

Get Up, Get Out & Play!

Make Every Day a Play With Your Kids Day!

It's springtime in Central New York, the long winter is fading away. There are more daylight hours now for outdoor play. Some springtime activities families can do together are:

- Fly a kite
- Play together at a playground
- Help a child ride a wheeled toy
- Walk in the woods, fields, and parks
- Play catch with dollar store soft balls



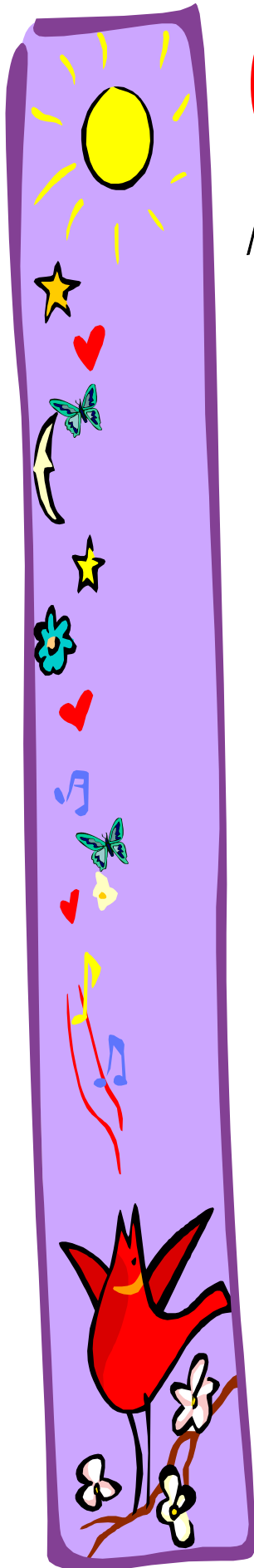
When playing together as a family outdoors, be sure to:

- Dress children for the weather.
- Carry a small first aid kit - Band-Aids & antiseptic.
- Watch for cues that your child is getting tired.

On rainy or cold days, there are still lots of fun indoor games and activities children will love. So, turn off your computer, TV or DVD player and have some fun moving with your child! Even if it's just for a few minutes a day, both you and your child can enjoy the benefits of regular physical activity!

Streamers in the Wind - Give each child one or two 5-foot sections of crepe paper streamers and let them run through the breeze.

Ask them what they are imagining as they run.



Toy Wash - Use one of the first warm days of spring to get children active cleaning their outdoor toys. Put the smaller toys that have to be cleaned in a pile on one side of the yard. Put a shallow basin with only a little water on the opposite side of the yard, with some soap bubble mixture in it and some sponges. Stand by the basin and ask the children to run and get one toy, then bring it back and wash it in the basin. When the toy is washed, have them jump, tiptoe, or take giant steps to the toy pile to get another toy to wash. Change the way the children move each time they get another toy.



Research says: Doing physical activities with your children can help you stay healthy too! Adults who are moderately active for 30 minutes each day are much less likely to develop heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. Walking just over two miles in 30 minutes each day is considered moderate exercise. The current thought about exercise is that "some exercise is better than none, more exercise is generally better than less, and no exercise can be disastrous".

Spring Flower Parade

Help children make flower costumes from drawn or cut-out, brightly colored construction paper. Fasten their creations to their shirts. Bring the children outside for a parade around the neighborhood to look for other flowers.



Good For You...Good For Your Baby!

Before, during and after your baby arrives you can enjoy the season by getting out in the fresh air. Walk and talk with your baby about his new world and what he experiences through sight, sound, smell, and touch. Babies love to see your face, hear your voice, cuddle and play...with You. Walking and talking with your baby about your world helps you both:

*Reduce stress *Build muscle tone *Have fun *Learn about each other

Hula Hoop Activities

Try these hoop activities with children 18 months or older:

Hula hoops are handy, versatile and inexpensive toys that can provide hours of fun physical activities for young children. Hula hoops are commonly found in dollar stores during the spring and summer. The seven different physical activities listed below are easy to do and are enjoyed by children and adults.



- **Chase the Hoop** - Roll a hula hoop from one end of the yard toward the other. Children run after the hoop, trying to catch it before it slows down and hits the ground.
- **Can You Put It Through the Hoop?** - Hold a hula hoop straight up-and-down with one edge touching the ground. Demonstrate what putting something 'through' the hoop looks like. Then ask your child, "Can you put your leg through the hoop?" Then, "Can you put your arm through the hoop?" Do the same for foot, head, and nose. After your child understands these body parts well, introduce the body parts of arms, hands, elbows, shoulders, back and ankles. Assist children as needed. At some point ask your child, "Can YOU put YOU through the hoop?" Then change places and let your child direct you in the game.
- **Hoop Scotch** - Like hop scotch, but uses three hula hoops laying on the floor in any pattern. Child tosses a bean bag into a hoop and has to jump into the hoop to retrieve the bag and jump out to throw again.

- **Hoop Target in a Tree** - Hula hoops can be used to suspend targets for throwing things. Hang a hula hoop from a tree branch, slightly above the children's reach. Tie two or three aluminum pie plates from the top of the hoop so they hang down in the middle of the hoop. Ask children to throw foam or fabric balls at the pie plate targets. Children often enjoy the noise made when a hit on the target bangs the pie plates together.

- **Going My Way** - Two children, or you and a child, can walk together inside a single hula hoop held at waist level. Pair similar size and age children together in the hoops.
- **Through the Hole** - The first player holds the hoop upright, touching the ground or floor, for the other to jump or crawl through. The second player then holds the hoop for the first player to jump or crawl through. For older children, use two hoops, one inside the other at a 90° angle to each other. The challenge is to pass through without touching either hoop.
- **Scatter Ball** - Lay a hula hoop on the ground in the middle of the yard. Put several playground balls, or empty 2-liter plastic bottles, in the center of the hoop. Explain that the balls (or bottles) live in the hoop and have to stay there. Ask children to guard them so they don't escape. Gently kick a ball or bottle from the circle and shout "One's getting away! Bring it back to the hoop." Children run after balls or bottles and return them to the hoop. Change places and let the children take turns kicking while you collect the balls and bottles.

A Note About Competition: Try not to compare children with each other. Instead, record the children's personal results so they will see progress as they grow and become better at the activities. If the children want to compete, encourage them to try to get just one more shot in or one inch further or five seconds faster to improve their own performances.

Explore the World and Learn How to Move

Before the baby is born:

Did you know that you have been getting in touch with your baby through movement—when you walk, sit, travel? Try getting in touch with your pre-born through dance.

Dancing Your Baby: Play music you enjoy (stay away from hard rock). Dance to the music, following the beat. If you notice your baby kicking more, change the music. Try different moves such as:

- ‘Waltzing’ moving slowly
- Dancing with someone special - touch each other and touch your abdomen to show your love to your child
- Moving like a belly dancer in slow round movements

0-6 month olds:

Move in the Wind - Make a wind toy by gluing colorful paper streamers, ribbon, shapes covered with foil to a paper plate. Hang the wind toy outside by a window where you and baby can watch it move. Talk with your baby about what you see.

Feel the Wind. Hold your baby and swing and sway while you sing to the tune of *Pop Goes the Weasel*.

*This is the way the spring wind blows,
spring wind blows, the spring wind blows.
This is the way the spring wind blows on a
warm spring day!*

Gently blow on your babies arms, legs and head.

Use your imagination to adjust any of these activities to your child’s age and development.

6-9 month olds:

Dancing with your Darling - Turn on some music and dance with your baby in your arms. Dance with an older infant and toddler while he stands, holding his arms with your hands for support. Gently dip, spin, and bob to stimulate baby’s senses.

Kicking Fun - Place baby on his back and hold a soft toy up to his bare feet. Encourage baby to kick the toy again and again.

10-12 month olds:

A Present for Me? Fill a small box with baby’s toys and let baby empty the box. Refill the box with toys and watch baby empty it again and again!

Noisy Fun! - Banging pots and lids together over and over is noisy, but doing so helps baby practice hand-eye coordination, learn about metal objects, and refine reaching and grasping movements.

13-15 month old toddlers:

It’s Windy! Take baby outdoors when a breeze is blowing. Let him feel the wind blow on his face. Talk about kites and airplanes and birds and other things that fly in the wind. Walk together with the wind and then against the wind. See which is easier.

Let’s Share Toys - Hand a toy to baby and then take it back, asking “May I please have your toy?” Repeat again and again so baby practices reaching and grasping. Hold the toy just beyond baby’s reach so she has to stretch or roll or scoot to grasp the toy.

