

# Kindergym



Fact Sheet #3

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## PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILD AT KINDERGYM

Kindergym is a special time for children with their parent/carer to play and have 'fun' in a safe and stimulating indoor environment. The equipment is set-up with many in built challenges that encourage the child to play, explore and experience many types on movement, activities and interaction.

Children have the opportunity to lead, practise and play during the Kindergym session which usually has a routine of warm up, 'free time' and group time activities.



Parent and Child Together

It's important that the parent/carer share in the play – after all, at this age you are their 'best' playmate. Share the game of peek-a-boo through the tunnel. A ball rolled down a wedge encourages the child to slide or roll down after it while developing track skills as they watch it roll.

Parents need to offer assistance and support for their child even when they know the child can manage the skill – be it balancing or climbing. Always stay close to your child on the equipment, (within arms length is recommended) either supporting the child having hands ready to prevent over balancing. Remember you are ultimately responsible for your child's safety. Encourage your child and 'talk' them through movements using positive comments or open-ended questions like "that was good holding on" or "can

you go through another way?"

If your child wants to attempt an activity you think is too difficult, try not to impart your fears or reservations, but guide them through the movement.

That is – show your child where to hold on and guide their feet on ladder rungs or support under the bottom to relieve body weight and stress if they are swinging on bars.

Children love repetition and may find small sections of the set-up they want to keep practising. This may become uninteresting even boring for the parent/carer but 'hang in there'! Try to see beyond the repeats to the mastery of the movement that the child is achieving.

Plenty of smiles, claps, 'well done' give instant feedback to the child, even for the smallest achievements. This will further enhance his/her confidence and self-image – "Yes I can balance on the plank by myself".



Leader / Parent Co-operation

Your Kindergym leader provides the structured environment and organised activities for you and your child. Much thought and preparation goes in to planning this and success often depends on the support and co-operation of the parent/carer with their child. So join in at Grouptime, forget any inhibitions and you will have 'fun' participating. If special events are arranged leave yourself reminders and

try to respond even to a small degree, ie dress-ups or face painting a little nose for Easter.

Attempt to follow up ideas. Take time to roll or throw and catch balls with your child at Kindergym and at home. Remember just how many sports are 'ball' orientated! Make some streamers, shakers, bean bags to play with - very simple but many uses for creative play. If the weather is too cold or hot throw a cloth over a table for a cubby or create a chair tunnel – things you may have seen at Kindergym.

Comment and suggest, and ask questions of your Kindergym Leader on equipment ideas and activities you child enjoys or have difficulty with, as this can be used in future planning.

Above all, enjoy your time at Kindergym. It is concentrated time with your child without the distractions of home. Marvel at your child's development no matter how small. Every child is a unique individual who will progress in their own time and rate through the stimulus and experience of Kindergym.

**Maree Hurley**  
DipT, Primary



**be active.**