



ZERO to THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

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Activity Level

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Activity level describes to what extent a child uses movement and physical skills to learn and explore the world.

Some children are not action-oriented. They are “watchers,” and are happy to hang out and play quietly. These children prefer to take the world in by looking or listening, prefer exploring with their hands (using their fine motor skills) instead of their large muscles (arms and legs), and focus their attention intensively on an activity such as working to get a puzzle piece in place.

For the watchers in your care, try the following strategies:

- **Respect their pace and style.** Offer them lots of opportunities to play with the things that he enjoys—for example, books, dress-up clothes, puzzles, building blocks, toy figures, and so forth.
- **Add movement to activities they already enjoy.** Hold a favorite toy a little beyond their easy reach or play music while you are cleaning up—it’s easy to shift from listening to dancing.

Other children are “movers and shakers” who seem to always be “on the go”— they like to reach out, grab, crawl, and explore. Movers and shakers love spaces that offer lots of opportunity for movement, tend to reach out for and touch anything they can get their hands on and may need lots of supervision, and aren’t “bad” or “wild” or “out of control.” They just

love to move.

For the children in your care who are movers and shakers, try the following strategies:

- **Offer lots of opportunities for safe, active exploration.** Baby proof your entire home. Create obstacle courses with pillows on the floor. Play hide and seek, freeze tag, and other active games. Have them help you with everyday activities like setting the table for lunch.
- **Don't expect children to lie or sit still for long.** Let them stand for a diaper change, allow them to turn the pages or act out the story when you read a book, or give them extra time to wind down before naptime.

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