

Play a Game With Me!

Children learn while playing games

Your child will develop intellectual skills as he experiments using numbers in a meaningful way, has opportunities to solve problems, and tries out his ideas to see if they will work. If an idea doesn't work, help him think it over and come up with a new idea.

Your child will develop language skills as he describes how he thinks you should play the game and as you negotiate rules together.

Your child will develop social skills as he practices taking turns, learns to negotiate with others, and learns to share property.

Your child will develop motor skills as he plays games. As he manipulates small objects he is improving fine motor skills. He gains better control over gross motor skills by throwing, rolling, kicking, etc., and develops perceptual motor skills by coordinating his senses together - eye-hand, eye-foot coordination, etc.

Play games, all kinds of games

What games are favorites in your family? What games can you remember playing as a child? Here are some games you can add to your list?

- **Action games**

Red Light-Green Light, musical chairs, freeze dance, Mother/Father May I, Twister, hop scotch, tag, jump rope, games with running, stopping, hopping, whirling, etc.

- **Ball games**

Variations of ball games, dodge ball, roof ball, tether ball, any games where you toss, pass, bounce, catch, throw, kick, and hit a ball. All need to be adapted to your child's ability.

- **Board games**

All Gone, Tug-O-War, Path Games, Candyland, Sorry, Boggle Jr., Checkers.

- **Card games**

Memory, Go Fish, War, Old Maid, Lotto, Animal Rummy, Uno.

- **Pretend/mime games**

Monkey See- Monkey Do, This is the Way We..., Three Billy Goats Gruff, Charades, games acting out animals, and pretending (construction, gardening, spring cleaning).

- **Seek/find games**

Going on a treasure hunt, hide and seek, Hot and Cold.

- **Water games**

Water balloons, Row, row, row your boat, sprinkler fun, squirt bottle attack.

- **Word games**

Telephone, cooperative story games (Start, each person adds a word, or sentence), sky writing, back writing, what's that sound, rhyming, analogy games - dog is to bark as cat is to ____, closure games, 1, 2, Buckle My ____, I Spy, Jr. Scrabble, Simon Says.

Parents,

This information is provided to you today on behalf of a special visiting program your care provider is taking part in. If you would like to receive similar visits and learn more about how your child grows and develops, please contact your local Parents as Teachers program or call 1-866-PAT4YOU to find a program in your area, or visit our website at www.patnc.org



Setting Lifelong Habits for Physical Activity

At the end of a long day with your energetic child, you may not think you need to encourage her to be physical active. But studies show that the older a child gets, the less likely she is to get the physical activity necessary for good health. Start now to encourage your child's love of physical activity for lifelong benefits.

The winning goal. There are so many benefits of physical activity for children. Supporting or increasing your child's activity is a goal worth working for. A few of the things your child gains from being physically active include:

- Enjoyment
- Stress relief
- Physical benefits of increased fitness and lower risk of obesity (strength, endurance, efficient heart and circulatory system, increased mental alertness)
- Chance to learn new skills and develop new interests
- Sense of competence and achievement when she works on skills
- Social interaction with other children during play

Parents make the team. You can be the athletic director, coach and cheerleader all rolled up in one to encourage your child's physical activity. Here are some things you can do:

- **Be a role model.** Participate in and enjoy physical activity yourself. The same benefits listed above for children apply to adults too.

- **Play active games with your child.** Make physical activity a family affair. Having your attention and participation encourages your child to engage in physical activity.
- **Plan time for unstructured play.** Young children need blocks of time to invent play, including physical activity.
- **Provide space, including outdoor space, for active play.** Encourage your child to play outdoors every day. If your home does not have a safe, appropriate place to play outdoors, be creative. Take her to a park, playground, or schoolyard every day.
- **Look for programs in your community.** Consult your community's recreation or park department for activities appropriate for children and take your child.
- **Invite a buddy.** Children like to play with others. Invite a friend. Your child may be more physically active when she has a playmate.
- **Limit TV watching.** Limiting the use of TV and electronic games takes discipline on your part. They engage children so well, and occupy their time. But more than an hour or two of TV and game playing a day poses a threat to your child's physical well being. Now is the time to set good habits for a lifetime.
- **Be positive about your child's activity.** Encourage your child's physical activity. Be positive about her skills. Avoid making fun of her or belittling her ability. Show your appreciation for her physical activity, and you will lay the foundation for lifelong habits.

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