

# Improving physical activity in early childhood education and care: **What works?**

## KEY MESSAGES

- **Some recommended physical activity practices are supported by evidence.**
- **Most recommended practices in ECECs have not been examined** in reviews of experimental trials.
- **Physical activity programs** delivered in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings are **generally effective in improving children’s physical activity levels.**



### What did we want to find out?

Which practices are effective for improving physical activity levels in children < 6 years of age in ECEC settings?

### Why is this important?

Many children do not get enough physical activity. This pattern can continue into adulthood. Adequate physical activity can help to prevent many chronic diseases.

### How did we investigate?

We conducted an umbrella review of evidence from relevant systematic reviews.

## WHAT DID WE FIND?

### Physical activity programs in ECECs can:

- increase the total amount of physical activity
- increase the amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity
- decrease the amount of time spent sitting still.



### Recommended practices that are supported by evidence include:

- providing opportunities for physical activity
- creating a physical environment that promotes physical activity
- training ECEC educators to provide safe and appropriate physical activity.



**Providing educational materials to parents is an effective strategy but is not included in guidelines for this setting.**

**For most of the recommended practices, we found no systematic review evidence of effectiveness.**

