

**Lesson Plans for Born to Move /  
Nacido para Moverme  
Hop-A-Lot's First Steps to Fitness  
Dianne Warren / Oasis Publications**

**Goal:** To apply the understanding of why activity is important to the physical, emotional, mental and social development of children.

### **Objectives for Parent:**

1. To understand the importance of movement in infancy
2. To develop my toddler's brain and body through movement
3. To understand the importance of active play
4. To use my example in action to teach my preschooler
5. To understand the importance of activity during pregnancy
6. To encourage creative play

### **Objectives for Child:**

7. To join my family in activities
8. To play outside everyday

### **Lesson Plan Set-up:**

There are many ways to use **Born to Move / Nacida para Moverme**. It is a teaching tool for both the mother and the child, so depending on the situation it will be used differently.

- Small groups of mothers can be directed through the book by a staff member following the lesson plan.
- Use one objective each time the group gathers. There is a lot of background information tied to each book page and many related activities. You will find some points repeated.
- Use what works. Mothers need to see how easy and "do-able" this is.

- You may begin by allowing each mother to choose one entry in the **Parents' Corner** and share what it means to her. It is very interesting to see how this varies within groups and what the mothers can learn from one another.
- Each numbered objective in the lesson plan will be followed by the related page numbers from the book. Make sure everyone is on the same page. All illustrations are the same for the English and Spanish sides, as is the information.
- Mothers will read the book to their children and talk to them about the topics being covered. Have mothers share their children's responses with the group.

## **Activities to Accomplish Objectives:**

### **1. (Page 1) To understand the importance of movement in infancy.**

#### **1. A. Parents are the child's first and most important teachers.**

- Infants are driven by reflexes. They don't "think" about what they do, they react to their surroundings and feelings. Their reflexes are in response to filling a need (to eat, connect with another person, relieve discomfort).
- One-on-one contact with your infant is the best way to interact, skin-to-skin and eye-to-eye. Vision and touch are her first ways of learning.
- An infant has more sensory nerves in her mouth than in her fingertips. Make sure her toys and surroundings are always clean.
- Infants use their senses to learn about the world. Provide stimulating pictures, mobiles and colors in areas infants spend time. Give them interesting things to see, touch, smell and hear.
- Infants may seem like they are in their own little world, but they are very alert and learning from their surroundings.
- Always talk to your baby. Describe what you're doing as you change her diapers, dress her, feed her, travel in the car and while playing. Sing to her.
- Excessive crying is not good for infants. They need to know you are nearby and their needs will be met in a timely fashion. Energy spent in stressful situations is energy taken away from growth.

#### **1. B. Infants progress from reflex to purposeful movements.**

- Your baby's brain grows quickly in the first year of life. She has over 1 billion brain cells that want to be used as she learns about the world.
- Active learning begins through play and movement. There is a brain/muscle connection. Play with your child and teach her how to move by moving with her.

- Don't restrict your baby's movements. Let her kick while you change her diapers, place toys "just out of reach" so she has to stretch for them, place wrist rattles on her arms to stimulate movement.

### **1. C. The importance of tummy-time.**

- When an infant is placed on her tummy, she starts to build upper body strength---head, neck and shoulder control are developed.
- A baby who spends less time on her tummy develops less upper body strength and this can lead to slower development of the ability to roll over, sit up and crawl.
- Start tummy-time as soon as you bring your baby home from the hospital. For a few minutes every day, place her on your chest or across your lap. As she gains strength, place her on a mat or blanket.
- Never leave a baby unattended while she is on her tummy.

### **2. D. Play with your baby everyday.**

- Get your baby out of her carrier or infant seat and off your hip.
- Your baby will explore, so make sure her surroundings are clean, safe and secure and she is never left alone.
- It helps to get down on the floor at your baby's level to check for unsafe conditions. Make her world a "yes" place instead of "no, no, no".
- Interact with your baby. Give her facial, verbal and non-verbal signals to keep her interest and encourage her to play with you.
- Use playthings of differing sizes, shapes and colors. Play "out of reach" games that encourage her to stretch for things. She will learn to reach, grasp, hold and shake.
- Play "peek-a-boo", "hide-n-seek", "pat-a-cake" and "row-the-boat", use soft blocks and balls, rattles, bubbles and plush toys.
- Your baby has no use for TV. She needs to hear, see and touch you. TV can interfere with language development.

### **1. E. Include your baby in family activities.**

- When your baby can sit up, include her in family meals.
  - Playing together builds family bonds and encourages your baby to move and explore.
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## **2. (Page 2) To develop my toddler's brain and body through movement.**

### **2. A. Activities and surroundings should stimulate the brain and the body.**

- Toddlers need to be active to grow and become smarter, happier, healthier and stronger.
- Make sure toddlers have enough space for active play.
- Stress a variety of physical activities. Seeing and doing new things helps a child's brain to develop.
- Provide as much free playtime as possible each day.
- As long as your child is awake, she should not be still for more than one hour at a time.
- Toddlers do not need to watch TV. They need to interact with adults for healthy brain development, social and emotional growth.

### **2. B. Toddlers need 30-60 minutes a day of guided playtime.**

- Toddlers need safe indoor and outdoor areas for active play.
- Young children learn best when you guide them and show them what to do. Your example and nearness are important to their success.
- Toddlers love to reach for moving objects. Use large, soft balls, bean bags, balloons, bubbles and hula hoops.
- Have mothers share how they used the above items in playing with their children.
- Active, daily playtime helps your child maintain a healthy weight.

### **2. C. Balance is an important skill learned through active play.**

- Balance helps children develop strength, flexibility and control of their bodies.
- Mastering balance prepares your child for more advanced movements.
- Control of the body builds your child's self confidence.
- Praise your child's attempts to balance. Practice makes perfect.
- Child-size shopping carts and baby strollers are good toys to help build balance while learning to walk.

## **2. D. Toddlers need as much free playtime as possible.**

- Free playtime allows your child to explore and discover things on her own. She loves to learn “first-hand”.
  - Free playtime builds your child’s imagination and sense of accomplishment.
  - Make sure areas used for free play are safe and supervised.
  - Provide an assortment of materials to encourage creativity. Refer to **6.A.**
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## **3. (Page 3) To understand the importance of active play.**

### **3. A. Toddlers learn best through activity.**

- Mental, physical, social and emotional skills are all developed through activity.
- Skills your child learns today are repeated the next day until they are mastered. A child enjoys repeating activities that lead to success. Repetition teaches.
- Activities where parents and teachers join in motivates children, guides them and sets a good example.
- Excessive “screen time” (TV, computers, videos) is linked to children who are overweight, aggressive and slower to learn in school.
- Make sure all learning activities are safe and age appropriate.
- Both large and small muscles are developed through activity.

### **3. B. Physical activity builds fitness in 3 ways.**

#### **1. Endurance:**

- The ability to play at a high level of activity for extended times. This involves aerobic exercise/activity.
- Aerobic activities increase heart rates and develop deeper breathing to make stronger hearts and lungs.
- Aerobic exercise for the young child includes running, swimming, jumping, (tri)cycling, etc.

#### **2. Strength:**

- Activities that build muscles increase strength.
- Activities that involve resistance build strength.
- Pushing and pulling, monkey bars, wrestling, climbing, lifting and carrying build strength.
- These activities also build strong bones.

#### **3. Flexibility:**

- Children are born with the ability to stretch and bend.

- Stretching keeps joints and muscles flexible.
- Activities that encourage stretching are reaching, toe touches, doing the splits, dancing, simple tumbling movements and yoga.

### **3. C. To build large muscles through outdoor activities you can:**

- Take a walk, walk the dog, bring a wagon or bags and pick up trash
- Use riding toys: tricycles, scooters, wagons
- Pull a wagon
- Run, jump, throw, hop, skip, kick
- Go to the park, use playground equipment
- Swim (with constant adult supervision) or run through the sprinklers
- Rake and sweep, wash the car
- Run an obstacle course
- At this age, it is more important to expose your child to a variety of movement activities than to look for mastery.

### **3. D. To build large muscles in snow activities your child can:**

- Go sledding or ice skating
- Help brush snow off car
- Make snow angels
- Toss snowballs into cans, baskets, boxes or hula hoops.

### **3. E. Children need safe, supervised play areas.**

- Toddlers can be reckless and will try activities they are not ready for. Make sure an adult is always watching them. 40% of playground accidents are due to lack of supervision.
- Toddlers are still learning to balance. Other than swings, never put a child on playground equipment she can't reach by herself unless an adult is right beside her.
- Safe outdoor toys include: large, light-weight balls, tricycle, push and pull toys, toy cars and trucks, wagons, scooters, child-sized brooms, rakes, shopping carts and baby strollers.

### **3. F. Small muscles are developed through activity.**

- Puzzles, art supplies and easy board games build small muscle control, thinking skills and confidence.
- Young children have short attention spans. Don't expect them to spend long periods of time in these activities.

- Make sure games and supplies are used correctly.
- Reading to your child builds an appreciation for books and learning, the skills of page turning and listening and a love of quiet time spent together.
- Children want to color with their parents. This is an excellent time to talk with your child while hand-eye coordination and imaginations are developed.
- Small muscle development like drawing, coloring and cutting prepares your child for school.



**4. (Page 4) I will use my example in action to teach my preschooler.**

**4. A. Preschoolers love to be around adults, imitating them and trying to “help”.**

- Preschoolers learn by copying, role playing, moving and following examples and simple instructions.
- Your child needs to see you involved in physical activities. Your example lets him to see physical activity as normal and fun.
- Playing with your child keeps her involved and increases her love for physical activity and learning.
- Praise your child’s efforts. Thank her for her help. This builds self-esteem and shows her the fun of team work.

**4. B. Plan family outings around physical activities.**

1. Physical activities enjoyed by the whole family are a powerful way to encourage your child to move and explore his surroundings.
1. Go to the park, beach, lake, creek, etc., for picnics and play.
2. Swimming is great for family fun. Never leave a child unattended around water.
3. Go on family outings...the zoo, nature hikes, community events, camping trips, farmers’ markets, shopping trips, etc.
4. Go for bike rides or walks around the neighborhood.
5. Go sledding or ice skating.
7. Enjoy family work days: wash the car or the dog, rake leaves, sweep the sidewalk, pick up trash in the neighborhood, “help” prepare dinner and clean the house, carry laundry, feed the animals, pick up toys and go grocery shopping.

8. Turn off the TV and have reading nights or play simple board games. **Farmers' Market**, available at [www.fitness4kidz.com](http://www.fitness4kidz.com), is a simple board game for the whole family to play together.
9. Have the mothers share what activities their families enjoy.

#### 4. C. Schedule activities where your child plays with others.

- Preschoolers need to learn how to play with each other.
- Start by involving your child in an activity by herself and then have her try it with a partner. Move from partners to a small group activity.
- Social skills: sharing, taking turns, helping and listening are learned through group play.
- Young children enjoy activities that show them how to cooperate, not compete. Encourage "team work".
- Save organized, competitive sports for school aged children.
- Learning to listen and cooperate with others prepares your child for school.

#### 4. D. Games to play in small groups that use simple instructions:

- "Simon Says"
- "Mother May I?"
- "Red Light, Green Light"
- "Being on Top of the News"
  1. Place newspapers (rectangle shaped) on the floor.
  2. Call out positions for the children to take relative to the newspapers:
  3. Kneel beside the news, walk around the news, jump over the news, put a hand on the news, put a foot under the news, stand on top of the news, etc.
  4. Let children call out directions.
- Learning to follow directions prepares your child for school.



5. (Page 5) **To understand the importance of activity in pregnancy.** Always talk to your doctor before beginning an activity program.

#### 5. A. 30 minutes of daily, moderate physical activity can:

- Regulate your moods and increase your ability to handle your body's changes
- Help your posture which improves the way you look and feel
- Boost your energy level
- Relieve back pains, constipation and swelling
- Build muscle, bone and joint strength

- Help you sleep better, especially if you sleep on your back with your knees bent, or on your left side
- Prevent or control gestational diabetes
- Prepare you for birth
- Help you regain your pre-baby body more quickly
- Reduce chances of experiencing “baby blues”.

#### **5. B. Low-impact activities to enjoy while pregnant:**

- Dancing
- Swimming
- Biking
- Walking
- Yoga
- Pilates
- Playing with your children

#### **5. C. Outside activities to share with your child(ren):**

- Yard work
- Washing the car
- Walking the dog
- Pushing child in stroller, pulling in wagon
- Yoga and stretching activities
- Riding bikes, separately or together
- Swimming and playing in the sprinkler
- Walking in the park, on the beach, around the neighborhood, on the school track, visiting a nature trail, etc.

#### **5. D. Inside activities to enjoy with your child(ren):**

- House work
- Simple meal preparations
- Fort building
- “Simon Says”, make sure child has a turn as Simon
- Art activities
- Dress up and role playing

#### **5. D. What to avoid while pregnant:**

- Jarring, bouncing, running or jumping activities
- Raw or undercooked fish and meats, non-pasteurized milk products
- Alcohol, tobacco and over the counter drugs

- Excess caffeine
  - Cleaning cat litter boxes
  - Eating fish with high mercury levels, such as: swordfish, tilefish, shark and king mackerel that can damage brain and nerve development in unborn babies. The larger the fish, the greater the chances of it containing unhealthy amounts of mercury.
  - Stressful situations....watch funny movies, visit people you enjoy and who want the best for you, laugh and play with your child(ren).
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## **6. (Page 6) To encourage creative play.**

### **6. A. Creative playtime supports self expression.**

- Help, but don't dominate, the creative process.
- Independence and control are part of the creative process.
- Provide a wide variety of materials that children can use in creative ways to express themselves.
  1. art supplies
  2. dress-up clothes and accessories
  3. water and sand toys
  4. small cars and trucks
  5. building blocks, Legos, Lincoln Logs
  6. empty boxes and large cardboard cartons
  7. music and percussion instruments
  8. dolls and stuffed animals
  9. flannel boards
  10. interest centers such as kitchen, classroom, store, playhouse, fort.

### **6. B. Creative playtime helps children deal with their feelings.**

- Creative playtime helps a child deal with feelings and find acceptable ways to express them.
- Role playing is a great way to learn about the world, express one's feelings and develop an understanding of others.
- Praise your child's creative efforts. Your support makes her feel safe to continue developing her sense of self.

- Avoid judging or comparing her creations, feelings and other attempts at self expression.

## **6. C. Use everyday materials to foster imaginations for indoor activities.**

- Turn on the radio and dance.
- Fill a plastic bottle with dry beans, rocks or buttons. Replace lid and shake your “maraca” while you dance.
- Use empty oatmeal and coffee containers as drums and join the band.
- Rolled up socks make good, soft balls. Toss them into empty boxes, pots and pans set around the room.
- Balloons are great for volleyball played over a rope tied between chairs. Attach balloon to wrist with string and bat around.
- Use old magazines to make art projects: collages, placemats, book marks, wall hangings.
- Use empty cans (smooth all sharp edges) and plastic bottles as sand and water toys. Place large tubs of sand or water on plastic sheets or old shower curtains for easy clean-up.
- Use large cardboard cartons to make TV’s. Put on a show.
- Use plastic cups and paper plates to play restaurant.
- Use paper plates to “ice skate” on the carpet or floor.
- Get out the dress-up box and create situations to be acted out: trip to the store, the “ball”, the restaurant, the doctor’s, the zoo...

## **6. D. Use everyday materials to foster imaginations in outdoor activities.**

- Use empty cans (smooth all sharp edges) and plastic bottles as sand and water toys. Build castles, play restaurant.
- Build roads in the sand / dirt or draw roads with washable chalk on cement and drive small cars and trucks. Decorate small boxes as buildings along the way.
- Play music and dance through bubbles.
- Plant a garden. Use containers and plant a cherry tomato, or quick-growing radishes. If space allows, plant pumpkins!

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## **7. To join my family in activities.**

### **7. A. A child who joins in family activities benefits in many ways.**

**1. Emotionally:** A child who is cared for and included in family activities:

- develops a sense of belonging and security
- uses this sense of security to move and explore her surroundings
- learns how to express herself through play
- handles stress better.

**2. Physically:** A child who is cared for and included in family activities:

- is taken out of carriers and allowed to move and develop large and small muscle control
- has family members to model behaviors and set examples for movement
- has a better chance of maintaining a healthy weight
- develops strong bones, heart and lungs
- is prepared to enjoy physical activity for life
- sleeps better.

**3. Socially:** A child who is cared for and included in family activities:

- learns how to interact and play with others
- learns how to listen and follow directions
- develops language skills more easily
- models her behaviors on her family members' examples.

**4. Mentally:** A child who is cared for and included in family activities:

- is exposed to an environment that is stimulating to the brain (the brain of a 3 year old is twice as active as an adult's)
- builds her intelligence through play and language
- sleeps better and is mentally alert for each day's activities
- uses the hand-eye coordination developed through physical activity to succeed in school.

**7. B. Family activities:**

**1. Meals:** when a child can sit in a high chair, it is time to join family meals.

- Read **Family Meals** from *Hop-A-Lot's First Steps to Fitness* series. Check [www.fitness4kidz.com](http://www.fitness4kidz.com)

**2.** Place an infant on a blanket to enjoy outside family activities.

**3.** Take walks and bike rides around the neighborhood.

4. Refer to 4.B for family activity and outing ideas.



8. (Page 7) **To play outside everyday.**

8. **A. The benefits of playing outside:**

- develops large muscles
- builds the skills of running, jumping, climbing, throwing, skipping, catching, swinging, galloping
- provides for children to “let off steam” with loud, energetic play so inside play is less disruptive
- allows children to develop strength and balance on large playground equipment
- gets kids out to enjoy fresh air, sunshine and nature.

8. **B. The drawbacks to staying inside:**

1. **“Nature Deficit Disorder”** is leading to a generation of “indoor children” more comfortable with computers, TV’s and videos than nature. This results in:

- Children missing out on the wonders of nature
- Loss of the awareness of how we relate with our surroundings, how we connect to the world
- Rising obesity rates in children
- Rising rates of depression in children.

2. **Too much “screen time”:** TV, videos, computers, texting.

- Children will copy what we do. Adults must model healthy media habits.
- Children under 2 years do not need to watch any TV. They need direct interactions with adults.
- Recent studies show children 8-16 months old recognize 6-8 fewer words for every hour spent in front of a screen.
- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 1-2 hours of TV for other young children. Children should not be inactive in front of media for more than 1 hour at a time.
- Children become watchers instead of doers.
- Choose the programs children watch very carefully. A recent study in *Pediatrics* shows boys ages 2 to 5 who watch violent TV shows or movies (such as Spider-

Man, Star Wars and Power Rangers) are more prone to be aggressive and anti-social at ages 7 to 10.

- Turn TV off during meals.
- Help your children understand ads. Many children think ads are part of the program they are watching.
- Don't give TV more importance by using it as a reward.



## 9. (Page 8) **Summary of benefits of physical activity.**

1. Review the benefits listed on page 8.
2. Have the mothers list activities that relate to each benefit.
3. Ask mothers to share the activities they enjoy with their children.
4. What are their favorite activities as a family?

Playing with our children and providing them with a variety of activities doesn't require a large bank account or special training. Understanding how the mental, physical, social and emotional development of their children depends upon daily activity will motivate parents to make sure their children are getting the best start in life and GET MOVING!!