

# Let's Play!

## Activities for Families



**SET  
4**

Focusing on  
Well-Being and  
Belonging



Ministry of  
Education

## Overview

This package of resources was developed by the BC Ministry of Education for parents and caregivers who want to support their child's early learning experiences through play.

Each play activity connects with one of the Living Inquiries described within the BC Early Learning Framework, which include:

- Engagement with Others, Materials and the World
- Well-being and Belonging
- Personal Identity, Social Responsibility, and Diversity
- Communication and Literacies

These resources describe simple play activities using this easy to follow format:

- What
- Why
- How
- Where
- When

## Acknowledgments

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# Sleeping Bunny



## What

There are many simple, easy ways to explore movement with children. Rhythmic language and song make movement activities engaging and predictable. Try this poem and the accompanying actions with your child to explore more about body movement.

### 1 Create the Environment

- Ask your child how they're feeling. Be specific when telling your child how you're feeling (e.g. sleepy, playful, ill, calm).
- Tell your child that you learned a new game that you want to try together.

### 2 Sleeping Bunny

*"See the little bunnies sleeping til it's nearly noon"* (have your child pretend they are sleeping).

*"Shall we wake them with a merry tune?"*

*"They're so still, are they ill?"*

*"No! Wake up bunnies!"* (Encourage your child to stand up and do the following actions below).

*"Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop"* (encourage your child to hop around).

*"Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop"* (encourage your child to hop around and repeat as many times as you wish).

## Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Find ways to keep themselves healthy including sleep and physical activity
- Feel confident in their control of their own bodies
- Enjoy being physically active

## How

Try the Sleeping Bunny poem game.

Instead of hopping, try jumping or dancing, or whatever movement your child might want to try.

Explore what other animals your child wants to pretend to be. Before reading the poem, try asking your child questions such as

- What animal would you like to try next?
- How does that animal move?
- How can you make your body look like that animal?
- How can you make your body move like that animal?



Below are some examples of movements, but use your imagination to explore many ways to move.

Animal	Movement	Reminders
<b>Horse</b>	Gallop	Keep right foot always in front of the left as you step/run
<b>Flamingo</b>	Balance on one foot	Stand up tall, arms out to your side. Lift one foot and balance on the other
<b>Tortoise</b>	Move slowly	Move slowly and quietly
<b>Frog</b>	Squat down low and jump up high	Reach down and touch the ground between your feet, then jump
<b>Bird</b>	Move arms out to your side	Move arms up and down, as in flapping motions
<b>Mouse</b>	Move quietly, walk, step, or jump quietly	Run on your tippy toes as quietly as you can. Jump up and down while landing quietly, so no one can hear you!
<b>Penguin</b>	Step, waddle and kick, with small arm flapping (small movements)	Waddle, kick, waddle, kick!
<b>Dinosaur</b>	Step, stomp, run, or walk	Make big movements—could be light and fast or heavy and slow

These movements could be used for imitating many more animals. Try moving like superheroes, or try moving like nature’s elements such as the ocean, trees in the wind, a growing flower, pouring rain, or a tornado!

With your child, suggest making up a new creature. Discuss how children can act out their creature’s movements! There are many possibilities, but the key is to have fun and get kids moving!

### Where

This activity can occur indoors or outdoors.

### When

This activity can occur any time of the year, or any time of the day.

### Reference

Child Health BC. (2017). *Appetite to Play*. Retrieved from: <https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/tips-ideas/teaching-fundamental-movement-skills>



# Being Calm



## What

Try this experience with your child as a way to introduce positive coping strategies when dealing with challenging situations. It is based on the idea that when parents are calm, children learn to calm themselves, too.

### 1 Create the Environment

- Talk with your child about learning to be calm.
- Ask your child for times when they were upset or struggled to be calm.

### 2 Try sharing different ways of being calm with your child:

- Try doing calming activities together
  - » Take deep breaths together. “Breathe in while I count to three. Now breathe out while I count to three”
  - » Pretend to blow up a balloon
  - » Blow a cotton ball across a table
- Point out when your child is being calm
  - » “I see that you are breathing slowly. You look calm”
  - » “Holding your stuffed animal helps you calm down, doesn’t it?”
  - » “Your face looks relaxed—you are staying calm”
- Talk about being calm
  - » “Let’s take some deep breaths together before we go outside”
  - » “I feel so much better after I have taken a few big breaths”

## Why

Through this experience, children learn to

- Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation
- Express a sense of personal well-being
- Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views
- Build healthy relationships with adults

*Breathe  
Deeply*

## How

Let your child watch you take deep breaths. Explain what you are doing as you breathe in and out.

Gently blow your breath out slowly onto your child's face, then smile. You can also try blowing out candles or blowing bubbles.

Hold your baby chest-to-chest and breathe slowly for a few minutes—your baby will feel calmer.

Place a toy on your child's stomach, and they can lift and lower the toy with each breath.

Incorporate mirrors so your child can see themselves in different emotional states (parents should try to stay as calm as possible).

Ask your child about being calm. "You took some big breaths in and out. How do you feel now?"

Ask your child about being calm: "Let's think together. What are some things that help us stay calm?"

Here are some ideas, but brainstorm with your child other ideas that will be helpful:

- If you are feeling sad, sick, tired, bored, sluggish—try stretching
- If you are feeling happy, calm, feeling okay, focused—drink water
- If you are feeling frustrated, worried, or feel like you are losing control—take deep breaths
- If you are feeling mad/angry, scared, upset or out of control—take a break

Pause and think about being calm throughout the day...

- First thing in the morning
- At bedtime
- Before and during a new activity
- When you're frustrated or anxious
- When you are in a hurry

## Where

This activity can occur anywhere, preferable in a quiet place away from noise and distractions.

## When

This activity can occur during any time of the day.

## Reference

The Child & Family Partnership [www.reachinginreachingout.com](http://www.reachinginreachingout.com)

*Relax*

# Building a Sandcastle or Snowcastle



## What

This is a game you and your child can play in winter or in the summer, and it is especially fun with a group of children. Here are some ideas on how to do this:

### 1 Create the Environment

- Show pictures and discuss sandcastles or snowcastles with your child, and see if they would be interested in making one.
- Brainstorm ideas on what material you would need to make the castle, and see if you have it around the house. Regular sand buckets or plastic drinking glasses can create a magnificent castle of snow and ice, or of sand.
- Model language around teamwork, acknowledging that you are working together and that being a team makes you happy.

### 2 Building Activities

- When you go outside, designate one area or station for collecting the snow or sand in the buckets, and another area for building the castles to encourage movement from one space to another
- You can help your child fill up the bucket with snow or sand, and then help them turn the bucket over to the area where you are building the castle
- Run with your child from the place where you are collecting the snow or sand to the place where you are building the castle. Try hopping, galloping, skipping, or just walking to the castle from the collecting station.

While you are playing, consider asking your child questions such as

- How tall and big do you want to make the castle?
- How does the snow or sand feel?
- How can you decorate the castle together?

## Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Build healthy relationships with both adults and other children
- Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, especially with physical activity
- Feel confident and in control of their bodies
- Enjoy being physically active



## How

Help your child fill the bucket with snow/ice along with you. Invite children to help turn the container or bucket over and lift it away to make the castle.

Invite children to fill and turn the container over themselves. Encourage them to take turns or co-operate during each task.

Prompt your child to design their own style of castle, and encourage them to find other materials to be part of their creation (for example, rocks, sticks, shells).

## Where

This activity can occur outdoors.

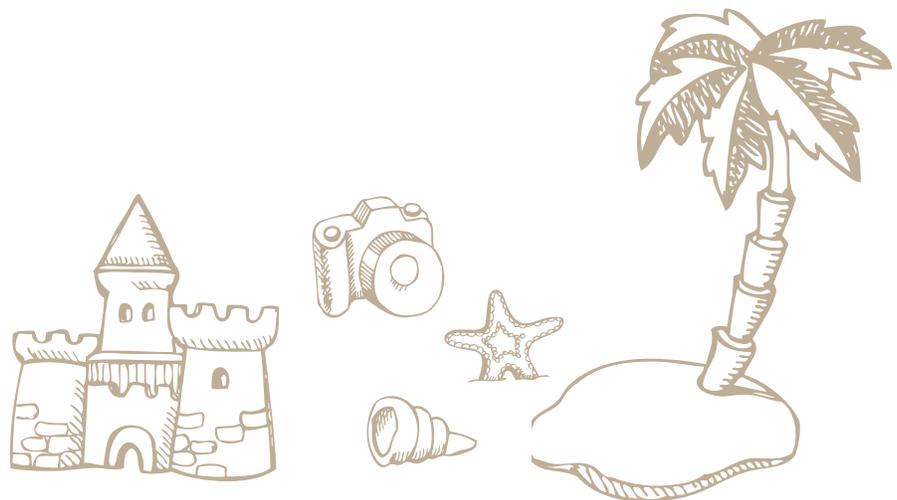
## When

Try these activities in the morning or the afternoon.

## Reference

Adapted from LIVE 5-2-1-0 and Appetite to Play:

<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/games-activities-3-5-yrs/snow-castle-relay>



# Yoga Poses



## What

Move through a variety of yoga poses that are safe and fun for kids. Try asking questions to your child while doing the poses.

### 1 Create the Environment

#### Breathing

Every yoga class begins with a few quiet minutes to get the body and mind ready for the practice. Breathing helps our minds and bodies relax. You can say, "Let's sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Slowly, breathe in through your nose (pause), and out through your mouth (pause). Breathe in through your nose (pause), and out through your mouth (pause). Feel your body and mind getting ready for yoga. Slowly open your eyes." You can ask, "How do you feel inside? How does your body feel? Are you feeling tired, or are you feeling awake?"

For younger children, you can also teach breathing by using a toy that is placed on your child's belly. Watch the toy rise as you inhale and drop when you exhale. You can also do this with an expandable toy sphere or balloon.



### 2 Poses

#### Child's pose

Tell your child, "Let's do the child's pose together." (Sit on your heels, lower your forehead to the ground and extend your arms way out in front of you). Ask, "Did you feel your knees pushing on your belly? This pose helps your belly digest food better." Push up on all fours, and return to sitting on your heels.



#### Downward facing dog pose

This pose helps build strong muscles, increases flexibility of the joints and spine, and builds confidence in our body's ability to move in unique ways. You can say, "Let's do the downward facing dog pose together." (Begin in an all fours position, hands under shoulders, and knees under hips. Curl your toes under. Straighten your legs and then straighten your arms. Hold this upside-down V position for three breaths. Carefully return to all fours). Ask, "How does your body feel? How do you feel inside? Are you feeling tired, or are you feeling awake?"



#### Tree pose

Balancing poses, like the tree, improve our ability to focus, pay attention, and concentrate for longer and longer periods of time. Tell your child, "Imagine you are a tall tree with roots growing out the bottoms of your feet. Let's do the tree pose together." (Begin in a standing position with palms touching and thumbs resting on your heart. Shift your weight to your left leg and slowly raise your right foot to your ankle, shin, or inner thigh with your knee facing out. Slowly return your foot to the floor and repeat on the other side). Ask, "Was one side easier than the other? Balancing poses take practice, and you will get better and better!"



## Sequences

There are sequences of yoga poses, done without stopping, which make our hearts beat faster, strengthening the heart muscle and giving us energy. Tell your child, "Let's put our downward facing dog and child's poses together." (Begin with the downward facing dog pose, lower to all fours and move into the child's pose, return to all fours and then the downward facing dog pose, back to all fours and the child's pose. Rest here). Ask, "Do you feel your heart beating faster? It's getting stronger!"



## Why

Through this experience, children will be learning

- To communicate thoughts and experiences
- To be curious about vocabulary (for example, names of yoga poses) and concepts
- About their personal identity (deeper understanding of self) and mindfulness
- Problem solving
- Positive coping skills
- Personal emotions

## How

Try the poses with your child.

Read a book about animals and act out the animals in yoga or other poses. Encourage your child to pose page-by-page along with the story.

Make up poses together: yoga for kids should be creative. Encourage your child to make up new poses and name them. This activity is great for practicing language skills. Make animal sounds. Use action gestures. Hop like a bunny and slither like a snake.

Explore HealthyFamiliesBC to find more activities to share with your child:  
<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/about-us>

## Where

This activity can occur indoors or outdoors.

## When

Try this activity any time of the day. You can even try it before sleep for relaxation.

Adapted from Appetite to Play and PBS Kids:

<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/games-activities-3-5-yrs/yoga-poses>







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