

# Active Play Audit Tool

Developed to assist Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to promote active play to children



**Completing this tool will assist your ECEC service to:**

- Meet requirements of the **National Quality Standard**
- Reflect the learning outcomes of the **Early Years Learning Framework**
- Support development of your **Quality Improvement Plan**
- Increase the opportunities for active play learning experiences for **children birth to five years**

**Revised February 2018**

## Why do we need this Tool?

This Tool has been developed to assist early childhood educators to promote physical activity for children attending ECEC services. It aims to support and promote the inclusion of opportunities throughout the day for children to engage in physical activity, contributing to a reduction in sedentary lifestyles and childhood overweight and obesity.

This Tool provides ECEC services with the opportunity to engage educators in critical reflection on how their practices and environments (indoor and outdoor), foster the physical development of the children. Information gathered using this Tool can also be used to inform the service Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as evidence of the ECEC service's continuous improvement.

## Did you know?

- 17.5% of NSW children are overweight or obese at the time they start kindergarten (Hardy LL et al, 2016).
- Children aged one to five spent on average, 16% of their day 'moving' (Ellis Y, et al, 2014).

*"Physical activity during the early childhood period is important as that is the time when children can learn and develop healthy behaviours which can then support them throughout their lives" (Hinkey et al, 2008, pg1)*

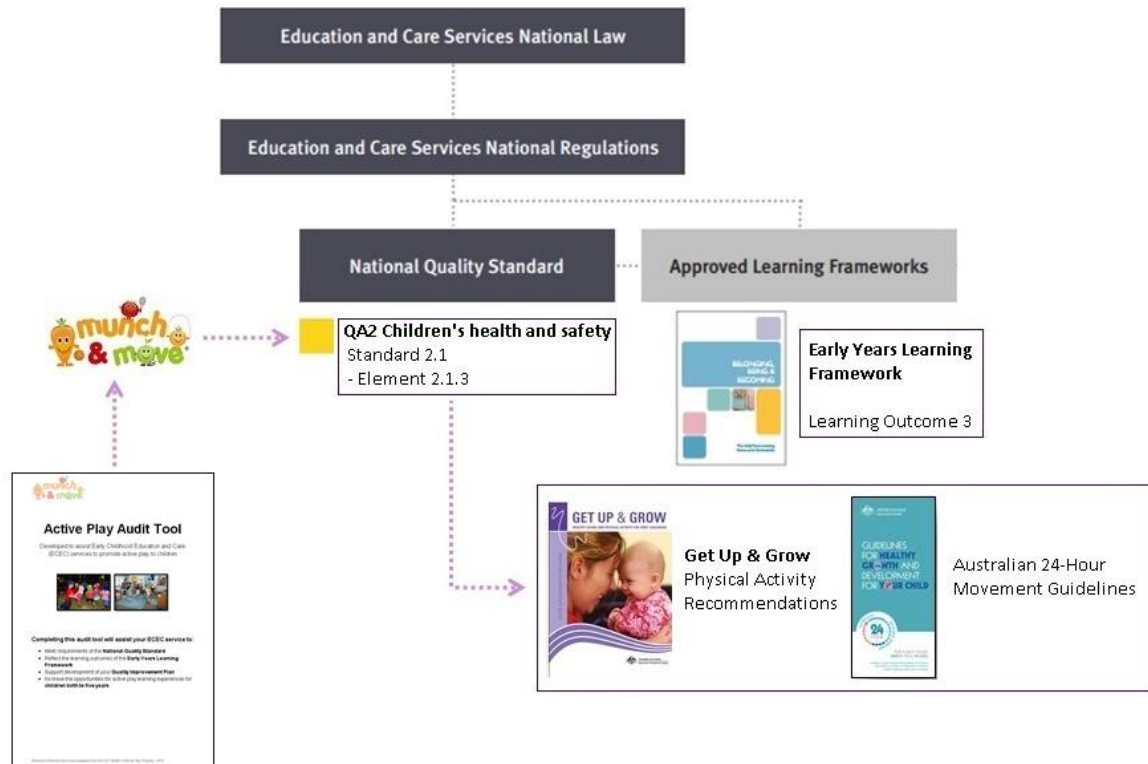
## How does this Tool link to the National Quality Framework?

Fostering a child's sense of wellbeing is interwoven throughout the National Quality Framework (NQF) and is referred to in Learning Outcome 3 of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Encouraging young children to be physically active and to develop positive attitudes and habits around physical activity nurtures a child's wellbeing.

The importance of children engaging in physical activity while attending an ECEC service is reflected within each of the seven National Quality Standard (NQS) areas, but is most strongly linked to NQS 2.1 *"Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted"*. Furthermore NQS Element 2.1.3 states physical activity is *"promoted and appropriate for each child"* (ACECQA, 2017, p.143).

In 2017 the Commonwealth Department of Health released the *Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): An Integration of Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour, and Sleep*. These guidelines take a holistic view of children's experience over a 24-hour period, recognising each movement behaviour is integral to health and linked. These recommendations build upon those embedded in the *'Get Up & Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood'* resources and are reflected in *Munch & Move*.

## The National Quality Framework



### The Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years):

- Infants (Birth to one year) should be physically active several times a day in a variety of ways, particularly through supervised interactive floor-based play, including crawling; more is better. For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes of tummy time, which includes reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling, spread throughout the day while awake.
- Toddlers (1 to 2 years) should spend at least **180 minutes** a day in a variety of physical activities, including energetic play, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- Pre-schoolers (3 to 5 years) should spend at least **180 minutes** a day in a variety of physical activities, of which at least **60 minutes is energetic play** such as running, jumping, kicking and throwing, spread throughout the day; more is better.
- Infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be restrained (e.g. in a stroller, car seat or high chair) for more than one hour at a time or sit for extended periods.
- Children younger than 2 years of age should not spend any time watching television or using other electronic media (e.g. watching television, using other electronic media such as DVDs, computer, tablet, electronic games).
- For children aged 2-5 sedentary screen time should be **no more than 1 hour** and less is better.

This Tool allows services to consider the importance of both the indoor and outdoor environments to promote physical activity for children.

*“Indoor and outdoor environments offer significantly different yet complementary experiences and should be given equal focus and attention.”  
“Services provide an inclusive environment when indoor and outdoor spaces are designed to support the diverse interests, preferences and learning styles of all children in the service.” (ACECQA, 2017, p. 195)*

When completing this Tool consider also NQS Quality Area 3 (Standards 3.1 and 3.2) that encourages educators to *focus on the physical environment to contribute to children’s wellbeing, creativity and developing independence, provide a diverse range of experiences that promote children’s learning and development, keep children safe and organise spaces to reduce the risk of injury.* (ACECQA, 2017, p.180).

## **Implementing the Active Play Audit Tool in your ECEC Service**

### **Objectives:**

- To **reflect** on the effectiveness of the learning environments in supporting children’s active play.
- To **reflect** on the intentionally planned physical activity opportunities that support the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines.
- To **identify** strategies to enhance physical activity including creative use of resources and professional development.
- To **guide** the development of an action plan to further promote active play for the children in your care through continuous improvement, linking to the service’s QIP.

### **How do I use the Tool?**

This Tool is divided into seven sections:

1. Learning Spaces
2. Resources
3. Physical Development
4. Fundamental Movement Skills
5. Educators
6. Families
7. Additional Essential Elements

Each section begins with a question that asks your service to **reflect** on current practices. Record these reflections in the spaces provided within the Tool.

Use the listed **Have you considered** to assist with your reflection (eg for learning spaces, which of the spaces listed does your service offer?).

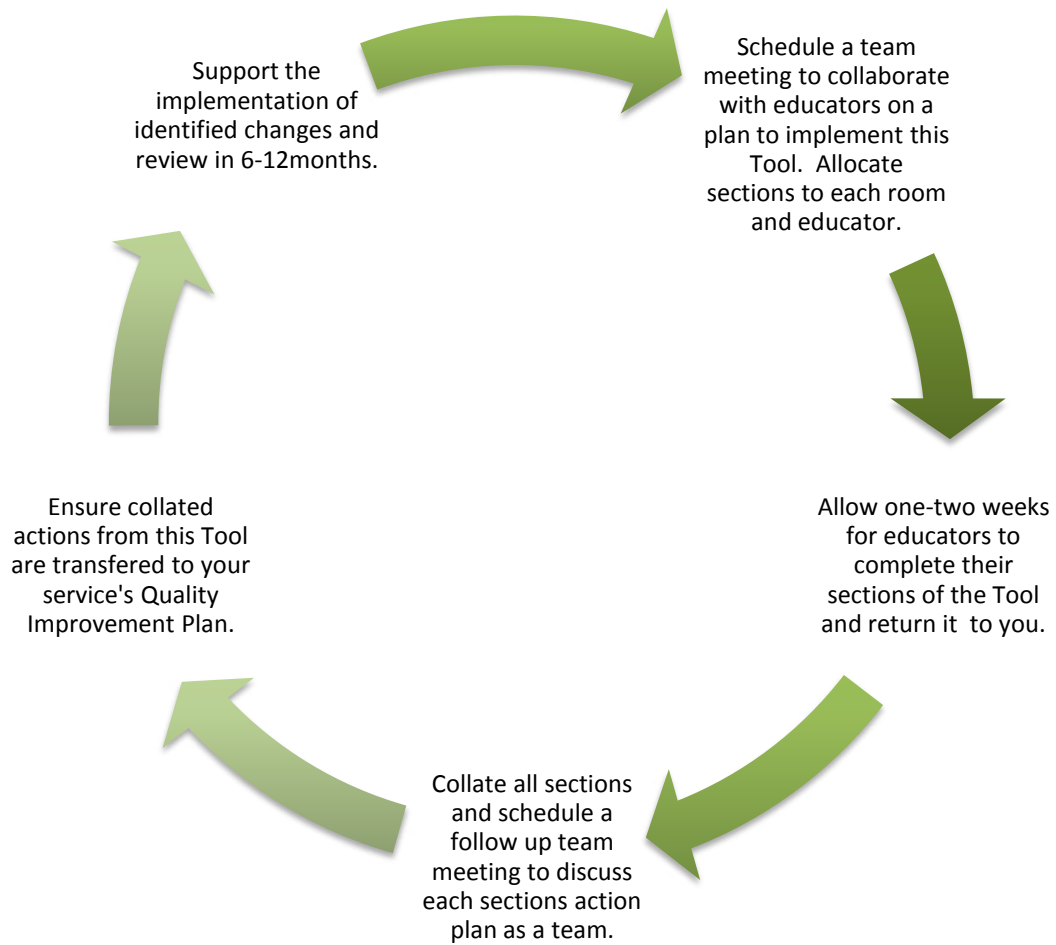
Reflect on future development using the questions posed in the **Moving forward** section.

On completion of this reflection process, record in the **Action Plan** section your service's strategies for increasing the active play opportunities in the different learning environments.

Use the listed **Have you considered** questions to assist with developing your action plan (eg. for learning spaces, are there spaces listed that you do not have and would like to create in the future? Perhaps your educators have requested further training to enhance their knowledge?).

Your action plan can then be transferred to your service's **QIP**

## Active Play Audit Tool Implementation Process



## Section 1 - Learning Spaces

**Reflective Question:** What are the learning spaces in our ECEC service's environment?

Indoors:

Outdoors:

**Have you considered:**

	Animal habitat		Dramatic play		Cubby house		Quiet space
	Shaded play area		Garden		Digging pit		Sandpit
	Stage / Platform		Grass area		Open area		Water trough
	Construction area		Hill / Mound		Bike paths		Softfall
	Furniture		Flooring				

**Moving forward:** What spaces do we have that we are not using? What spaces could we create? What changes can we make so that our learning spaces better facilitate active play? How can our indoor spaces be modified to create additional active play spaces in poor (too hot, too cold, too wet) weather?

**Action Plan:**

## Section 2 - Resources

**Reflective Question:** What resources are available to encourage children's active play?  
Indoors:

Outdoors:

**Have you considered:**

	A-frame trestles		Climbing trees		Scooters		Sticks		Steps
	Animal figures		Dry creek bed		Shade		Pipes		Streamers
	Stepping stones		Watering cans		Tree stumps		Bikes		Balls
	Work bench		Flying fox		Pots		Spades		Shells
	Wheel barrows		Bean bags		Rakes		Buckets		Swing
	Edible plants		Hoops		Ramps		Chalk		Targets
	Scooter boards		Ladders		Ribbons		Wood		Tree logs
	Brooms		Music		Ropes		Pebbles		Tyres
	Boats		Paint		Scarves		Photos		Trestles
	Books		Pinecones		Shovels		Camera		Trucks
	Variety of surfaces		Dramatic play props		Kitchen equipment		Hammer and nails		Magnifying glass

**Moving forward:** What resources do we have that we are not using? What resources do we need to get? How can we use recycled materials to make active play equipment? What changes can we make so that our resources better facilitate active play? How do we set up the environment and resources to encourage and support children to engage in movement and active play?

**Action Plan:**



### Section 3 - Physical Development

**Reflective Questions:** During children's active play, what areas of physical development are being promoted? How do we promote physical development?

Indoors:

Outdoors:

**Have you considered:**

	Tummy time		Sitting balance		Rolling		Crawling
	Pivoting on tummy		Creeping on tummy		Cruising		Pulling to stand
	Muscle strength		Coordination eye-hand		Flexibility		Walking
	Body awareness		Coordination eye-foot		Dexterity		Cross-patterning
	Agility		Cardiovascular fitness		Skiping		Bone strength
	Balance		Spatial awareness		Posture		

**Moving forward:** What are the individual physical needs of the children in our care? Are there games or activities we can introduce to the children to promote the development of specific physical skills?

**Action Plan:**

## Section 4 - Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)

**Reflective Questions:** During children's active play, what FMS are being promoted and how?

Indoors:

Outdoors:

**Have you considered:**

**Locomotor FMS**

	Jumping		Running		Side-sliding		Gallop
	Leaping		Hopping		Skipping		

**Manipulative FMS**

	Catching		Underarm throwing		Stationary dribbling
	Overarm throwing		Kicking		Striking a stationary ball

**Moving forward:** How can we promote FMS to cater for the individual age and needs of the children in our care? Are there games or activities we can introduce to the children to promote the development of specific fundamental movement skills?

**Action Plan:**

## Section 5 - Educators

**Reflective Questions:** As an educator, how do you support children's active play and physical development through the identified learning spaces and resources?

How do we plan the program to ensure that there is a balance between planned and spontaneous active play as well as a balance between passive and active experiences?

**Have you considered:** (Interactions)

	Individual – one to one		Shared – small group		Shared – large group

**Have you considered:** (Role modelling)

	Curiosity		Enthusiasm		Participation
	Demonstration		Imagination		Passion

**Have you considered:** (Other)

	Accessing community resources (built, space, human)		Awareness of children's individual needs		Scaffold children's physical skills
	Embedding active play into the everyday curriculum		Observational recordings and evaluations		Provide positive constructive feedback
	Being aware of spontaneous opportunities		Include active play in professional conversations		Conversations with families
	Provide opportunities for risk taking and challenge		Planning intentional experiences (gross motor skills and FMS)		Provide quality & sufficient resources
	Sharing with children the benefits of being active		Building on children's interests		Being culturally inclusive
	Including children in planning and set-up of active play		Excursions/ incursions		

**Moving forward:** What changes do we need to make to the way we interact with children and model active play? Are there opportunities or experiences that we need to include in our program to better facilitate active play? Do you feel you would benefit from professional development related to promoting active play? If yes give an example.

**Action Plan:**

## Section 6 - Families

**Reflective Question:** How do we involve and share with families the importance of engaging children in active play in both the indoor and outdoor environment?

**Have you considered:**

	Being an active role model		Conversations with families		Daily diary / Journal
	Embed active play into the program		Family active play journal to share with service		Noticeboards / Photos / Newsletters
	Invite families to participate in active play		Invite families to share their active play interests		Special active play events

**Moving forward:** How can we improve the way we share the importance of active play with families and support them to do regular active play with their children?

**Action Plan:**

## Section 7 - Additional Essential Elements

**Reflective Question:** What additional essential elements need to be considered in supporting active play in the learning environment?

**Have you considered:**

	Adequate shade		Early Years Learning Framework		Sustainability
	Adequate space		E&C Services National Law		Supervision
	Ample time		National Quality Standard		Kidsafe Guidelines
	Appropriate clothing		Physical activity policy		SunSmart Guidelines
	Appropriate footwear		Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines		Routines
	Cost effectiveness		Workplace Health & Safety		

**Moving forward:** What else can we do to better facilitate active play at our service both indoors and outdoors? Do we have a physical activity policy? Consider reflecting on *Munch & Move* sample Physical Activity and Screen Time Policy - [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)

**Action Plan:**

Whole Service Action Plan			
Tool Section	What action will take place	By when	By who
1. Learning Spaces			
2. Resources			
3. Physical Development			
4. Fundamental Movement Skills			
5. Educators			
6. Families			
7. Additional Essential Elements			

## References

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