



HEAD START BODY START  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND OUTDOOR PLAY (HSBS)



Including Preschoolers with Special  
Needs in Active Play!



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*Meet today's speaker...*



Diane Craft, Ph.D.  
Professor of Physical Education  
SUNY Cortland, New York

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**Overview of  
webinar**

- Discuss characteristics of preschoolers with special needs
- Share specific examples of inclusive physical activities
- Consider guidelines for leading inclusive activities



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### What are most common special needs of children in Head Start?

- Speech & language delays
- Developmental delays
- Autism spectrum
- Intellectual disabilities
- Emotional difficulties
- ADHD



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Preschoolers with special needs share characteristics of typical preschoolers, but more pronounced!



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### Need help with:

- Communicating
- Understanding instructions
- Attending to tasks
- Practicing to learn
- Sharing and getting along with others
- Increasing or decreasing activity level



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**Physical Activity is important for ALL preschoolers**



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**Goal = Develop Fundamental Movement Skills**

**Locomotor Skills**

Run, jump, hop, gallop, slide, leap, skip

**Object control**

Throw, catch, kick, strike, bounce, trap

**Stability**

Stretch, bend, twist, turn, swing, sway, inverted balance, upright balance...



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**Goal = Develop Physical Fitness**

- Cardiovascular endurance
- Muscular strength and endurance
- Flexibility



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# Modify Environment and Task for the Individual

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## Activity: All Stop and Go to Music

- Practice listening to music cues
- Respond to stop signal
- Sign and say stop
- Practice impulse control



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## Activity: Clean Up the Floor

- Clear barrier
- Many soft objects to throw
- Relaxed rules
- Deemphasize winning



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### Activity: Spiders and Bugs



- Non-elimination
- Teach gentle touch
- Assist child as needed



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### Activity: Matching Socks

- Practice locomotor skills
- Reinforce cognitive concept of matching
- Learn colors, shapes, patterns
- Assist child as needed



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### Activity: Easy Kicking

- Practice eye-foot coordination
- Use tethered balloon
- Cover balloon for safety



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**Activity:  
Easy Punching**

- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Use open hand or fist
- Option to contact with any body part



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**Activity:  
Easy Striking**

- Use foam bats
- Space balloons far apart
- Batting is privilege



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**Activity: Bubble Wrap Jumping**

- Environment promotes jumping to hear the pops!
- All travel in same direction
- Can walk instead of jump



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### Activity: Swat the Fly



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### Swat the Fly

- Promote cardiovascular endurance
- Each child participates at own level
- Teach to only swat flies



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### General Teaching Strategies



Same as with typical preschoolers but even MORE important with preschoolers with special needs

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### Teaching Strategies

- Simplify instructions
- Give visual, oral, and kinesthetic cues
- Provide plenty of repetition
- Have role models
- Use communication systems
- Eliminate elimination games



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### Teaching Strategies

- Succeed 3 out of 4 tries
- Minimize waiting time
- Use safe, soft objects



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Physical Activities in this webinar are from the book/DVD set:

**Active Play!**  
Fun Physical Activities for Young Children  
by Diane Craft and Craig Smith  
[www.activeplaybooks.com](http://www.activeplaybooks.com)




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**Speaker Contact Info**



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Phone: 1-800-213-7193 ext. 454  
Join our online community!  
<http://hsbs-play.ning.com/>

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