



Brighter
Futures for
Children

move >>
<< more

Helping your child
be healthier and happier

Welcome to your Move More activity pack

This pack is to support you in helping your child be healthier and happier by moving more.

You don't need to be sports or exercise fans, do any long workouts or have any special training or experience to get started. Even just a small amount of light, regular activity will make a big difference!

Inside this pack, you will find some tools and tips for making movement a regular part of your child's day and how it will benefit all your family.

Why move more?

Moving more is not only good for our bodies and our physical health but it's also known to be great for our mental health. Moving more will help your child feel good and:

- increase their energy levels
- help them feel more positive and confident
- reduce anxiety, stress or depression
- improve sleep and relaxation
- help memory and focus
- boost their mood and wellbeing levels.

Here are some ideas to get you started!

Tips to move more

Get your child moving for just 30 minutes a day, each week. This could be broken down into two 15-minute walks, or three sessions within the day.

Aim for your child to do some moderate exercise - movement that makes them breathe a little faster and feel warmer (not out of breath or sweaty).

Have a go at the activities on the cards included in this pack - hula hooping, bean bag tossing and jump roping!

Just walk – it does wonders for our wellbeing. Brisk walking's an effective way to start moving more - use the pedometer included to help you record your daily steps.

Get your child to do activities around the house such as cleaning, washing the car, gardening, sweeping the pavement.

Cycle or walk to appointments instead of driving.

Cook together standing up and get your child to bring you the items needed.



Put on some music and dance – both music and movement are great for us!

Have a look at our website which has lots of tips on moving more:
www.brighterfuturesforchildren/movemore



How does moving more help? The science behind it...

Physical activity is a natural and powerful depression and anxiety fighter for many reasons:

- 1 Something you may have heard of - endorphins! As we exercise, our brains release these chemicals which provide an energising and feel-good effect
- 2 The body and mind are closely linked. As your child moves, relieving any muscle tension and stress, their body will feel more relaxed, as will their mind
- 3 Being aware of our bodies moving and functioning will distract the mind and give time away from any negative thoughts
- 4 Getting outside for fresh air and not being confined to your house can help provide perspective and boost our immune systems.

Moving more is good for all of your family

The global pandemic brought many challenges for us. And when you have a child who is physically or mentally unwell, it can add to the stress and be even more difficult, for all the family.

Perhaps the thought of doing any type of physical exercise may seem too much of a struggle. But moving more could have the opposite effect for you and other family members and help you cope with any challenges. It will:

- + provide you with time away from any stressful situation
- * distract your mind away from your own anxieties and thought patterns
- + give you the opportunity to take part in a self-care activity, each day
- * create something to do to have fun as a family! Playing together and setting goals will reinforce connections and provide points of celebration and teamwork





Overcoming obstacles – what to do if you face problems moving more

Even though there are many reasons why moving more can help us feel good, the very idea of it may feel overwhelming and not appealing for some.

If your child is feeling too exhausted, depressed, anxious or frightened and you're struggling to motivate your child to move more, here are some helpful ideas:

★ Start small

Just five minutes a day, doing something that's low impact, such as walking, is a great start. Setting ambitious goals can be overwhelming, especially for those with poor mental health. Go at your child's pace and keep it manageable

★ Link things they love

If your child has a treat they really love or an activity they spend lots of time doing, link this to movement. For example, if they like reading, order or find some free audio books they can listen to while they walk. Or stand to watch one of their favourite TV shows and do some stretching on the spot

★ Pick the right time

Choose a time when your child's energy is at its highest and avoid times when they always struggle

★ Take the focus off "sport, exercise, body"

Children often have body image anxieties which are a barrier to getting involved with anything that feels sporty, like joining a team or working out. If your child is resistant to sport or formal exercise avoid those words when suggesting activities. As we've shown in the tips, being active is not just about sport.



Ready to move more?

We hope you find this pack useful and that you and your family can find new, easy and enjoyable ways to move more. If you need any support, please don't hesitate to speak with your contact at Brighter Futures for Children. Moving more is going to be a regular topic for us as we aim to help all Reading's children be active and healthier and happier.

More support for you

For any more information and resources, please visit:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/movemore

getberkshireactive.org

www.readingfis.org



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Brighter Futures for Children is a not-for-profit company, wholly owned by, but independent of, Reading Borough Council. We deliver children's services (including fostering), early help, education and SEND services in Reading.

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