

Being Active with Your Young Child



Encourage your child to be active to get them started on a lifetime of health. Play and movement activities help children develop important physical abilities, teaching confidence and motivation. Physical activity should be FUN and something they want to do on their own. Early activity is the stepping stone to an active life.

Experts now say that every minute adds up, so keep your child moving throughout the day! Being active as a child can actually decrease their future risk of cancer, stroke, obesity and disability.



Less Than 2 Years

Play

Do plenty of floor play to get your child's arms and legs moving. Tummy time with toys helps babies to develop strong neck and shoulder muscles.

Explore

Take your child out of their car seat unless you're in a car. Carry your infant around in a front carrier or on a hip to build head control and trunk strength. Limit their time in swings, strollers and bouncy seats – let them explore.

No Screen Time

This age group should have NO screen time. The more you play with them, the more they understand how to move their bodies. And you'll develop a stronger bond with your child instead of them being hypnotized by images on a screen.

Sleep

Children 4-12 months old need 12 -16 hours of sleep each day including naps. Kids 1-2 years old need 12 -14 total hours of sleep. It's great for their health – and yours too!

Ages 2-5 Years

Play

Do plenty of floor play to get your child's arms and legs moving. Tummy time with toys helps babies to develop strong neck and shoulder muscles.

- Outside play is best – in the backyard or on the playground
- Take walks around your neighborhood – go exploring together!
- Look for climbing and swinging equipment
- Find community gyms or swimming pools (YMCA's, Boys & Girls Clubs) that have classes to help develop kids' physical and social skills

Less Screen Time

Your 2-5- year-old should spend no more than 1 hour/day in front of a screen. Offer ideas to get them up and moving. Do chasing or follow-me types of games, dance to music, play Simon Says. Create new games. Every active moment you spend with your child is an opportunity to make a memory.

Sleep

Kids 3 - 5 years old need a total of 10 -13 hours of sleep each day including naps.

Ages 6-12 Years

Do SIXTY: Kids need 60 minutes of physical activity every day. This includes activity for their hearts, muscles and bones. Exercise should be vigorous on 3 days of the week. Fit in 5 or 10 minutes here and there. Or be active for 30-45 minutes. It's all good!

Keep It Simple

Help your child to sit less and move around more! Ask them to walk the dog. Ride a bike to school. Dance in their rooms. See how fast they can get up the stairs. Find opportunities to encourage activity throughout the day. Make it a game!

Find What's Fun

If they love it, they'll do it! Are they interested in soccer? Dance? Skateboarding? Shooting hoops? Swimming? Double Dutch? Invite their friends to be active together. They'll get social and active time.

Less Screen Time

Your child should spend no more than 2 hours sitting in front of the TV or computer each day. Seriously. After they're done with homework, send them outside to play or give them active chores.

Sleep

Kids ages 6 -12 years old need 9 -12 hours of sleep each day including naps. Turn off screens at least 1 hour before bedtime. Keep bedrooms cool, dark and quiet. They'll do better in the classroom and on the playground.

Grade Schoolers – Active THEIR Way

The activities below count towards the recommended daily 60 minutes. Mix it up. Find what works best for your child – before, during or after school. Think about “activity snacks” just like food snacks. Do fun things together as a family. Jump around during TV commercials.

Vigorous-Intensity Aerobic Activity

Running, bike riding (faster), soccer, basketball, tag, flag football, jump rope, martial arts, hip hop dancing

Moderate-Intensity Aerobic Activity

Brisk walking, bike riding, skateboarding, swimming, catch and throw games like baseball or stickball

Muscle Strengthening

Weightlifting (only with trained supervision), climbing, wrestling, tug-of-war

Bone Strengthening

Hopping, skipping, jumping, running, sports with jumping, fast movements and changes of direction