

City of Eagle | Parks & Recreation Department  
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Early childhood is a critical time for developing many skills, from language, to body awareness, to social and emotional perception. Playing and learning are natural for toddlers, so while some activities may simply look like games, children playing are actually hard at work learning important skills.

We are fortunate in Eagle to be surrounded by so many parks, trails, and open space for young children to play in and explore. According to early childhood expert Dr. Mary Rivkin (2000), the act of play stimulates brain development and function in children. Allowing children time for discovery and play, whether with other children/adults or by oneself, is essential for cognitive and physical development.

Participating in recreation programs is a great way for children to practice their developing physical, social, and emotional skills. A program like dance helps a child learn motor skills as well as social skills, such as waiting in line to practice somersaults and listening to the teacher. These sorts of programs are great preparation for the structure of school and will help children gain lifelong confidence and self-esteem.

The City of Eagle Parks & Recreation Department has several preschool-age programs beginning soon. Our expert instructors provide the perfect balance of instruction, self-directed learning, and fun in each class. They can help coax even the shyest child out of their shell, and ensure that children leave feeling excited and proud of themselves. Tiny Tots Soccer and Basketball allow children to explore balance, movement, and motor skills in conjunction with each sport. Preschool dance lets children work on listening skills, following directions, and body awareness while learning different ballet, tap, and tumbling moves. Upcoming preschool summer camps are a great introduction to the camp environment in a non-intimidating, half-day format. You can check out all of our programs for toddlers to adults on our website, [www.cityofeagle.org/recreation](http://www.cityofeagle.org/recreation).

Rivkin, M. (2000). *Outdoor experiences for young children*. (ERIC Digest No. 12).