



According to KidsHealth.org, children who are physically active are more academically motivated, alert and successful. Physical activity also builds self-esteem, strong muscles and bones and better sleep habits. Children need to be provided with age-appropriate activities and equipment that will motivate them to get plenty of physical activity throughout the day.

Hula hoops are inexpensive, easy to use and, with a little creativity, can keep a child amused for quite some time.

## Hoop Activities (Under 5s)

### Balance and Rotation

Give each child a hoop to stand in:

- Spinning- Turning both ways, arms out to keep us balanced, go really slow to start off with then speed up. Try with eyes closed, on tippy toes, down low.
- Rotation around a hoop – walk around the perimeter of the hoop – heel to toe, try walking on the hoop. Stand inside the hoop, lift and hold at hip level and turn around in circles. Try spinning it on your hips, then try doing this and turning.
- On hands and feet on either side of hoop – walk around hoop.
- Sitting and balancing on bottom – hold ankles and rock back and forth – side to side. Spin around in circles on bottom.
- Helicopters- hold the hoop above their head and spin around.
- Hold hoop in front like a big steering wheel, steer side to side.
- Step through the hoop and lift it over body to front again. Try to do this slowly in a skipping motion.

*Hoop flower pots* - Put lots of hoops on the floor spread out and ask each child to stand inside one. Children bend down to pick up the hoop and they gradually stand up (like a flower growing) holding the hoop. When they reach full stretch they drop the hoop over themselves to the floor. Teachers can describe the growing, rain, sun, grow, grow. The wind blows (sway side to side) and then spins you around (spin on the spot one way then the other).

### Locomotion

*Hula Hoop Freeze Tag* - Scatter out several hula hoops around the play area. Assign taggers to freeze the other players. Students inside a hula hoop cannot get frozen, but can only stay long enough to count to 10. Only one child per hula hoop is allowed.

#### *Hot Hoops* -

Equipment: Coloured hoops (one for each child), Music

Coloured hoops are laid out in a clear space. Children jump in a circle around the hoops while the music plays. When the music stops, children must find a hoop to jump in to. Once all children have found a hoop, the leader calls out the 'hot' colour. E.g. "Red hoops are hot hoops!" Children who are in the hot coloured hoop must jump to a different hoop to share with another child. Start music up and repeat.

## *Hopping Circuit -*

Equipment: Hoops spread out in a circuit

Each child takes a turn running through the circuit, running up to hoops and hopping through them. Note: Ensure that the course has rest times (non-hopping times) set out between groups of hoops.

## **Movement and Body Awareness**

*Music and hoops* - Play music, when you stop it, call out a body part for the child to put into a hoop.

*Cars* - Children use hoops as steering wheels. Vary direction and speed as the child drives the car. Could use stop signs, corners, traffic lights etc.

*Car Ride*- Children in pairs, child at the back is the driver – puts hands on front child's shoulders. Both children walk around with the driver steering and changing direction. Swap over.

*Cooperative musical hoops* - hoops are placed on clear floor. Children and caregivers run, skip, gallop while music plays. When music stops, everyone must be in hoops. Leader removes some hoops each time so more and more children have to fit into the remaining hoops (Great for spatial awareness).

*Puddles and Rivers* - Place hoops around the floor. Children run and jump in and out of the hoops. Run around hoops, bunny hop in and out, jump from hoop to hoop, 'splashing in puddles' (Great for spatial awareness).

*Direction* - Place a hoop on the ground. Ask the children to step in and out. Give directional instructions such as go to the left, right, front or back (Great for language).

## **Throwing/Kicking**

*Targets* - Put out hoops so children can practise their throwing or kicking. Hang a hoop with some string or rope from a tree or door frame, so children can throw objects through it. Leave hoops on the ground for target practice.

*Scarf Hoop Twist* – Throw the scarf into the air and pass it through the hoop as many times as possible before it hits the floor.

*Scarf Hoop Catch* – Throw the scarf into the air and catch it on the edge of a hoop.

