

Rainy Day Ready

Keeping kids moving with gross motor play when you can't go outside



Movement doesn't stop just because the weather does.

1 Why We Sometimes Stay Inside

Weather, health, and safety sometimes keep a classroom inside for the day — and that's okay. Here's what usually keeps everyone in:



Extreme heat or cold



Storms, lightning & heavy rain



Poor air quality or advisories



Illness prevention



Unsafe or wet playground



Age or temperament of children

2 Indoor Gross Motor Alternatives

Rotate teacher-led games with open-ended play so every child gets to move, stretch, and burn energy safely indoors.



Yoga & Stretch Circle

Guided stretches and simple poses build balance, body awareness, and calm focus.



Balloon & Ball Play

Batting balloons, tossing beanbags, or rolling balls builds catching, throwing, and eye-hand coordination.



Dance Parties & Action Songs

Freeze dance, action songs, and movement games get hearts pumping and bodies moving to the beat.

- More ideas:
- Obstacle courses
 - Tape balance beams
 - Simon Says
 - Red Light, Green Light
 - Musical chairs
 - Indoor bowling
 - Parachute play
 - Follow the Leader
 - Animal walks
 - Scarf & ribbon dancing

3 Why Gross Motor Time Matters

Gross motor play isn't just fun — it fuels the brain, body, and behavior children need every single day.



Builds fundamental movement skills

Running, jumping, climbing, and balancing form the foundation for lifelong physical competence.



Grows the brain, not just the body

Active play is linked to gains in attention, memory, and executive function in young children.



Strengthens self-regulation & social skills

Movement helps children manage energy, take turns, cooperate, and read social cues.



Supports lifelong physical health

Daily activity builds strong bones and muscles, cardiovascular fitness, and healthy growth.



Reduces challenging behavior

Burning off energy indoors helps children stay calm, focused, and ready to learn and listen.

60 min

of active play required daily in Kentucky full-day child care

Kentucky requires moderate-to-vigorous active play every day — including outdoor play when available — and it can be split into smaller chunks across the day rather than one long block.

Source: 922 KAR 2:120, Sec. 4(23), Kentucky Child Care Facility Health & Safety Standards

4 Best Practices for Indoor Movement

Simple routines that make indoor movement time safe, inclusive, and effective for every child in the room.

- ✓ Clear a safe, open space and set clear boundaries before you begin.
- ✓ Offer variety: balance, jumping, throwing, and dancing activities.
- ✓ Adapt activities so every child can participate at their own level.
- ✓ Mix structured, teacher-led games with free, child-led movement.
- ✓ Use music or visual cues to signal start, stop, and transitions.
- ✓ Schedule movement breaks throughout the day, not just once.

5 Kentucky Regulations to Know

922 KAR 2:120

Key requirements from Kentucky's Child Care Facility Health & Safety Standards.

- ✓ Full-day programs must provide at least 60 minutes of active play daily; half-day programs at least 30 minutes (Sec. 4(23)(a)2).
- ✓ Without outdoor access, centers must provide an indoor gross motor space of at least 60 sq. ft. per child, with a 2-inch protective surface around climbing equipment (Sec. 4(22)).
- ✓ Daily programming must include indoor and outdoor play using both small and large muscles (Sec. 2(4)(d)9).

- ✓ Active play time may be broken into smaller increments throughout the day — it doesn't need to be consecutive (Sec. 4(23)(a)3).
- ✓ Active play time can never be used as a reward or withheld as punishment (Sec. 4(23)(b)).