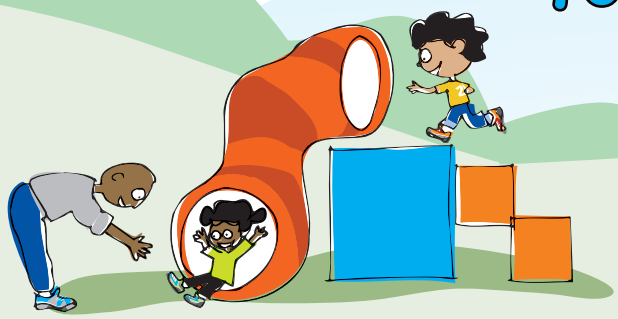
Healthy Tips for Active Play



Why is active play important?

Active play helps your child learn healthy habits. There are many health benefits of active play, such as:

- Active children are less likely to weigh too much.
- Keeping your child active now helps lower the chance of developing chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes.
- Activities, like running and jumping rope, help your child learn movement skills to develop muscles and strong bones.
- Active play can also help the mind develop. Playing "pretend" lets kids be creative.
- Active children are more likely to be happy and feel good about themselves. Children feel proud after learning how to bounce a ball or ride a bike.

Your child loves to move!

Encourage your child to play actively several times each day. Active play for children can happen in short bursts of time and can be led by you or your child. Active play can include playing on the playground, playing tag with friends, or throwing a ball.

Do you wonder if your child is active enough?

My child plays outside several times a day or inside where he or she is free to move.	**Yes**	**No**
I make sure my child's TV and screen time is less than 2 hours a day.	**Yes**	**No**
I make sure my child is actively moving for at least 60 minutes a day.	**Yes**	**No**
When actively playing, my child breathes quickly or sweats.	**Yes**	**No**

If you can usually answer yes to these statements, your child is probably getting enough active play.

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How can you raise an active child?

- **Make active play fun for the whole family.** Let your child help plan the fun.
- **Focus on fun, not performance.** All children like to play. They will win when they move, have fun, and are active daily.
- **Set limits on TV and computer time.** Limit TV and other screen time to less than 2 hours a day, as advised by many doctors. Try reading during inactive time rather than watching TV.
- **Be active yourself.** Active parents tend to raise active children. You influence your child's behavior, attitudes, and future habits. Be more active and limit your own time watching TV. Set the example by using safety gear, like bike helmets.

As children grow, they may be ready for new activities.

By age 2, they can run, walk, gallop, jump, and swim with adult help.

By age 3, they can hop, climb, ride a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels and a safety helmet, and catch, throw, bounce, and kick a ball.

By age 4, they can skip, swim, and complete an obstacle course.

There are many activities you can do with your child.

Here are some ideas of how to be active with your child. Write down your own ideas, too!

Indoor play

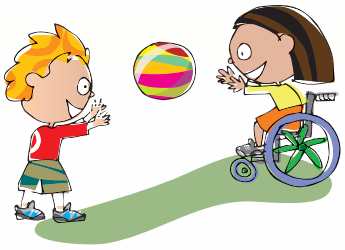
- Act out a story
- Turn up the music and dance
- Walk inside a shopping mall
- Play games, such as duck-duck-goose, hide and seek, follow the leader, Simon says

Your family ideas: _____

Outdoor play

- Family walks after dinner
- Play catch
- Take a nature hike
- Games in the yard or park
- Kick a ball

Your family ideas: _____



For more great tips on these and other subjects, go to:
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