choose activities from this list when screen time is not allowed.
- Monitor the time spent on screen-based activities with an alarm clock or a timer.
- Make your child's bedroom a screen-free zone.
- Be a good role model by limiting the time you spend on screen-based activities.



Screen time

is the amount of time you and your children spend using electronic media including watching television and DVDs, playing computer games and using the internet.

Interested in more?

There are lots more things you can do to encourage your children to eat well and be physically active.

www.beactive.wa.gov.au

Information on how to be active and includes research and advice from the Physical Activity Taskforce.

www.det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink

Encourages parents to use the GREEN AMBER RED system at home.

www.health.wa.gov.au/anaphylaxis

How to help protect children from potentially fatal allergic reactions.

www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation

Consumer information on a range of food standards and nutrition.

www.healthyactive.gov.au

Information and initiatives on healthy eating and regular physical activity to assist all Australians to lead healthy and active lives.

www.natureplaywa.org.au

Getting children outside to run, jump, climb, splash, invent, imagine and play makes them happier and healthier.

National guidelines for three to five old children

Children should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day.

Children should spend less than one hour a day watching television and using other electronic media (DVDs, computer and other electronic games).

Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be sedentary, restrained or kept inactive for more than one hour at a time (with the exception of sleeping).



Discover more, visit our parent website
W: det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou