

Get Up, Get Out & Play!

Make Every Day a Play With Your Kids Day!

Summer time! With summer comes bright blue skies, white puffy clouds, and warm weather. It's a great time to get outside and play with your children. Some of the many summer activities families can do together are:

- Go swimming
- Chase a foam Frisbee
- Run through the spray of a lawn sprinkler
- Visit a park or elementary school playground
- Play Simon Says, emphasizing movement skills



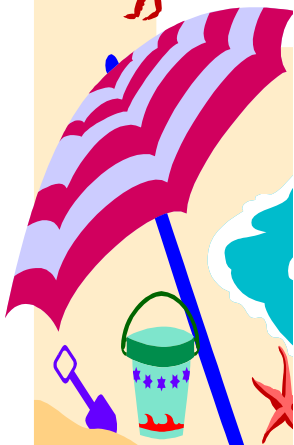
When playing together as a family outdoors, be sure to:

- Use sunscreen - young children's skin burns quickly.
- Watch for bug bites.

Water play is lots of fun. Watch your child carefully. It only takes a second for an accident to happen.

On rainy 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!

Chasing Bubbles - Children of all ages love chasing soap bubbles blowing in the breeze. Use a bubble wand that makes several bubbles at one time to keep the children busy chasing lots of bubbles.



Fun in the Mud - You'll be the talk of the children when you let them go play in the mud! Save some old clothes for children to wear while playing in the mud. Wear some old clothes yourself and join them. Splash in the puddles! Slide on the wet grass! Squish the mud between your fingers. Then go inside, everyone change and wash up, and talk about the best part of playing in the mud!



Movement also helps children...

- Make their hearts, bones, muscles and immune systems stronger
- Improve their posture
- Sleep better
- Feel better about themselves

Sand Box - Make a pint-sized version of a sand box for your toddlers. Use a plastic tub approximately 2 feet by 2 feet. Drill a few small drainage holes in the bottom of the tub. Fill it with sand from one bag of play sand. Place it on the ground. Put some plastic shovels, spoons and small pails in it. Cover it when not in use or move it to a protected area to discourage cats from using it as a litter box.



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. When the weather is hot, morning and evening times are the most comfortable. Take a walk and talk with your baby about what you see, hear, smell, feel.

Place a blanket on the ground for you and your baby. Talk to your baby about the grass. After baby is born you can help baby touch his/her feet or hands to the grass.

Laundry Basket Activities

Try these laundry basket activities with children 18 months or older:

Laundry baskets of different sizes make great toys. Think about what fun children can have playing with them. Children can push baskets; pull baskets; run, march to music, crawl, jump, skip, and hop around baskets; stand in, to the side and behind baskets; jump over them; crawl over or through them; throw something at and into them; hide under them; store toys in them; and of course, keep laundry in them!

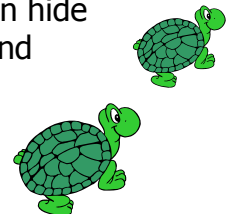
With just rectangular plastic laundry baskets used as toys and props, children can have hours of fun while getting exercise at the same time. Here are some great physical activities children and adults can do with laundry baskets:

- **Train** - Tie two baskets together to make a train. Add a short rope for pulling, a child in the first 'car' and her toy cargo in the second 'car', and you, the adult, will get a good workout chugging the train around the house!
- **Go Shopping** - Ask your child to push a basket around the kitchen as she 'shops' for the ingredients you've planned for a picnic lunch.
- **Toy Store** - Have your child use a basket as a cart in a 'toy' mine. He



pushes the basket around the play room, putting toys in to push to stock the shelves of an imaginary toy store in another room.

- **Maze** - Place four baskets upside down on the floor with space between each for crawling. Cover the baskets with an old sleeping bag or blanket to create a hidden, child-sized maze underneath.
- **Stop-and-Go** - Line up three baskets end-to-end on the floor and run around them while playing Stop-and-Go to Music.
- **Target Practice** - Jam a hula hoop upright inside a laundry basket. Fasten the hoop to the basket sides with duct tape. Hang an inviting target from the top of the hoop so it centers inside the hoop. Place a heavy object in the bottom of the laundry basket to keep it from tipping over when the wind blows. Ask the children to throw rolled-up socks, soft toys or foam balls at the target.
- **Turtle Shells** –Turn laundry baskets upside down and let children use as 'turtle shells'. Children can hide underneath the baskets and pretend that they are turtles, slowly moving across the floor under their basket 'shells'.



* **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:

Your unborn baby has been soothed by a sort of massage almost from conception. When your baby was smaller than an aspirin, amniotic fluid washed over the baby in gentle waves. Later, your baby felt the uterine wall. As your baby grows, he/she will be able to feel your hand move along your belly.

Unborn Massage - Gently rub your belly. Your baby will feel your touch and move slowly and pleurably. Start below your belly button and move slowly to below your breasts OR make a number of circular motions covering the same area. Massage will soothe your baby and give a message of love.

0-6 month olds:

Rattle and Roll - Put ice cubes and a few drops of food coloring in a clean, clear plastic jar. Screw the cap on the jar tightly. Roll the jar back and forth. Let baby see, feel and hear what happens. Talk with your baby about what they see, hear and feel.

It's Raining - With baby sitting on your lap or safely beside you, place a shallow plastic container of water where baby can reach it. Use about one inch of water in the container. Let baby splash. Using a clean washcloth or sponge, wring out water like it is raining. See if your baby will try to catch the 'rain'.

6-9 month olds:

Sock Mystery - Place a toy, such as a rattle, three-quarters of the way inside a clean sock. Shake the rattle to make noise. Give the sock to baby and encourage her to find the rattle.

Baby Kick Line - Hold baby under the arms and in an upright position. Let her kick objects and feel contact with the floor under her feet.

10-12 month olds:

What's That on Me? - Lay a flat, clean sock on baby's head, arm or leg. Say "What's that on your head, arm, leg?" Encourage baby to grasp and remove the sock. Make it a game with you playfully placing the sock back on the baby each time she removes it.

Let's Go Walking - Indoors and outdoors during mild weather, hold baby's hand to help her as she steps purposefully from one foot to the other in her bare feet. It may be a few more months before she begins to walk on her own, but now she is likely to really enjoy stepping with your help.

13-15 month old toddlers:

It's Raining - Take baby outside for a brief walk in a warm, gentle rain. Cover baby with an umbrella. Remove the umbrella briefly so she can feel and experience falling rain. Talk about the rain with her. Explain that water from the sky helps plants grow and gives us water to drink. While few babies will understand this, it doesn't hurt to give explanations about what is happening in baby's surroundings. Be sure baby does not get chilled. Help baby dry off and warm up immediately after briefly getting wet in the rain.

Chase the Baby - Play movement games with your toddler such as 'hide and seek' and 'chase the baby'.

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



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