



*Developed to
encourage
and enhance
a young
child's healthy
beginning.*

BLEND Beginnings

My Healthy Body

MY HEALTHY BODY KEY MESSAGES

Preschoolers are interested in their bodies and are at the perfect age to begin teaching small lessons to help them discover and find out more about the body. It is with this information that children will learn the importance of good nutrition (to fuel the body) and physical activity (to keep the body strong and healthy). During the three weeks of lessons children will explore the external body (arms and legs) and be introduced to the internal body (heart and lungs) all through simple conversation – and creative and active play. For example, children will learn their *Heart* is the motor that keeps their body going, while their legs are the tools that help them run fast. They will also test their muscle strength, dance to music to get their heart beating, play games that will inspire them to learn more about the body, and talk about the foods that will keep their body healthy.

Teaching small children about the body can sometimes be difficult, but according to experts the best, most effective, and easiest way to teach them is through play. After all, a child's job is to play! So what better way to incorporate important lessons, such as "the body," than to do it with play. Active play, such as running, climbing, and throwing a ball, helps a child's leg, back, and arm muscles become stronger and improves coordination.

There are a number of ways to integrate the lessons about the body in a child's playtime and daily routine. Some effective playtime techniques can include songs, rhymes and riddles, movement and imitation games. Other methods that are helpful during daily routines can be talking and labeling body parts in basic conversation – during mealtime, dress and diaper time, and during simple pretend and doll play.

The hardest part about teaching young children about their body is getting them to sit long enough to learn. Keep the conversation simple and stay with familiar objects. It is very important to know that young children understand things that are in their immediate environment. Children will become very frustrated and unwilling to participate if the teachings are too abstract.

Tips for teaching young children about the body:

1. Start with naming and labeling parts of the body with their correct anatomical names. Integrate talking about body parts in daily routines.
2. Lead children in games and activities where they touch or identify their own body parts (e.g., *Follow the Leader, If You're Happy and You Know It*).
3. Play children's music that incorporates the body, physical activity, and/or nutrition.
4. This is not the time to teach study and test-taking skills. Many young children do not respond well when they are quizzed. Instead of asking "What is this?" ask them to "Touch your knee!" Avoid repeatedly asking a child where particular body parts are. When a child seems to shut down or look confused, stop the questions or activity for a while.
5. Keep it short.
6. Don't be afraid to be silly and have fun!
7. Praise every child!

Content reviewed by Mary Caskey, Extension Educator, Health and Nutrition



MY HEALTHY BODY CIRCLE TIME

Teaching young children how to make healthy nutritional decisions and increase their physical activity is far too complex for them to understand. However, teaching young children that eating a carrot will help them see better or drinking milk will help make their bones and teeth stronger is much more comprehensible to young minds.

Preparing the Environment:

- Hang the “My Healthy Body” Poster* in your designated Circle Time area.
- “My Healthy Body” Picture Cards* should be used during Circle Time for additional visual aid and to spark a conversation.
- Have the “Healthy Food” Sitting Mats* available for the children to sit on during Circle Time conversations.
- Prepare reading books that support teaching about the body.
- The BLEND Apron* should be worn by the staff member leading the session. Place cards or other materials needed for the unit in the apron pouches.

**Materials available in the BLEND Beginnings Program Container*

Leading the Circle Time Session:

Start with the basics. Don't worry about the entire body structure or its functions, talk about what is simple and obvious for young children. Say a body part and point to it – have the children repeat the body part (developing language skills) and have them point to that location on their body. Some of the children will not know what each body part does; nonetheless, talk about it and show them what each body part accomplishes.

Examples:

I see with my (eyes).

I smell with my (nose).

I talk with my (mouth).

I clap with my (hands).

I walk/run with my (feet, legs).

Take advantage of those "teachable moments" that can occur throughout the day to help children learn more about their bodies. For example, if a child scrapes his knee and needs a bandage – talk to the class about where the scrape is and where the bandage should go.



MY HEALTHY BODY LESSON PLANS

Week 1 My Healthy Body

Day 1 - Circle time (10 minutes) Introduce the lesson “My Healthy Body” and begin conversations about the different parts of the body which includes:

**Head (Hair, Eyes, Ears, Nose, Mouth),
Neck, Shoulders, Chest, Arms, Elbow,
Wrist, Hands, Fingers, Leg, Knee,
Ankle, Foot, Toes**

Activity Time (15 minutes)

- Body Outline (page 14)

Energy Time (30 minutes): Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (page 15)
- Hokey Pokey (page 15)

Day 2 - Circle time (10 minutes) Talk about the following:

**Head, Neck, Shoulders, Hair, Eyes,
Ears, Nose, Mouth**

Activity Time (15 minutes)

- Body Outline (page 14)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- Body Parts Follow the Leader (page 16)
- If You're Happy and You Know it... (page 16)

Week 2 My Healthy Body

Day 1 - Circle time (10 minutes) Talk about the following:

**Chest, Arms, Elbow, Wrist, Hands,
Fingers**

Activity Time (15 minutes)

- Body Outline (page 14)
- How Tall Am I? (page 16)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- I Am Strong (page 17)
- Toss and Catch (page 17)



MY HEALTHY BODY LESSON PLANS

Day 2 - Circle time (10 minutes) Talk about the following:

Leg, Knee, Ankle, Foot, Toes

Include the poem in your conversation:

- Me Complete! Poem (page 17)

Activity Time (15 minutes) Select from the following activities:

- Body Outlines (page 14)
- How Tall Are We? (page 18)
- Body Lotion (page 18)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- Jump the River (page 18)
- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (page 15)
- Walking, Walking Song (page 18)

Week 3 My Healthy Body (Heart and Lungs)

Day 1 - Circle time (10 minutes) Talk about the following:

Heart

Include the poem in your conversation:

- Happy Hearts Poem (page 19)

Activity Time (15 minutes) Select from the following activities:

- Body Outlines (page 14)
- Find Your Heart (page 19)
- Smile for Physical Activity (page 19)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- My Heart Is Beating (page 20)
- Freeze Dance (page 20)

Day 2 - Circle time (10 minutes): Talk about the following:

Lungs

Include this activity in your conversation:

- My Strong Lungs (page 20)

Activity Time (15 minutes)

- Body Outlines (page 14)
- Straws and Cups (page 20)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- Bubbles of Fun (page 21)
- Concentration Relay (page 21)



Body Outlines

Materials needed:

- Large sheets of butcher block paper
- Black marker
- Crayons
- Magazines
- Glue sticks
- Heart, lung, and t-shirt patterns (*see pages 22 and 23*)

Plan

Day 1

1. Tell the children that you are going to draw the outlines of a body. Find a volunteer and trace around that child.
2. Have the child lay down on a piece of butcher block paper and trace his/her body using a marker or crayon. Talk about the body parts that you are tracing. For example: "I am tracing around the head, now the neck...the feet," and so on.
3. Hang the drawing up where space allows.
4. Encourage a staff member to color in that body outline. Additionally, draw and color in a pair of shorts/pants on the outline prior to the activity on Day 2.

Day 2

1. After talking about the body parts in Circle Time, show the children the body outline that you had created on Day 1 and tell the children that they will help you label the upper body parts. Have the children name the outline body – we like "BLEND."
2. Start with labeling the body parts: head, neck, shoulders, face, etc.
3. Gather magazines and find face features – nose, eyes, mouth, etc. Cut out and use a glue stick to adhere the features to the body outline.
4. Make a t-shirt that will fit the outline for Day 4 activities. Use the t-shirt pattern as a guide (enlarge on copier) or create one on your own.

Day 3

1. Gather the children and label the mid-section of the body – chest, arms, elbow, wrist, hand, fingers.
2. Tape the t-shirt cut-out at the shoulders only - making sure the child can lift up the shirt to eventually reveal the heart and lungs.

Day 4

1. Have the children help label the lower body of the outline. Ask them to point to their knees, ankles, etc.
2. Make a copy of the heart and lung pattern for Day 5 activities. Color the patterns

Day 5

1. After the activity, "Find Your Heart," ask the children where they would place the heart on the body outline. Lift the t-shirt up and place the heart on the body outline with a piece of tape. (Do not glue in place, yet).

Day 6

1. After talking to the children about "My Strong Lungs," place the lung pattern in the appropriate area on the body outline. Take off the heart and glue the lungs on first and then glue the heart on top the lungs.
2. When the body outline is complete, display in a visible area. The children will be so excited to talk about and show their parents their new "BLEND" buddy!



Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes

This game encourages children's awareness of themselves and others. Where are their shoulders, where are their knees, toes, and head? This game usually stimulates children to play it themselves, encouraging movement and fun!

**Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Knees and toes.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
And eyes and ears,
And mouth and nose.
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Knees and toes.**

Start out slowly; allow the children time to touch each body part along with the lyrics. Then speed up until everyone collapses in giggles.

Hokey Pokey

Everybody stands in a circle and does the motions to the corresponding words of the song. Toddlers and some preschoolers won't know right from left at this point, but they'll understand the body part and can follow your lead.

**You put your left foot in,
You put your left foot out,
You put your left foot in, and you shake it all about!
You do the Hokey Pokey (*Raise hands in the air and wiggle fingers.*)
And you turn yourself around (*Turn around in a full circle.*)
That's what it's all about! (*Clap with each syllable.*)**

Other body parts: right foot, hands, head, backside, whole self, etc.

Tips for adults: Choose body parts that toddlers know, and throw in a new part now and again. Make sure to sing slow enough so the kids can follow along.



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Body Parts Follow the Leader

Encourage your toddler to do what you do. Put on some music and get the children moving! Ask them to follow the leader (staff member or another child). Here are some ideas:

- *Bend your elbows*
- *Slap your knees*
- *Shake your legs*
- *Wiggle your toes*
- *Stomp your feet*
- *Smile and show your teeth*
- *Clap your hands*
- *Swing your hips*
- *Wave your arms*
- *Snap your fingers*
- *Blink your eyes*

If You're Happy and You Know It...

**If you're happy and you know it...clap your hands,
If you're happy and you know it...clap your hands.
If you're happy and you know it...and you really want to show it,
If you're happy and you know it...clap your hands.**

Repeat with: Stomp your feet, blink your eyes, shrug your shoulders, wiggle your fingers, shake your head, etc.

How Tall Am I?

Children love to learn all about themselves and how to grow bigger, taller, and stronger. This activity will allow each child to learn how tall they are and compare their height to other objects.

What you need:

Yarn or String
Scissors
Masking Tape
Measuring Tape

What to do:

Have each child stand up. Hold a piece of string up to a child's body. Measure the piece of string from the top of the child's head to the floor and cut the string. Use a piece of masking tape to label the string with the child's name and fold the piece of tape in half over the top of the string.

Using a measuring tape, help each child measure how long his or her string is. Let the children know that the number they measured on the measuring tape is how tall they are right now. If desired, write the measurement on the piece of tape.

Let each child take his/her piece of string around the preschool classroom and find things that are taller than they are and things that are shorter than they are.



I Am Strong!

Children can test their strength by carrying objects from one designated area to another.

What you need:

Objects to lift (not too bulky or too heavy). Some examples include:

- Small bag of apples
- Pillows or stuffed animals

What to do:

Mark the designated areas and have a staff member available to assist the child at both areas. At the start, have a staff member place the item(s) on the child's arm (in the carrying position); be very careful not to have the child lift an item that is too heavy. Once the child has the item securely positioned on her/his arm, have the child walk to the other designated area. The staff member at the finish will help the child unload the items. Praise the children for their strength and their efforts. Talk about how strong they are and will be if they continue to play and eat healthy foods, like apples and bananas.

Toss and Catch

Tossing and catching promotes gross motor skills in young children. Catching requires complex coordination of fingers, hands, arms, and eyes, so expect short bursts of progress and incremental success.

What you need:

A ball, a soft beanbag, or a toy.

What to do:

Sit on the floor facing a child or have the group sit in a circle together. Roll a soft, lightweight ball to a child, and have the child push or roll it back or to another child. As the children improve, raise the center of gravity a bit by moving from sitting to kneeling. Finally, stand up a couple of feet apart and gently bounce the ball back and forth. A bounce puts kids' hands in a better catching position. As the children improve their skills, have them stand close (feet apart for balance) to a partner and underhand toss a ball or other soft object to them. Have the other child catch it and toss it back. Gradually add distance.

Me Complete! Poem

**I have ten little fingers and ten little toes,
Two little arms and one little nose,
One little mouth and two little ears,
Two little eyes for smiles and tears,
One little head and two little feet,
One little chin; that's me complete!**



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How Tall Are We!

After measuring each child, designate an area that you can chart the height of every child. Make a group growth chart in your Circle Time area so the children can see the different heights of their friends.

What you need:

Paper
Markers
Tape

What to do:

Be as creative as you want and design a growth chart that will work for your center. Place the paper vertically, horizontally, or place tape strips on the wall as your chart. Label each child's name and height next to his or her marked height.

Body Lotion

Lead the children in a soothing group activity. Allow the children to explore a squirt of lotion. Give each child a squirt of lotion and show/tell them which body part they should rub it on. As you rub the lotion on the body parts, name the part and ask the children to follow.

Option: Children love to put on lotion, but, if this activity presents you with concerns you may want to consider the Bean Bag Bonanza Activity (page 61) instead of this activity.

Jump the River

Lay a jump rope in a straight line on the floor – or draw a line on the ground with chalk. Ask the child to pretend the line is a river. Challenge the child to jump from one side of the river to the other. When the child is ready, you can “widen the river” by using two ropes, side by side, or a towel.

For larger groups or younger children, create several areas or stations so the children don't lose interest in the activity.

Walking, Walking Song

Sing the lyrics to the tune of "Frère Jacques." Have the children move according to the words of the song. They walk when singing about walking, hop when they sing about hopping, etc.

Walking, walking
Walking, walking
Hop, hop, hop!
Hop, hop, hop!
Running, running, running,
Running, running, running,
Now we stop.
Now we stop.



Happy Hearts Poem

American Heart Association

Tell children that when their hearts are healthy, they feel good. Ask them to tell you how they can keep their hearts healthy (by playing, sleeping, and eating good food, etc). Ask whether they have heard people cheer at a game or other event. Tell children that when people are happy they sometimes give a cheer, such as “Yeah Team!” When people cheer, they speak louder than usual.

Say the entire poem, using the hand motion and the voice tone as directed. Then teach the poem to the children, two lines at a time.

My heart is inside me. Here, here, here.	(Medium voice, touch chest)
It beats very quietly. Hear, hear, hear.	(Soft voice, touch ears)
My heart keeps me happy. Cheer, cheer, cheer.	(Loud voice, arms up and out)

Find Your Heart

American Heart Association

What you need:

Heart Stickers *(included in BLEND Beginnings Program container)*

What to do:

Ask the children if they know where their hearts are located in their bodies. Have them point to the spot. Most children will point to the center of their chest. Explain that the center is not quite the right location. Show the children exactly where their heart is located. First, ask children to point to the center of their chests – have them move their fingers about two inches to the left. Place the heart sticker in the right location.

Smile for Physical Activity

American Heart Association

What you need:

Heart Pattern *(page 24)*

What to do:

Make copies of the heart pattern. Give each child two hearts (one happy face and one sad face) and a tongue depressor or frozen dessert stick. Help them use paste or glue to attach both faces to the stick on opposite sides. As they say the rhyme below, children can show the happy or sad face.



When I sit around too much, my heart is sad.
When I move around enough, my heart is glad!

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My Heart Is Beating

Explain to the children that our heart is a muscle in our body. The more we move, the more our heart beats. This is good for the heart! Pair the children up with each other and turn on rhythmic music. Explain that when the music stops they will listen and feel each other's hearts beating. Now, turn on the music and have the children jump and dance to the sounds. Explain that the more they move, the faster the heart beats. Have the children feel their own hearts.

When the children are finished exploring the heart beating, take a seat and prepare to calm the heart. Explain that it is important to let their heart rest after activities.

Freeze Dance

In its most basic form, you play music and let the kids dance their little hearts out until someone presses pause and the music stops. Then the kids freeze in whatever position they were left in. They try to stay frozen until the music is restarted.

Variation #1: With Pillows – Place pillows on the floor for each child. When the music stops they have to sit on their pillows as fast as possible.

Variation #2: Solo Dance – The children sit on their pillows and one child's name is called. That child gets up and solo dances in the middle of the group until the music stops.

Variation #3: Shadow Dance – One child leads while the rest of the children follow every move that the leader makes.

Variation #4: Body Parts Down – When the music is cut off, a body part is shouted out and they have to get that part to the floor as fast as they can. Some examples are: Elbows! Knees! Back! Head!

My Strong Lungs

Explain to the children that our lungs give us air to breathe. Do breathing exercises with the children. Have them take deep breaths and exhale, then have them take short quick breaths. Breathe through the nose and breathe through the mouth. Watch the chest move outwards and inwards. Have the children lie on the floor and lift their heads to watch their chests move up and down.

Straws and Cups

Give each child a straw and a plastic cup with some water in it. Talk to the children about how our lungs give us the air that we breathe. Have them practice their breathing skills that they learned in "My Strong Lungs." Once they have practiced their breathing, have them make bubbles in the water using their straws by blowing out their air. Explain that they are pushing the air out of their lungs to make bubbles in the water.



Bubbles of Fun

You will need a bottle of bubbles and a wand. Have the children take turns blowing bubbles. Challenge them to make as many bubbles as they can – really working their lungs. Talk about the air that they are blowing with is coming from their lungs and that to keep your lungs healthy you need to keep active.

Bubble Challenge: Challenge the children to pop the bubbles before they touch the ground. Incorporating the body parts that they just learned, call out various body parts and have them pop the bubbles with that part.

Concentration Relay

This is a great activity to incorporate many of the things that the children are learning – body parts, colors, fruits, and vegetables.

What you need:

First, gather several items and get a duplicate. For example, two apples, two red socks, two photos of the same image, etc. At one end of a room, place a table or something to set the items on. At the other end of the room, create a start line with tape or chalk.

What to do:

Create teams of three or four children. Teams larger than that may cause the children to lose interest. Select the first two teams to start the relay. The teams should line-up in single file – each child is given an item. Only one person from each team will be racing at one time – just like a relay. Tell the children that they will have to run as fast as they can to the table and find the match for their item. Once they match the item, they should run back the start line as fast as they can. Then next person in line will do the same (an adult may need to tell the children when they can go). Continue until all children have participated. Praise everyone for participating.



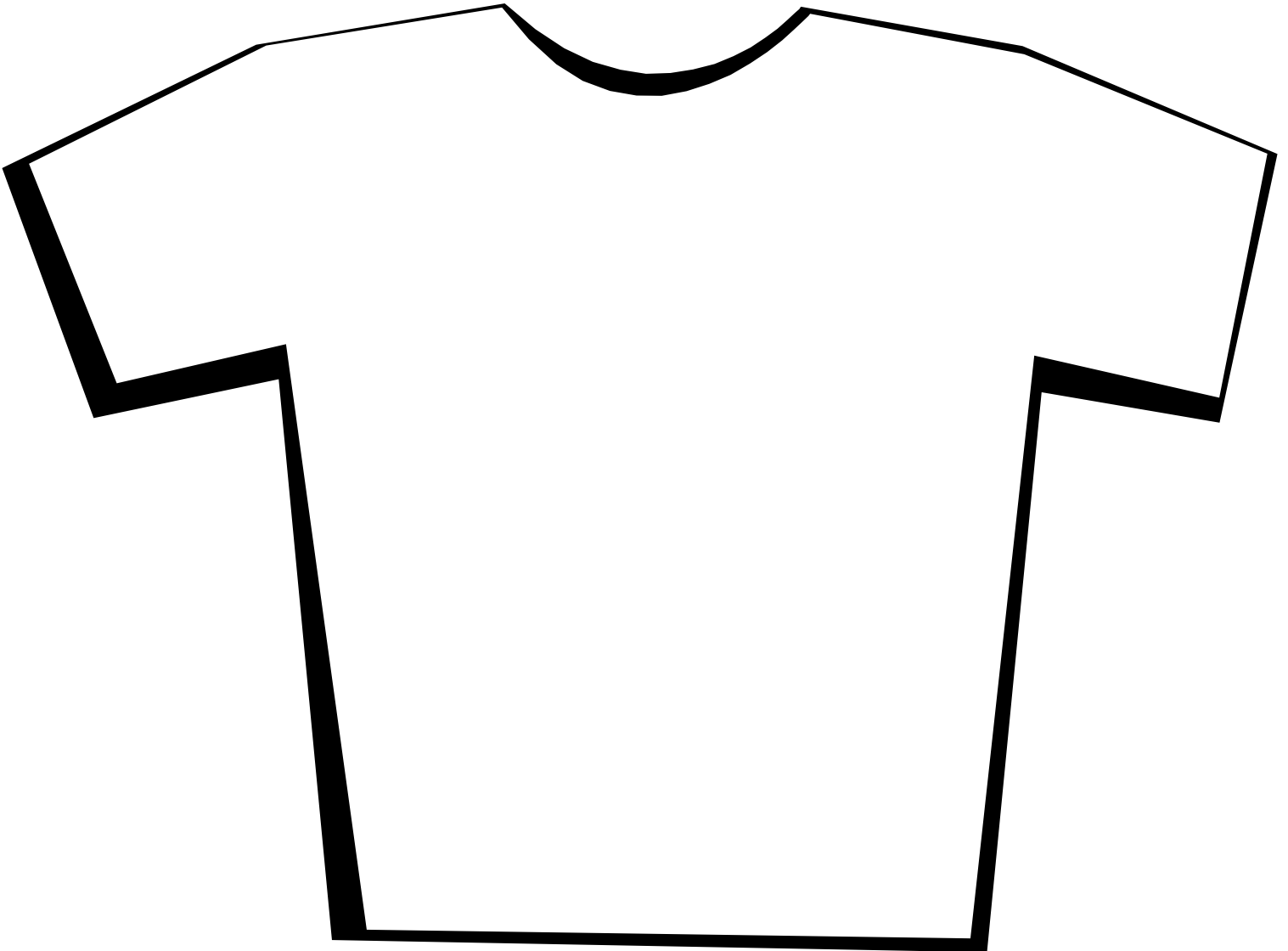
My Healthy Body: **Body Outline**

Heart and Lung pattern



My Healthy Body: **Body Outline**

T-shirt (print to enlarge on copier)



My Healthy Body:
Smile for Physical Activity
(Print 2 hearts per child)

