



PARENT AND CHILD ACTIVITIES

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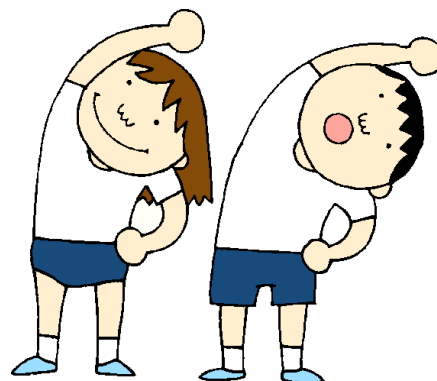
Created by Susan Dewey

Making Exercise Fun for Children

Exercise is an activity everyone in the family can enjoy. It can be done indoors or outdoors so weather won't be an issue.

While as adults we may walk 2-3 miles a day, use an exercise bike or treadmill, it is not a safe option for young children. The idea is to make exercising fun for both you and your children. One benefit of exercising as a family is less time on electronics.

Young children don't have a long attention span so one trick is to have a short 10-15 minute activities for them. You can start by making it more of a game. Go on a family bike ride through the neighborhood or park. Together you can do push ups, stretches, sit ups or jumping jacks. You can even make it a contest to see who can do the most in the shortest time. If you have access to water, laps races are a given. You can also toss a ball around, play catch, or toss a frisbee . Have races like three legged race, sack races or red light/green light race. Playing a round of basketball is always good. Who can make the most hoops? These are just a few ideas for outdoor activities.



If you are stuck indoors because of the rain or it's simply too hot, here are some ideas: turn on the music and dance away. Even your young toddler will have fun wiggling and giggling to music. Inside your home create a balance beam with masking tape so your children won't "fall". You can create an obstacle course out of things found around the house, keeping in mind the age of your children. Using a jump rope will increase eye/feet correlation .

Other ideas include: using a ball that becomes a bowling ball with milk cartons as pins. Canned goods can become weights your child can lift. You can spread a blanket over a few chairs to make a tunnel. Be creative in what you do and what you use to make your obstacle course. Exercise with your child. Make it fun, and soon they will beg to do more. As your children get older, it will become a habit that will make them healthier and you will be healthier too.

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