

Outdoors and Active

A Physicality Grab 'n' Go Kit

Some of the childminders involved in the Outdoors and Active project thought that a kit of easy to carry, low cost resources could encourage children to be more active in the park, in their gardens or even just out and about on daily walks. They tested different kinds of containers for the kits and observed how active children were with the different playthings they had. These are the childminders' Top Tips:

Choose a container or bag that suits the way you get to the park:

- A small, lightweight, water resistant backpack
- A change-bag style tote bag that would go over pram handlebars
- A flat-pack plastic basket on wheels - pushing or pulling this to the park would be a good physical activity for children in itself
- A small and light suitcase on wheels – again, children could push or pull this
- A tidy box to go in a pram's storage basket

The aim is to get children as physically active as possible, using and enjoying their whole bodies for movement play. Encourage them to:

Boing: up and down movements such as bouncing, hanging upside down, hopping and skipping, leaping.

Whoosh: to and fro movements such as being rocked, swinging, running, starting and stopping, sliding.

RolyPoly: rotating movements such as twirling, rolling over or down a hill, dancing, spinning, cartwheels.

Use their physicality: 'bodyful' movements such as stretching, balancing, leaping, squeezing, crawling.

Try some of these simple, lightweight, cheap resources to encourage physically active play:

- French skipping elastics or a long length of 2.5cm wide elastic, tied at the ends for jumping, pulling, stretching
- Light, washable or wipe clean bean bags for throwing and catching
- Clothes pegs and clips, a few tent pegs or tarpaulin pegs and an old sheet for den building
- Small, water resistant picnic blanket for dens and snack time
- Small multi-coloured parachute for windy day and ball games
- Silky, satiny, flowy scarves for whooshing through the park with
- Chunky chalks for making trails, mark making and pictures
- Water squirter for water fights and mark making
- Small lengths of string / twine and rope / paracord to make dens, trails, tree swings
- Mini-first aid kit (sterile wipes, non-allergenic plasters)
- Couple of tennis balls
- Cheerleader shakers / pom-poms
- Gymnastic twirling wand – or make your own with a real stick and some ribbon
- Clear plastic umbrella for fun in the rain
- Back scratcher / massager to stretch arms behind the back

Where to find these cheap and cheerful treasures:

- Pound shops and market stalls
- Charity shops and jumbles sales
- DIY and homewares shops
- Online

Remember:

Children will want to use these items in unusual ways – why not let them? Think about the benefits as well as the hazards, and work out how you can enable risky play, rather than preventing it unnecessarily.