

Healthy Start Sampler

Growing happier,
healthier children

MAY 2023



Active play

Playing outside in spring

After a long winter, it's a joy for children to play outside in spring. Mud, puddles, sticks and sand may be messy, but they offer a world for children to explore.

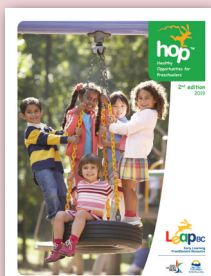
Playing outside has great benefits for children: it increases opportunities for problem solving, observation, leadership, free play, and creativity. Outdoor play can also reduce anxiety and improve mood and focus.

Just being outside increases your chance of being active!

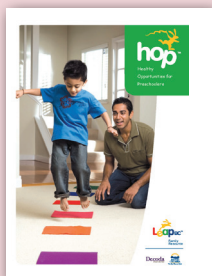
To learn more about the benefits of outdoor play, check out our Healthy Start @ Home video “Outdoor Adventurous Play”.



Leap HOP is a free resource for parents and educators that offers activity ideas for children aged 3-5.



**Leap HOP
Early Learning
Practitioners Resource**



**Leap HOP
Family Resource**

Download Leap Hop and our other resources at:
healthystartkids.ca/toolkit/

Sidewalk Chalk

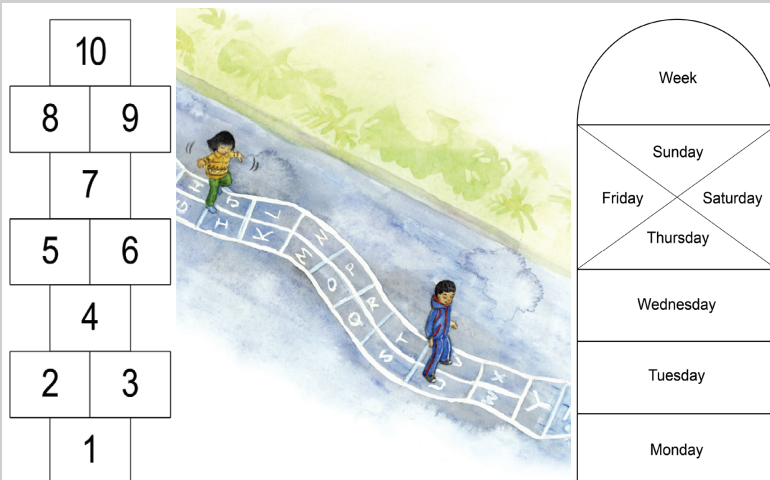


Sidewalk chalk is an easy starting point for all kinds of outdoor play. Drawing, colouring, and letter practice are examples of children's free play with chalk. Adults can also organize games like a 'floor is lava' obstacle course (draw rocks to jump to and flames to jump over), or a chalk street map for toy truck play.

Hippity Hopscotch

Hopscotch is a classic game that helps children develop locomotor skills, strong bones and muscles, and literacy skills like number or letter recognition.

Use a “10-step” or “Days of the week” pattern. Challenge children to hop in the single squares (using one foot) and jump in the double squares or rectangles (two-foot landing). Have the children call out the number or day of the week as they go.



Source: **LEAP HOP Family Resource**



Let's make

Nut Free Trail Mix

Nut free trail mix is a good alternative to granola bars, which usually contain a lot of sugar. This is an easy recipe to make with children; they can measure out the ingredients and mix them together in a big bowl. Store the trail mix in a large airtight container and take along snack sized portions in baggies or small reusable containers.

This is a flexible recipe that you can make using ingredients you have in your cupboard.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups toasted O cereal
- 2 cups shredded wheat cereal
- 2 cups rice square cereal, or any other low-sugar, whole grain cereal
- 1 cup raisins
- ½ cup dried cranberries or apricots
- ½ cup pumpkins seeds, sunflower seeds, or soy nuts* (optional)
- ½ cup chocolate chips (optional)
- ½ cup pretzels (optional)

**Most schools and preschools are nut free because of the prevalence of nut allergies among children.*

Adapted from the recipe "Crunchy trail mix", Food Flair, pg. 174



Gardening with children

It is exciting for children to watch a seed grow into food they can eat. Gardens are a great way to help children be active, and to help them learn about nature and how plants grow food. Preschoolers can help with most gardening tasks and take pride in what they do. Vegetable gardening can increase children's willingness to eat new vegetables.

- Create a garden indoors or outdoors.
- Visit a nearby nursery and select seeds or seedlings for potting.
- Choose plants that are easy to grow, such as sunflowers, tomatoes, beans, radishes, snow peas and herbs.

Children will enjoy having their own small section of a garden or their own pot to grow plants.

If you're not an experienced gardener, start small, such as by planting seeds in an empty egg carton filled with potting soil.

What's important is that children have fun! Digging in dirt, planting, watering, and looking for bugs is hands on learning at it's best.

Source: **Food Flair**



The *Food Flair* manual offers tips and activities that support healthy eating for young children from birth to age 5.

The *Food Flair* Activity Cards contain information about nutrition, healthy eating, along with recipes and fun activities to do with children.

Download *Food Flair* and the activity cards at:
healthystartkids.ca/toolkit/

