



Physical Activity

Importance of Having Fun

Involving the Whole Family

For physical fitness to become an integral part of your child's life, it must involve the whole family; from going on walks or hikes together to cheering in the stands at a child's soccer game. If a member of your family complains or says they do not enjoy physical activities, try to find an activity they do enjoy. Research has shown the key to consistent physical fitness is discovering an activity that brings a good experience to the participant. Children and adults may shy away from physical activities due to insecurities about their abilities. Within the safety of the family unit, help your family recognize the importance of physical fitness and improve their skills through practice and positive reinforcement. By consistently supporting this philosophy, children will learn the value of living a healthy lifestyle without the issues that occur from scheduled and competitive sports. Physical fitness should not be limited to structured activities. Show children that physical activity is a natural part of everyday life by using the stairs rather than the elevator or park farther away from the store before circling the lot to find a space closer to the door.

Suggestions of Physical Family Activities

Walking
Hiking
Biking
Swimming
Skiing
Skating
Basketball
Roller Hockey
Dancing
Gardening
Golfing
Hide 'n' Seek
Washing the car
Cleaning the garage

Indoor and Rainy Day Activities

When the weather turns cold or rainy, many parents feel that physical activity has to be limited to reading or watching television. While some downtime is good for relaxation, children need physical movement every day. Movement improves not only physical development, but also social and emotional skills. What can your child do indoors that is safe, fun and physically active? Here are some ideas: Work on the balancing skill by having them walk a straight line or a crooked one as their abilities improve. Encourage them to walk the line backwards as well. The line can be made from masking tape, string or yarn and the children can help design the course. Work on the jumping skill by setting up a pretend frog pond. Use towels or other non-skid materials as jump points. For older children, place stuffed animals in between the points and have them attempt to jump over the obstacles. Depending on the space available, obstacle courses can be a great way to practice gross motor abilities while indoors. Have children crawl, jump, somersault, crab-walk, or tiptoe through a maze of couch cushions or blankets placed over chairs. Older children may enjoy designing the course by drawing it on paper first. To wind down the day, enjoy sensory playtime, such as play-dough, stringing beads, or lacing cards.

