

# FIT WIC ACTIVITIES



READY ... SET ... GO PLAY!

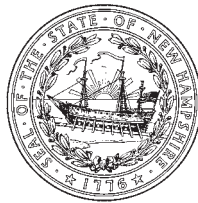
NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



# **Growing Healthy with WIC**

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health Services  
Bureau of Prevention Services  
Nutrition and Health Promotion Section  
29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301  
1-800-WIC-4321

**Fourth Edition**  
**Fall 2009**



Thank you to our Vermont colleagues for allowing  
the New Hampshire WIC Program to adapt this Fit WIC Activity parent's book  
for New Hampshire.

The design/illustration is by Gotham City Graphics;  
and activity illustrations are by Jen Woodard.

The original Fit WIC project was developed by the Vermont Department of Health WIC Program and the University of Vermont, using federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, under the 1999 WIC Special Projects Grants.

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or the policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	ii
---------------------------	----

## **Parent's Pages**

Born to Play.....	3
The Fit WIC Activity Pyramid.....	5

## **Quiet Times**

Quiet Times.....	9
Reading Suggestions for Quiet Times.....	11

## **Everyday Activities & Play**

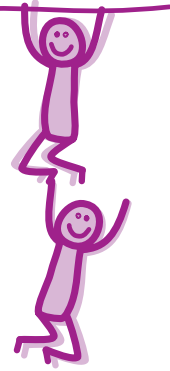
Every Day...Play Outside .....	15
Every Day Activities.....	16
Plan for Active Time .....	17
Let's Go Fly a Kite .....	19

## **Skill-Building Physical Play**

Skill-Building Physical Play.....	23
Toys That Encourage Physical Play .....	24
Running and Jumping Games .....	25
Tumbling, Rolling, Crawling & Climbing .....	33
Rhythmic Movement & Balance .....	37
Catching, Throwing, Kicking Games.....	43
Pretend Games & Imagination .....	51

## **Special Outings and Exploring**

Playgroups.....	57
Playgrounds, Parks and Trails .....	58
Farms and Markets .....	60
Libraries and Special Events.....	61



# INTRODUCTION



Welcome to **Fit WIC Activities**, a book for parents and their preschoolers. **Fit WIC Activities** will help you foster your children's health and development through active physical play. This book is full of ideas for playing actively everyday, building physical skills like throwing, catching and kicking, and finding new places in your community to go play.

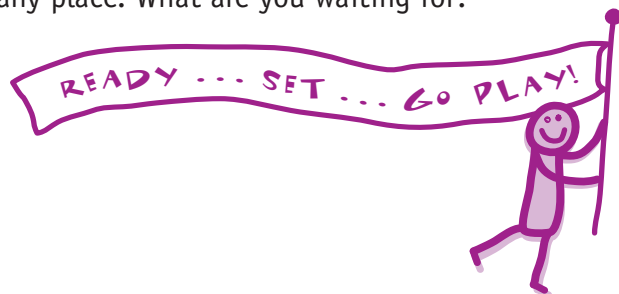
You are your child's first and most important teacher. Your child needs your help to learn the physical skills he will use throughout his life. Physical activity has many benefits:

- Your child will learn positive things about herself and what she can do.
- Your child will learn to control his own body, and that being active makes him feel good.
- Your child will be healthier and have a lower risk for heart disease, diabetes, some kinds of cancer and obesity.
- Daily active play will help your child grow stronger, smarter and happier!

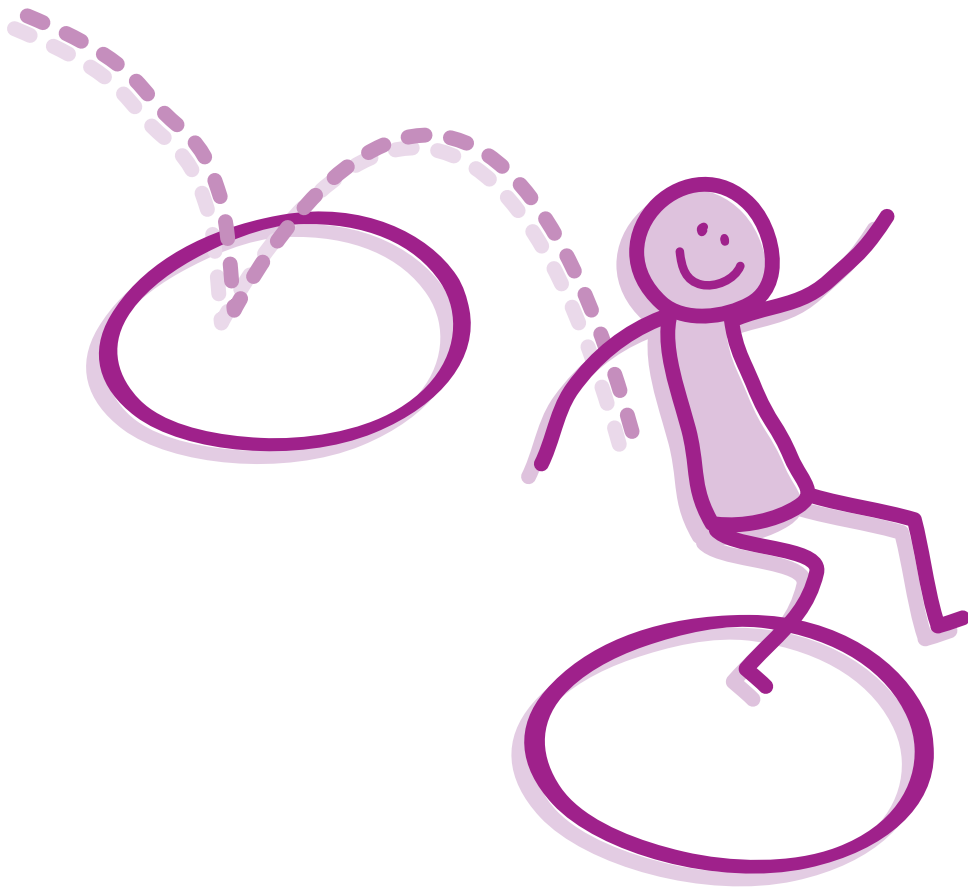
Challenges like bad weather and a lack of time don't have to keep you and your child from being physically active.

- Whenever you can, go outside. Children are naturally active in safe outdoor spaces where they can play hard.
- Keep everyone's seasonal clothing organized in baskets or bins by the door. If you dress for the weather, it's easy to enjoy playing outside.
- Small amounts of physical activity throughout the day add up to big benefits. Play with your child several times each day. By the end of the day, you both will have met your activity goals, feel more relaxed and be ready for a good night's sleep.

**Fit WIC Activities** gives you and your child a "grab bag" of play activities that you can do anytime and any place. What are you waiting for?



# PARENT'S PAGES





# BORN TO PLAY



## How children learn:

- From birth, children learn about their world and make new discoveries through movement. Movement and physical activity are essential for a young child's healthy growth and development.

- Children can learn some physical play skills on their own; other skills need to be taught to them.
- You are your child's first and most important teacher. The physical skills you help your child learn through everyday play and skillbuilding practice will be important to her throughout her life.
- When your child is participating in physical activity, he is using his muscles and his mind. As you play with your child, you can teach him new words and ideas related to moving.
- For young children to enjoy doing an activity they need to succeed at it 70% to 80% of the time — any less and they get frustrated and quit, any more and they get bored and lose interest quickly.

## Fit WIC Activities

The activities in this book follow the guidelines on the Fit WIC Activity Pyramid (see next page). They will help your 3 to 5-year-old child play actively, learn important skills and build confidence and self esteem.

## The activities are divided into three sections:

- **every day activities for outside and inside**
- **skill-building activities for physical play**
- **ideas for special outings and exploring your community**

**Try these ideas as often as you can. Your child will learn to love being active and will develop physical skills that will last a lifetime.**



# FIT WIC ACTIVITY PYRAMID



The Fit WIC Activity Pyramid is a guide to physical activities that are best for children 3 to 5 years of age. The main idea is to play vigorously every day! Second is to learn and build play skills. Third is to get to know places in your community where you can be active with your family.

## Here's how to use it:

The **base** of the Activity Pyramid lists ideas for activities to do every day, like going outside to play and helping out around the house. Try to get outside to play every day and to include a variety of helping activities in your daily routine.

Children need 60 minutes or more each day of unstructured playtime, where they are free to be active. Just going outside is a great way to encourage this kind of play. The *Every Day Activities and Play* section of this book gives you other ideas for unstructured playtime.

Children also need at least 60 minutes a day of structured play, where you are there helping them practice physical skills. In the **middle** section of the pyramid are ideas for helping your child learn specific skills, like throwing and catching, jumping, tumbling and dancing.

These developmental skills need to be taught and are important to the physical well being of your child. The more your child practices, the more skilled she will become. You'll find lots of fun ways to do this in the *Skill-Building Physical Play* section of this book.

At the **top** of the pyramid is a list of special outings. These activities can offer variety, introduce your children to your community, and are fun for the whole family. Explore a new park or attend a special event in your community. Plan outings with your family often.

Your child doesn't need to play for 60 minutes all at once — most young children do best with shorter periods of active play throughout the day.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends your child watch no more than 1 to 2 hours of TV per day, and does not recommend any television for children 2 years and younger.

**AIM FOR AT LEAST 2 HOURS  
OF ACTIVE PLAY EACH DAY.**



READY ... SET ... GO PLAY!

## KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID



**TURN OFF THE TV & GO OUTSIDE!**

Playing outside is a great way to be active and have fun.

### EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY

plan outings often

visit a park or playground  
find a new trail to walk, ride or hike  
visit a local farm or farmers' market  
join a play group

go ice skating or sledding  
visit a museum or library  
participate in family events  
check out community events

### BUILD YOUR SKILLS

aim for at least 60 minutes each day

running	climbing	twisting	throwing
jumping	rolling	marching	kicking
chasing	tumbling	bending	dribbling
hopping	dancing	stretching	bouncing
crawling	balancing	catching	swinging racquets

### PLAY EVERY DAY

aim for 60 minutes or more each day

go outside  
take a walk  
help around the house  
ride your bike  
help in the garden  
make a fort to crawl in & around

rake leaves & jump in the pile  
take care of pets (walk a dog)  
pick up toys  
help shovel snow  
make a snow angel  
invite a friend to play

## READY...SET...GO PLAY! WITH THE FIT WIC ACTIVITY PYRAMID

Children learn through movement. Did you know that you are your child's most important teacher? The skills you help your child learn through active play are skills she can use all of her life.

### Everybody needs to be active.

Physical activity adds up – play several times each day to meet the goals for your child and for yourself too. Children like to be active – keep them moving as much as possible every day.

#### • Play Every Day

Your toddler or preschooler needs 60 minutes or more each day of active free playtime. Going outside every day is one of the best ways to accomplish this. If you can't be outside, active play inside is the next best thing.

#### • Build Your Skills

Your toddler needs at least 30 minutes a day of planned physical activity. Your preschooler needs at least 60 minutes. Help your child practice skills like jumping, tumbling, balancing and catching every day.

#### • Explore Your Community

Getting to know his neighborhood will help your child feel safe and confident. Instead of watching TV on Saturday mornings, make a play-date at the park or take the family to visit the library, a nearby farm or recreation path.

### Infants (0–12 months old):

From birth, give your baby safe opportunities to move and explore. Babies love “floor time” where they can reach, roll and crawl. Try not to keep her in her infant seat, crib or playpen for too long at one time.

- *Games to play together* — peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake

### Toddlers (1–3 years old):

Toddlers are learning to control their own bodies and develop skills like running and jumping. Active play helps your toddler tap into his creativity and imagination too.

- *Games to play together* — follow the leader, marching band, ring around the rosy, dancing to music

### Preschoolers (3–5 years old):

Preschoolers are developing confidence in movement skills that will prepare them for more advanced physical activities like school sports.

- *Games to play together* — hide and seek, kickball, freeze tag, hopscotch, catch

### Active play helps your child

Feel better  
Learn better  
Cooperate better  
Eat better  
Sleep better

# QUIET TiMES







It's a lot easier for children to get wound up and going than to slow down and stop. Give them time to stop slowly. Their minds need some transition time so that they can begin slowing their bodies down. Remind them two or three times before you want them to stop.

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

We have about 10 minutes and then we need to be going.

**FOLLOWED BY:**

We have about five more minutes. Where do you want to spend it?

**THEN:**

Okay, time for one last slide, then we're out of here.

To help your child settle down after active play, try to develop a regular cool down routine. Here are some ideas:

- Offer your child a refreshing glass of water.
- Offer your child a favorite comfort.
- Offer to read your child a story — try the wonderful titles listed at the end of this section, or an old favorite!
- Teach your child a special signal that lets her know it's time to cool down — this could be clapping your hands, holding up 2 fingers in the air, or singing a familiar song like "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." Use this signal every time it's time to settle down.

**AVOID USING TV, VIDEOS OR COMPUTERS AS  
YOUR MAIN QUIET TIME ACTIVITY.**

Like the rest of us, children don't do as well when they are tired. Getting tired makes physical coordination more difficult. Watch for signs of tiredness and find ways to let your child rest between active play time. Build in favorite quiet time activities between high energy and high effort play.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

breakfast, help make the beds

outdoor play

drink of water, snack and a story

help mom pick up, practicing related skills  
(tossing clothes in laundry basket, into the washing  
machine etc.)

indoor game with music

lunch and rest time (if child no longer naps suggest  
a favorite quiet activity)

outdoor play (trip to the park or playground)

snack and a story (act out the parts)

help put laundry away

help make dinner, set the table

dinner followed by a walk around the block or  
garden — skip, hop and gallop

bath, story and bed

READY... SET... CALM...



# READING SUGGESTIONS FOR QUIET TIMES

Check out these children's books at your local library.



## Growing Food

*Growing Vegetable Soup*  
by Lois Ehlert

*This Year's Garden*  
by Cynthia Rylert

*Pumpkin Pumpkin*  
by Jeanne Titherington

*Roots, Shoots, Buckets  
and Boots*  
by Sharon Lovejoy

*Bread and Jam for  
Frances*  
by Russell Hoban

*How a Seed Grows*  
by Helene J. Jordan

*Native American  
Gardening*  
by Michael J. Caduto  
and Joseph Bruchac

*Oliver's Vegetables*  
by Vivian French

*Blueberries for Sal*  
by Robert McCloskey

*One Child, One Seed*  
by Kathryn Care

*Dinner from Dirt*  
by Emily Scott

*Shaina's Garden*  
by Denise Patrick

## Cooking

*This is the Bread I  
Baked for Ned*  
by Crescent Dragonwagon

*Bread, Bread, Bread*  
by Ann Morris

*Pancakes for Breakfast*  
by Tomie dePaola

*My First Kitchen Gadget*  
(series of six)  
by Joanne Barkan

*Feast for 10*  
by Cathryn Falwell

*Apple Pie Tree*  
by Zoe Hall

*The Popcorn Book*  
by Tomie dePaola

*Chop, Simmer, Season*  
by Alexa Brandenburg

## Food Folklore and Cultural Stories

*Corn is Maize: The Gift  
of the Indians*  
by Alik

*Johnny Appleseed*  
by Steven Kellogg

*Stone Soup*  
by John W. Stewig

*Fiesta U.S.A.*  
by George Ancona

*Let's Eat: What  
Children Eat Around the  
World*  
by Beatrice Hollyer

*Thanksgiving Day*  
by Anne Rockwell

*Big Cheese for the White  
House*  
by Candace Fleming

*Love as Strong as Ginger*  
by Lenore Look

*Mama Provi and the Pot  
of Rice*  
by Sylvia Rosa-Casanova

*Strega Nona*  
by Tomie dePaola

*The Runaway Tortilla*  
by Eric Kimmel

*The Runaway Rice Cake*  
by Ying Chang  
Compestine

*Carlos and the Squash  
Plant*  
by Jan Romero Stevens

*Carolina Shout!*  
by Alan Schroeder

*Brave Potatoes*  
by Toby Speed

## Foods and Eating

*Alphabet Soup*  
by Kate Banks

*Gregory, the Terrible Eater*  
by Mitchell Sharmat

*What a Good Lunch!*  
by Shigeo Watanabe

*How Pizza Came to Queens*  
by Dayal Kaurkhalsa

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*  
by Eric Carle

*Planting a Rainbow*  
by Lois Ehlert

*If You Give a Moose a Muffin*  
by Laura Joffe Numeroff

*One Little Spoonful*  
by Susan Alik

*I Will Never Not Eat a Tomato*  
by Lauren Child

*Jamberry*  
by Bruce Degen

*Oliver's Fruit Salad*  
by Vivian French

*Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti*  
by Anna Grossnickle Hines

*Pancakes, Pancakes*  
by Eric Carle

*The Cake That Mack Ate*  
by Rose Robart

*Oh Dear!*  
by Rod Campbell

*The Little Red Hen*  
by Paul Galdone

*The Three Bears*  
by Paul Galdone

*Peanut Butter and Jelly*  
by Nadine Bernard Wescott

*Soup for Supper*  
by Phyllis Root

*Fruits and Vegetables*  
by Gladys Rosa Mendoza

*Eating the Alphabet*  
by Lois Ehlert

*Like Butter on Pancakes*  
by Jonathon London

*Anytime Mapleson and the Hungry Bears*  
by Mordicai Gerstein

*Dinner at the Panda Palace*  
by Nadine Bernard Wescott

*The Pea Patch Jig*  
by Thacher Hurd

*Apples and Pumpkins*  
by Anne Rockwell

*I Eat Fruit*  
by Hannah Tofts

*I Eat Vegetables*  
by Hannah Tofts

## Foods and Counting

*Making Minestrone*  
by Stella Blackstone

*Ten Apples Up on Top*  
by Theo LeSieg

*The Rajahs Rice*  
(a mathematical folklore tale from India)  
adapted by David Barry

*Today is Monday*  
by Eric Carle

*One Potato: A Counting Book of Potato Prints*  
by Diana Pomeroy

*Ten Red Apples*  
by Pat Hutchins

*Too Many Tamales*  
by Gary Soto

*Each Orange Had 8 Slices*  
by Paul Giganti



# EVERY DAY ACTIVITIES & PLAY



READY ... SET ... GO PLAY!

## KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID



**TURN OFF THE TV & GO OUTSIDE!**

Playing outside is a great way to be active and have fun.

## EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY

plan outings often

visit a park or playground  
find a new trail to walk, ride or hike  
visit a local farm or farmers' market  
join a play group

go ice skating or sledding  
visit a museum or library  
participate in family events  
check out community events

## BUILD YOUR SKILLS

aim for at least 60 minutes each day

running  
jumping  
chasing  
hopping  
crawling

climbing  
rolling  
tumbling  
dancing  
balancing

twisting  
marching  
bending  
stretching  
catching

throwing  
kicking  
dribbling  
bouncing  
swinging racquets

## PLAY EVERY DAY

aim for 60 minutes or more each day

go outside  
take a walk  
help around the house  
ride your bike  
help in the garden  
make a fort to crawl in & around

rake leaves & jump in the pile  
take care of pets (walk a dog)  
pick up toys  
help shovel snow  
make a snow angel  
invite a friend to play

# EVERY DAY...PLAY OUTSIDE

---

Since children are naturally active, if you take them outside they will play. Find a safe place for them and keep an eye on them, or better yet, play with them.



Explore the different seasons. Stomp through Spring puddles, run through the sprinkler, jump into piles of autumn leaves, build a snow fort. In cold weather it will be easier if you keep everyone's outdoor clothes organized. During summer it's helpful to keep sunscreen, hats and water handy.

## Try these ideas:

- Put a plastic mat or piece of cardboard on the floor near the door for wet or snowy boots.
- Put up some hooks for jackets and snow pants.
- Give each child a box, bin or basket for their hats, scarves, heavy socks and mittens. (Your child can have fun decorating her box.)
- Get a plastic water bottle for each member of the family and write their names on them.

## NOW YOU'RE DRESSED AND READY TO GO OUT TO PLAY, SNOW OR SHINE

### Cold Weather Activities

dress warmly and go outside!  
go dashing through the snow  
build a snow family  
make snow angels  
sled, snowshoe or ski around the yard  
catch snowflakes  
collect leaves, acorns or pinecones  
hunt for frozen animal tracks  
walk through the bare woods

### Warm Weather Activities

put on sun screen and go outside!  
walk to the playground  
ride a tricycle or bike  
play ball  
build sandcastles  
make mudpies  
splash in a wading pool  
hike up a hill  
do cartwheels and somersaults  
in the yard

# EVERY DAY ACTIVITIES

---



Take advantage of your child's natural activity level by teaching him to help you inside or outside. Helping around the house teaches children responsibility and respect. Children like being helpful! At first it will take some effort on your part, but it will pay off in the long run. Helping around the house is a good alternative to watching TV. And keeping the house and yard picked up leaves a clear space for kids to play safely!

The helping activities listed below are perfect for your 3 to 5-year-old. Start with the easiest ones and work your way up to harder jobs. Look in the next section of the book (*Skill-Building Physical Play*, page 23) for ways to turn routine housework into games.

## TASKS YOUR CHILD CAN HELP WITH

### Indoor Helping Activities

- pick up toys
- make beds  
(pull up the covers, fluff the pillow)
- sort, fold and carry laundry
- help wash, dry and put away  
dishes, pots & pans
- clean floors (sweep, mop, vacuum)
- dust furniture
- carry and put away groceries
- help cook (wash fruit, make salad)
- set the table for family meals
- water house plants
- feed and care for pets

### Outdoor Helping Activities

- sweep the porch
- pick up the yard
- rake leaves
- shovel snow
- hang out the laundry
- carry out the trash and recycling
- wash the car or brush off the snow
- stack firewood or pick up kindling
- walk the dog
- plant, weed and water the garden



# PLAN FOR ACTIVE TIME

## FEBRUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Play Shadow Tag on Groundhog Day	3
	5	6 Playgroup - 10 am	7	8	9	10 Take family skating at White Park
11	12	13	14 Draw Valentines in the snow	15 Tot Drop In- Gym 10 am	16	17
18	19 Celebrate President's Day	20	21	22	23 Music and Movement Playgroup - 10 am	24
25	26 Build a snowman	27	28 Story Hour at Library 10 am			



### Use a calendar to plan ahead for special activities.

- Write in the name, time and place of the upcoming event on the appropriate date on the calendar.
- Invite a friend. Make a play date.
- Check the calendar each morning to help you organize your day.

### Use the calendar as a place to track your child's daily physical activity.

Let your child mark off or put a sticker on each day that she was physically active for at least 60 minutes. You can also check off days when you were able to help him with skill building play for 60 minutes or more.

## Mark your calendar!

### January

Healthy Weight Week  
(third full week)

*Read Ezra Jack Keats's  
The Snowy Day, then  
go outside and build a  
snowman.*

### February

National Children's  
Dental Health Month

*Play Shadow Tag on  
Groundhog Day.*

### March

National Nutrition  
Month

*Make instruments and  
march in your own St.  
Patrick's Day parade.*

### April

National Library Week  
TV-Turnoff Week

Earth Day (22nd)

National Kite Month

*Make paper kites  
and go fly them! See  
instructions on  
pages 19 & 20.*

### May

Mother's Day  
(second Sunday)

*Cinco de Mayo — make  
sombreros and do a  
Mexican Hat Dance.  
Then read The Cat in the  
Hat to settle down.*

### June

Dairy Month

Father's Day (third  
Sunday)

Farmers' Markets begin

*Plant a small vegetable  
garden in the yard or  
in pots. Read Growing  
Vegetable Soup by Lois  
Ehlert.*

### July

*Make red, white and  
blue stick ponies and  
gallop in the fourth of  
July parade.*

### August

World Breastfeeding  
Week (1st–7th)

New Hampshire  
Farmers' Market week is  
celebrated in August.

*Set up a backyard water  
park with your hose,  
sprinkler and wading pool.*

### September

National Fruit & Veggie  
Month

TV-Turnoff Week

Eat Dinner Together as  
a Family!  
(Last Monday in  
September)

Grandparent's Day  
(Sunday after Labor Day)  
*Take a nature walk and  
collect leaves to press,  
rub or to make pictures.*

### October

Children's Health Month  
and Day (first Monday)

Kids Walk to School  
Week and Day

*Remember to use  
your Farmers' Market  
coupons!*

*Rake big piles of leaves  
and jump in them!*

### November

National Children's Book  
Week (week before  
Thanksgiving)

Great American Smoke  
Out (third Thursday)

*Take a family walk  
before and after  
Thanksgiving dinner.*

### December

*Celebrate the first  
snowstorm — go out  
and catch snowflakes on  
your tongue!*

# LET'S GO FLY A KITE!

---

Kite flying is a perfect family activity for Spring! National Kite Month starts April 1st. You and your family can celebrate by making one of the kites described below. Take your homemade kites out to the yard or park, away from any power lines, trees or other unsafe obstacles. Run and let your kite catch the wind! Get together with friends for a kite parade, or play follow-the-leader in the sky.

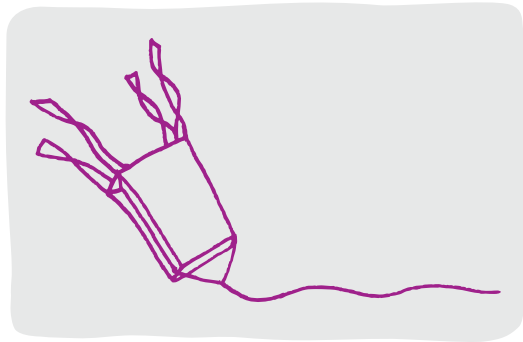
Making a kite can help you teach your child about art and science. Flying a kite gives your child a chance to practice important physical skills. Remember to follow the 3 C's of kite safety — caution, courtesy and common sense. Get outside and enjoy the weather — go fly a kite!

For more information about kite flying and National Kite Month, visit [www.nationalkitemonth.org](http://www.nationalkitemonth.org).

## Paper Bag Kite

**What you need:** Paper bag, crepe paper or ribbon, hole punch (optional), string, scissors

**How to:** Decorate a paper bag using crayons, markers, stickers, etc. Glue a crepe paper streamer or ribbon to each bottom corner. Punch a hole in 2 opposite sides of the bag, near the top. Tie a short piece of string through the holes to make a loop. Attach a long string for a flying line to the loop.



## Paper Kite

**What you need:** (1)  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ " piece of paper; (1) 8" wooden skewer, chopstick or dowel; 6–10 feet of ribbon; masking tape or other tape; 6–10 feet of string, scissors, hole punch (optional), (1) small piece of cardboard (use an empty cereal box to cut out a 1" x 3" piece)

**How to:** Fold a sheet of  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ " brightly-colored or decorated paper in half to  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ " (fig. 1). Draw a diagonal line, AB as in figure. 2; then fold again along the diagonal line AB in Figure 2.

Open one side forming kite shape in Figure 3. Place tape firmly along fold line AB to stiffen the spine of the kite.

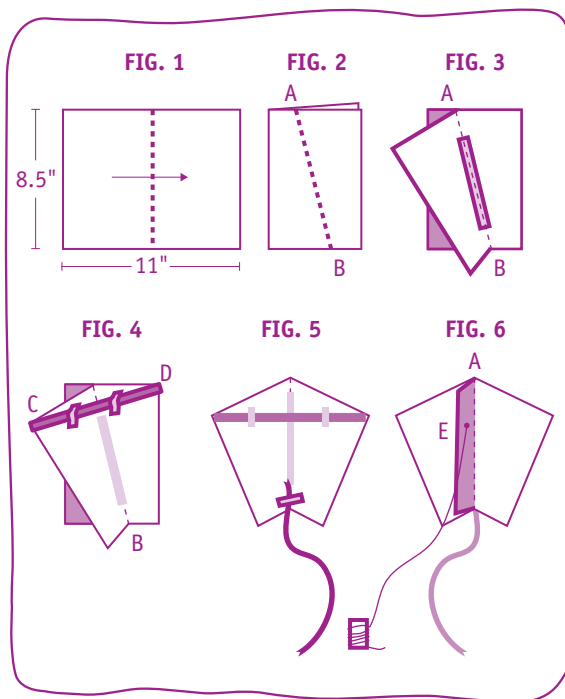
Place wooden skewer from point C to D and tape it down firmly (fig. 4).

Cut off 6–10 feet of ribbon and tape it to the bottom of the kite at B (fig. 5).

Flip kite over and fold the flap back and forth if needed until it is perpendicular to the front of the kite (fig. 6).

Punch a hole in the flap at E, about  $\frac{1}{3}$  down from the top point A (fig. 6).

Tie one end of the string to the hole and wind the other end around a small piece of cardboard that will be your string winder (fig. 6).





# SKILL-BUILDING PHYSICAL PLAY



READY ... SET ... GO PLAY!

## KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID



**TURN OFF THE TV & GO OUTSIDE!**

Playing outside is a great way to be active and have fun.

## EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY

plan outings often

visit a park or playground  
find a new trail to walk, ride or hike  
visit a local farm or farmers' market  
join a play group

go ice skating or sledding  
visit a museum or library  
participate in family events  
check out community events

## BUILD YOUR SKILLS

aim for at least 60 minutes each day

running  
jumping  
chasing  
hopping  
crawling

climbing  
rolling  
tumbling  
dancing  
balancing

twisting  
marching  
bending  
stretching  
catching

throwing  
kicking  
dribbling  
bouncing  
swinging racquets

## PLAY EVERY DAY

aim for 60 minutes or more each day

go outside  
take a walk  
help around the house  
ride your bike  
help in the garden  
make a fort to crawl in & around

rake leaves & jump in the pile  
take care of pets (walk a dog)  
pick up toys  
help shovel snow  
make a snow angel  
invite a friend to play



## SKILL-BUILDING PHYSICAL PLAY

---

The following activities were chosen to meet the specific developmental needs of children ages 3 to 5. They are easy to do and are a great alternative to watching TV. All of the activities are designed for outside play — or you can adapt them for indoors based on weather or other needs.

Preschoolers learn by moving, imitating and following examples.

The activities in this section address skills like:

**RUNNING AND JUMPING**

**TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING**

**RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT & BALANCE**

**CATCHING, KICKING & THROWING**

**IMAGINING & PRETENDING**

**You are your child's most important teacher. The skills that you teach your child through active play will build her self-confidence, help prepare her for success in school, and help her feel comfortable about being active the rest of her life.**



# TOYS THAT ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL PLAY

---

Most of the activities in this *Skill-Building Play* section use homemade play objects that are easy to make from things you already have around your house. Toys that encourage physical play don't have to cost a lot of money.

Here are some ideas to try:

## Balls

Rolled-up socks; crumpled paper, newspaper, old aluminum foil; yarn

## Racquets

Pull the bottom of a wire coat hanger down into a diamond or circular shape. Cover with an old pantyhose leg, nylon knee high or large sock, securing the end with a rubber band or masking tape. Bend the hook of the hanger in and cover any sharp edges with masking tape to make a handle.

## These ideas make good gifts from parents, relatives or friends

### For 3 to 4-year-olds

hula hoop  
bowling set  
foam frisbee  
whiffle ball  
koosh ball  
tricycle or big wheel  
doll stroller  
plastic racquets  
plastic lawn & garden tools: toy lawn mower, rake, small shovel, etc.  
wading pool — adult supervision required!  
children's music tape or CD  
bubbles

### For 4 to 5-year-olds

kite  
playground ball  
jump rope  
bike with training wheels  
double-bladed ice skates  
junior size baseball bat with tee  
wagon  
toy hockey set  
paddle racquets  
velcro catcher's mitt  
with velcro ball  
sled  
sidewalk chalk  
snowshoes  
plastic skis or snowboard

# RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES



- fast
- slow
- forward
- backward
- high
- low

- chasing
- scurrying
- dashing
- jumping
- hopping
- leaping
- galloping
- walking
- trudging
- waddling
- plodding
- darting
- skipping
- springing
- prancing

# READY, SET, RUN AND JUMP!

**Check out these books at your local library.**

*The Snowy Day*  
by Ezra Jack Keats

*Jump Frog, Jump*  
by Robert Kaplan and Byron Barton

*Let's Hop and Skip*  
by Diane James

*Snow Dance*  
by Lezlie Evans

*Frog Legs: A Picture Book of Action Verse*  
by George Shannon

*Puddles*  
by Jonathan London

*Dappled Apples*  
by Jan Carr

*Owl Moon*  
by Jane Yolen and John Schoenherr

*Here We Go*  
by Margaret Miller

*Hopping Rabbit*  
by Amanda Leslie

*The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV*  
by Stan and Jan Berenstain

*Stella, Queen of the Snow*  
by Marie-Louise Gay

### Chase Me, Chase Me

2 or more players

Playfully chase your child safely throughout the yard, the playground or the house. Outside go uphill and downhill, zig and zag, fast and slow, forward and backward. Hug him gently upon capture!

---

### Bubble Chase

1 or more players

**What you need:** Bubble solution; wand for each player

**How to:** Make up some bubble solution several hours ahead of time. Let your child blow bubbles and have fun chasing, popping or stomping them!

This works best outside in the shade, or on a cool, cloudy day!

---

#### Homemade Bubble Recipe

2/3 cup concentrated dish washing liquid

4 cups water

*Optional: 1 Tablespoon glycerin, which you can buy at any drug store.*

- Pour the water into a large container like a plastic dishpan or a clean empty milk jug.

- Add the dish washing liquid and gently stir.

- Add the glycerin and gently stir.

- Let the bubble mixture sit for several hours before using.

The longer it sits, the better the bubbles.

- Cover and store any leftover bubbles for another day. Leftover plastic yogurt or margarine containers with lids work great for storing bubbles.

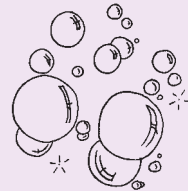
#### Tips:

- 1. Some dish washing liquid brands may work better than others. Experiment to learn what works best for you.

- 2. Distilled water may help make the bubbles better.

- 3. Glycerin isn't expensive and it really makes bubbles stronger and longer lasting.

- 4. Let the bubble wand sit in the bubble mix for a few seconds and try not to stir — stirring makes suds and foam, which are bubble busters!

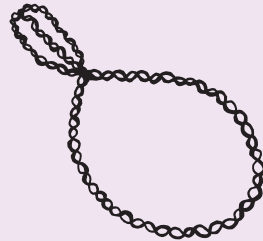


## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES

### Bubble Wand Ideas

- Dip plastic straws into the bubble solution and gently blow to make tiny bubbles. *You can also tape three to five straws in a circle for a big bubble made up of little connected bubbles.*

- Bend a hanger into a circle with a short handle. You can cover the handle with tape if it's sharp at the bottom. It's good to twist 2 wires together to make one loop — this lets the wand hold more bubble solution and makes the handle less dangerous. *You can also bend pipe cleaners into shapes and use those as wands.*



- Open plastic cookie cutters make good wands.
- Cut a hole in the center of a plastic yogurt or coffee lid.

---

### Hula Hoop Chase

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — a large plastic hoop.

**How to:** Let your child roll the hoop and chase after it. This is most fun outside. If you can't get outside, you can also play inside.

**Variation:** Let your child hold the hoop at her waist. "Drive" around outside or inside as a fire truck, dump truck or car.

---

### Hula Hop

1 or more players

**What you need:** 1 or more large plastic hoops.

**How to:** Lay hoop(s) on the sidewalk, lawn or floor and let your child jump or hop in and out of them.

---

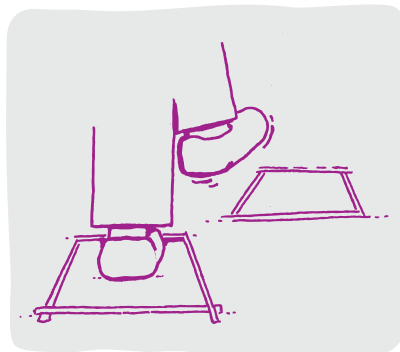


### Square Hop

1 or more players

**What you need:** Sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**How to:** Make a pattern of squares on a safe sidewalk or driveway with sidewalk chalk, or in the dirt using a stick. Have your child hop in and out of each square on one foot. Have her repeat the activity with the other foot. Inside make squares around the room on the floor using masking tape.



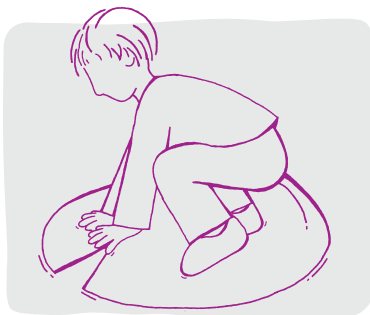
**Variation:** Children who aren't skilled at hopping on one foot yet can try this activity jumping with two feet.

---

### Frog Hop

1 or more players

**How to:** Have your child squat down on the lawn or floor, like a frog. Tell her to reach forward, putting her hands on the floor. Then have her jump her feet so they land close to her hands. Try big and small leaps and have her make frog sounds as she jumps!



**Variations:** Draw lily pads with sidewalk chalk on a safe sidewalk or driveway, or draw lily pads in the dirt or even in the snow. Let your child jump on and off the lily pads. To play inside, you can also make lily pads out of cardboard or paper. Decorate if you wish and use masking tape to secure the lily pads to the floor.

---

## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES

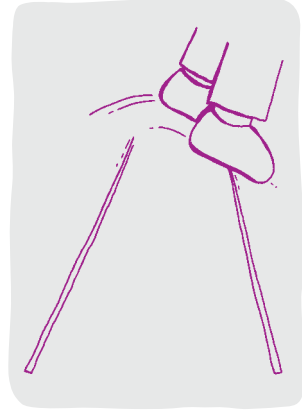
### Jump Right Over

1 or more players

**What you need:** Sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**How to:** Draw two lines on a safe sidewalk or driveway using chalk or draw two lines in the dirt, parallel to each other, about one foot apart. Have your child jump across the “river” to the other side — being careful not to get his feet wet! You can make the river wider as your child’s jumping skills improve.

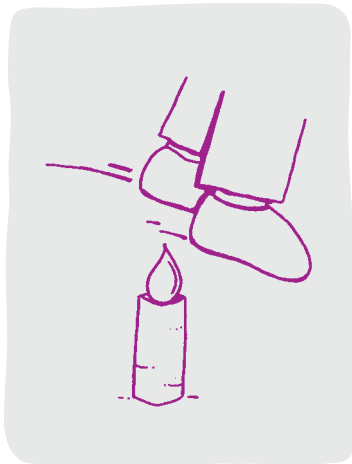
**Variation:** Draw a single line and let your child practice jumping and hopping over it. Inside, use masking tape to make one or two lines on the floor.



---

### Jumping Jack

1 or more players



**What you need:** For each player — an empty bathroom tissue roll, paper, red or orange crayon, masking tape

**How to:** Use the bathroom tissue roll for a “candlestick.” Cut a “flame” from paper, color it and tape it to the candlestick. Place the candlestick outside on a flat spot or inside on the floor, and have your child jump over it.

You and your child can recite this rhyme as he jumps:

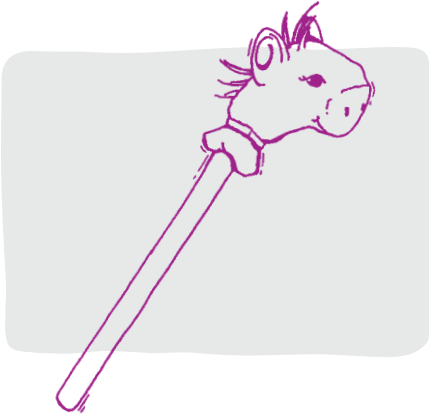
*Jack be nimble,*

*Jack be quick,*

*Jack jump over the candlestick.*

Practice jumping high, medium and low.

## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES



### Galloping Pony

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — cardboard wrapping paper tube, paper bag, masking tape, newspaper, crayons or markers

**How to:** Make a cardboard horse by decorating the paper bag to look like a horse's head. Stuff the head with

crumpled newspaper and tape it onto one end of the cardboard tube. Have the child gallop around to visit different parts of the yard or house. Practice going slow and fast, forward and backward, galloping and prancing.

**Variation:** Have child pretend she is a Pony Express carrier, bringing mail or supplies to different places, or picking up toys to deliver to the toy box.

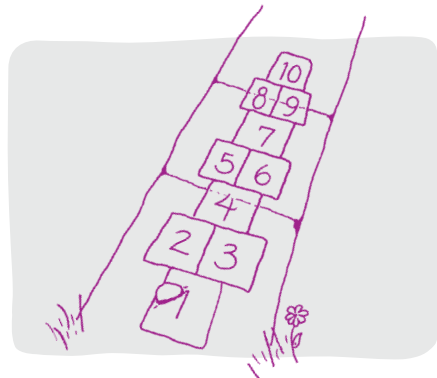
---

### Hopscotch

1 or more players

**What you need:** Sidewalk chalk or masking tape, beanbag for each player

**How to:** Mark out a hopscotch board outside with sidewalk chalk or in the dirt using a stick, or inside using masking tape on the floor.



Have your child toss the beanbag onto square one and then hop or jump onto square one (on one foot or both feet, depending on your child's ability) and pick up the beanbag. Toss the beanbag onto square 2 and so on. When she gets to the top, turn around and go back down to square one. If there is more than one player, have the children take turns, or make several hopscotch boards so all children can play at the same time. Or, while the other children are waiting for their turn, practice hopping on one foot.

### Platform Jumping

1 or more players

**What you need:** A stool or sturdy box about 10 inches high to jump from, an old towel for a base to jump to.

**How to:** have your child stand on the solid box or stool and jump to the landing base on the ground. Emphasize jumping with two feet and landing on two feet to start. As her skills advance, she can try this on one foot.

**Variations:** To play indoors, use masking tape to mark a landing base on the floor. To make it easier, hold his hand as he jumps, jump from ground level or place the landing base closer to the jumping platform. To make it more challenging, use a higher platform, but not higher than her waist; place the landing base farther from the jumping platform.

**Safety Caution:** Use a very sturdy stool or platform to jump from. Allow only one child at a time on the platform. Be sure the landing base is not slippery on the surface you are using.

---

### Snowshoe Shuffle

1 or more players

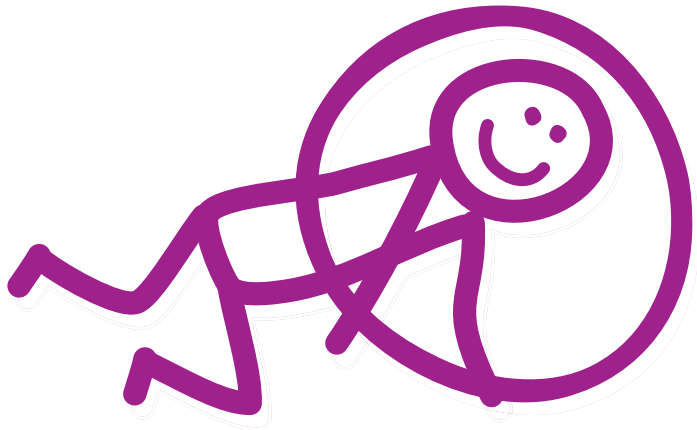
**What you need:** A pair of snowshoes for each person. You may be able to rent them, or borrow from a friend, school or recreation program. You can also make your own, below, with heavy boxboard and shoelaces or elastic.

**How to:** Cut two pieces of strong, heavy boxboard into ovals about the size of a shoe box (kid-sized for kids, grown-up sized for grown-ups!). Punch two holes on each side of the cardboard, in the center, about a snow boot's width apart. Thread a long shoelace or piece of elastic through the holes and tie over your boots. Walk, slide, or "skate" over packed snow.

---

# TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING

- forward
- backward
- over
- under
- around
- through
- up
- down
- wiggling
- slithering
- cartwheeling
- creeping
- somersaulting
- sneaking
- surrounding
- dangling



# READY, SET, TUMBLE AND ROLL!

**Check out these books at your local library.**

*Over, Under, Around and Through*  
by Tina Hoban

*Clap Your Hands*  
by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

*Tumble, Bumble*  
by Felicia Bond

*We're Going on a Bear Hunt*  
by Michael Rosen

*Verdi*  
by Janell Cannon

*Sometimes I Like to Curl Up in a Ball*  
by Vicki Churchill

*The Day the Babies Crawled Away*  
by Peggy Rathmann

*Dahlia*  
by Barbara McClintock

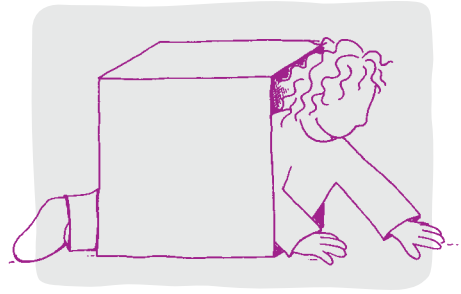
*Inch by Inch – The Garden Song*  
by David Mallett

# TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING

## Climb Over, Creep Under, Crawl Through

1 or more players

**What you need:** Large cardboard boxes, cushions or pillows, chairs or other furniture



**How to:** Create an obstacle course in the yard (or indoors if the weather is bad) by setting up a series of objects for your child to go over, under, around and through. Try opening both ends of a large box to create a tunnel to crawl through, stack chair cushions or bed pillows to climb over, line up lawn chairs to creep under. Use your creativity to add more obstacles!

**Variations:** Have your child move through the course going backward. You can also ask your child to crawl through like a crab, creep under like a spider, inch around like a worm, tumble over like a puppy or kitten, slither under like a snake, sneak through like a fox...check out the blue divider pages in this section of the book for more action words!

---

## Hula Crawl

2 or more players

**What you need:** Large plastic hoop for each player.

**How to:** Hold a hoop upright and let your child crawl, creep or climb through it. Let your child practice going backward and forward, under and through.

**Variation:** Stand with your legs apart and let your child creep or crawl between them. If you have enough people, make a human tunnel!

---

## Roll Like A Log, Tumble Like A Weed

1 or more players

**How to:** Roll, tumble, rollover, somersault, bend and stretch outside on a soft grassy area, in the leaves, or in the snow. Inside, try this on a mat, mattress, rug or blanket.

---

# TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING

## Back Rock

1 or more players

**How to:** Have your child lie down on the ground on her back, pull her knees into her chest, and her arms around the knees. Ask her to rock back and forth along her spine, then roll from side to side.

---

## Forward Roll

1 or more players

**How to:** Ask your child to squat on the ground or floor and place his hands flat in front of him on the floor. Have him press on the balls of his feet, stick his bottom up into the air, tuck his chin into his chest, place his head between his knees, and roll forward on the back of his head. To help him remember to keep his chin tucked in, you can have him hold a bean bag under his chin.

---

## Footsie Roll

2 or more players — since this activity is done in pairs, you need an even number of players

**How to:** Have players pair up and lie on the ground or floor on their backs with the soles of their feet touching each other's. Ask one child to try rolling over without letting her feet come away from her partner's feet. Take turns being the partner who does the rolling.

---

## Climb Every Mountain

1 or more players

**How to:** Find a grassy hill or tall snowbank and climb to the top. Roll or somersault back down. Then climb back up and do it again!

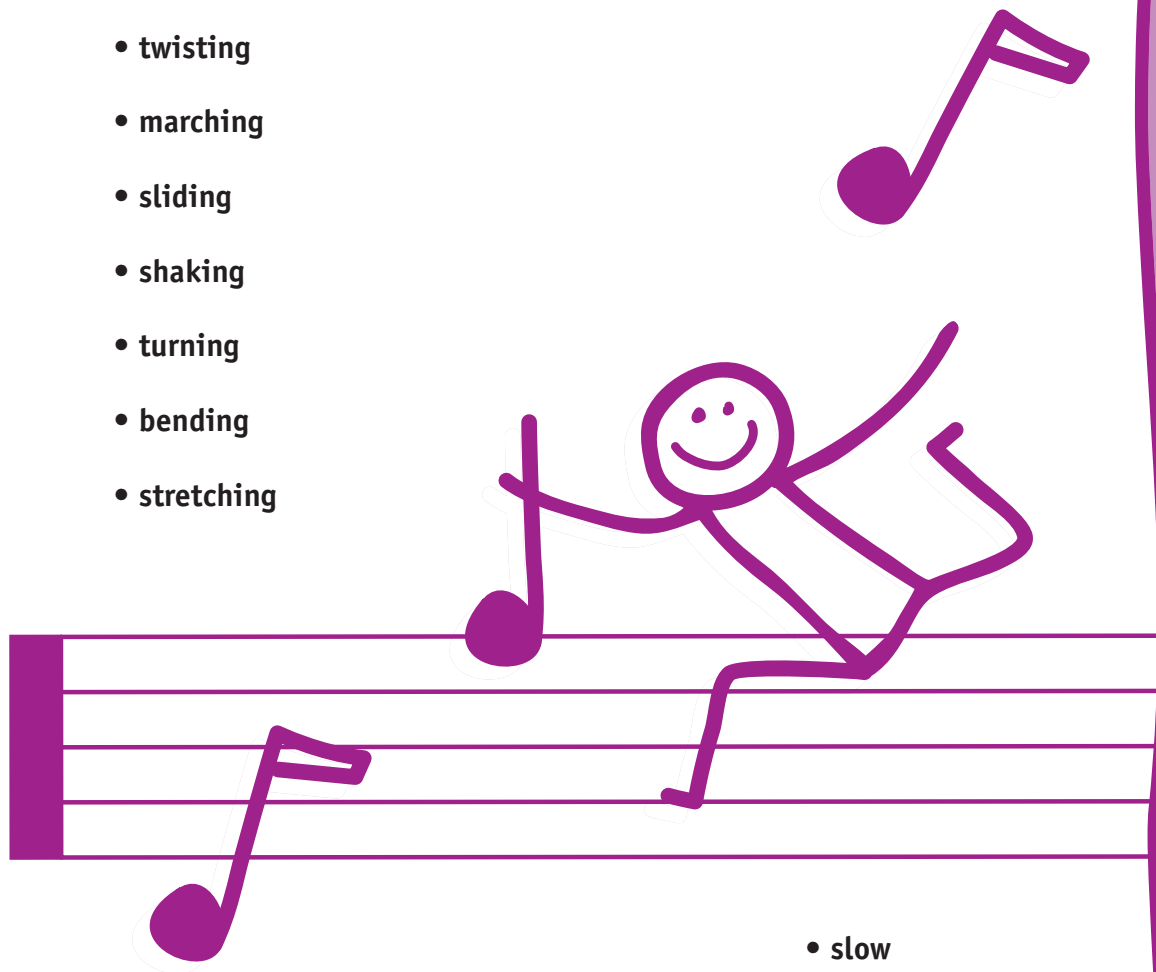
---





# RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT & BALANCE

- dancing
- shuffling
- twisting
- marching
- sliding
- shaking
- turning
- bending
- stretching



- slow
- medium
- fast

# READY, SET, DANCE!

**Check out these books at your local library.**

*Barn Dance*

by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

*Animal Boogie*

by Debbie Harter

*Barnyard Dance*

by Sandra Boynton

*My Daddy is a Pretzel*

by Baron Baptiste

*Baby Danced the Polka*

by Karen Beaumont and Jennifer Plecas

*Clorinda*

by Robert Kinerk

*Zin! Zin! Zin a Violin*

by Lloyd Moss

*Three Cheers for Tacky*

by Helen Lester

*My Mama had a Dancing Heart*

by Libba Moore Gray

*Hilda Must be Dancing*

by Karma Wilson and Suzanne Watts

## Freeze Dancing

2 or more players

**What you need:** Music

How to: Put on some music or make your own, and let your child dance. Explain to your child that when you stop the music, everyone freezes. Start dancing when the music comes on again. If you have a portable tape player or radio, play outside.

---

## Moving to Music

There are a variety of CD's just for children, and many have traditional songs that have movements to go with them. You can teach your child the traditional movements if you know them, or you and your child can make up your own. For example:

### **"Skip to My Lou"**

Show your child how to skip around, pretend to fly for "Flies in the buttermilk..." etc.

### **"Ring-Around-the-Rosy"**

Join hands with your child, circle around, and then fall down.

### **"Ten in the Bed"**

Show your child how to roll on the ground or floor for "Roll over, roll over."

### **"Wheels on the Bus"**

Show your child how to circle his arms for the wheels going around; jump up and down for the people going up and down; move her arms back and forth for the wipers going swish; walk or run backwards to move on back, etc.

### **"Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"**

Have your child touch his head, shoulders, knees, toes, etc. whenever he hears those words. Let him follow your movements if he needs help.

### **"The Ants Go Marching"**

Have your child march around. Create movements to go along with the words that your child can follow — pretend to climb a tree, pick up sticks, etc. Have your child stomp her feet for "Boom, Boom, Boom..."

---

## RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT & BALANCE

### Tight Ropes

1 or more players

**What you need:** Sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**How to:** Make a straight line with chalk on a safe sidewalk or driveway or in the dirt using a stick. Have your child walk along the line, as if he is on a tight rope or balance beam. Let him try walking forwards, backwards and sideways along the tight rope, or hop on and off. Inside, make a line using masking tape on the floor.

**Variation:** “Balance Trail” — Instead of a straight line, make a trail or path with some twists, turns and corners. Draw brooks to cross, logs to jump on and so on. Have your child follow the winding path.

---

### Hula Twist

1 or more players

**What you need:** Large plastic hoop for each player.

**How to:** Let your child spin the hoop around her waist — try it fast, try it slow. Try it high, try it low! Try it to music! Try it in the yard, in the house!

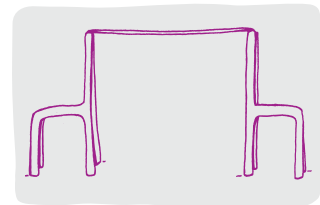
---

### Limbo

1 or more players

**What you need:** 2 chairs, masking tape or string

**How to:** Make a limbo “pole” by placing 2 chairs about 4 feet apart, back-to-back, and attaching tape or string across the top of each chair. Have your child pass underneath the pole, doing the “limbo.” Lower the tape or string for each round.



**Variation:** If you have 3 or more people playing, you can also use a jump rope, having 2 people hold the ends while the other person passes under the rope. Children can listen to music and dance while they play.

---

## RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT & BALANCE

### Mirror Me

2 or more players, best with an even number of people

**How to:** Face one another. As one person moves, the other person does the same, as if they are a mirror image.

---

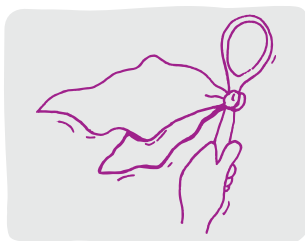
### Marching Band

1 or more players

**What you need:** Containers with lids, dried beans, spoons, pots and pans, rubber bands

**How to:** Make some instruments using dried beans in a closed container to shake, spoons to bang on pots, rubber bands to stretch over open containers and twang. Let each child have her own instrument. March around the neighborhood or in the house.

---

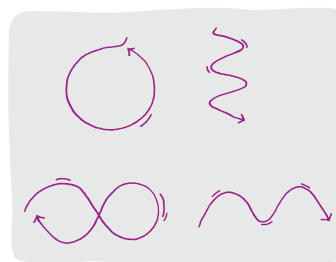


### Scarves and Ribbons

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — scarves or ribbons that can be held in your child's hand or tied to a wooden spoon.

**How to:** Move around outdoors with scarves or ribbons. Vary movements from slow and gentle to quick and lively. Move with just one scarf or with several. Try making circles, zigzags, figure 8's and waves with the scarves. If you have a portable radio or tape player, try moving to different types of music using the scarves or ribbons, or play Scarves and Ribbons inside to music.



circles, zigzags,  
figure 8's, waves

## Balancing Act

2 or more players

**How to:** Find an open area of yard or floor where you can play safely and comfortably. Get down on the ground with your child and ask him to try these balancing skills with you. The more often you practice with your child, the better he'll get.

Start out balancing on all fours, with hands, knees and feet touching the ground.

Then ask your child to balance on just his hands and feet.

Ask him to raise one leg.

Raise one arm.

Raise one leg and opposite arm at the same time.

Ask him to balance on two knees and one elbow.

Balance on one knee and one elbow.

Ask your child to make up his own combinations of body parts to balance on.

---

# CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES



- bouncing
- rolling
- kicking
- catching
- tossing
- throwing
- striking
- dribbling

- hard
- soft
- overhand
- underhand
- high
- low
- straight
- curved



# READY, SET, CATCH!

**Check out these books at your local library.**

*My Two Hands, My Two Feet*  
by Rick Walton

*Here are My Hands*  
by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault

*Snowballs*  
by Lois Ehlert

*Pickle and the Ball*  
by Lynn Breeze

*Snowmen at Night*  
by Caralyn and Mark Buehner

*Feet are Not for Kicking*  
by Elizabeth Verdick and Marieka Heinlein

*Beverly Billingsly Can't Catch*  
by Alexander Stadler

*Little Pig's Bouncy Ball*  
by Alan Baron

*The Berenstain Bears Get Their Kicks*  
by Stan and Jan Berenstain



# CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

## Tidy-Up Toss

1 or more players

**What you need:** An empty box, bin, basket

**How to:** Have your child pick up her outside toys and gently toss them into a box to earn points. Try overhand and underhand tosses, try from closer to the box and farther away. Later, let her use the points she earned for a prize — an extra story at bedtime, a special sticker on her activity calendar.

**Variations:** Try the same thing inside if you can't go out. If by chance the yard or house doesn't need picking up, practice tossing skills with balls — outside think snowballs, inside try sock or yarn balls!

---

## Trash Bag Toss

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — unused trash bag, newspaper

**How to:** Fill a trash bag with crumpled newspaper. Tie it shut. Toss it, throw it, roll it or roll on it in the yard or inside.

**Safety caution:** Plastic bags can be a choking hazard and may cause suffocation — adults should use caution with infants and toddlers.

---

## Kick Course

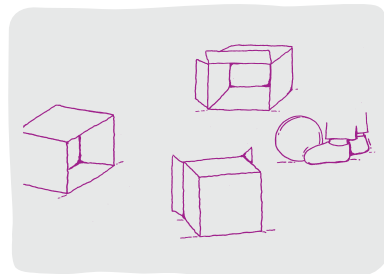
1 or more players

**What you need:** Ball for each player, containers such as boxes, wastebaskets, crates, some open on both ends

**How to:** Set up the containers around the yard or room. Have your child kick the ball through or into each container as they go around the course.

**Variation:** Make a course in the snow with shoveled paths, snow tunnels and mounds.

---



## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

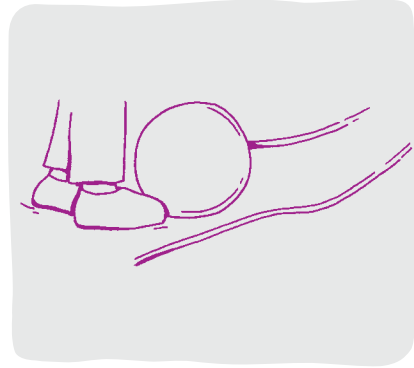
### Foot Dribble

1 or more players

**What you need:** Ball for each player; snow shovel or rake; sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**How to:** Shovel pathways in the snow. Have your child use her feet to move the ball along the pathways. Once your child has mastered a straight path, make it harder with curved or zigzag paths.

**Variations:** Make pathways outside with sidewalk chalk, draw lines in the dirt, or rake a path in the leaves in fall. Inside, make pathways by putting 2 long strips of masking tape on the floor about 2–4 feet apart.



---

### Milky-Crunchy Knock 'Em Down

1 or more players

**What you need:** Empty milk jugs, cereal boxes or 2 liter plastic bottles; ball

**How to:** Set up six or more empty milk jugs, cereal boxes or plastic bottles at one end of the sidewalk or on smooth ground. Ask your child to stand at the other end with a ball and roll the ball into the jugs or boxes. Count the number knocked down. If there is more than one child playing, let them take turns — one child can set them up, one can knock them down. If you can't get outside, Knock Em' Down can also be played inside.

---

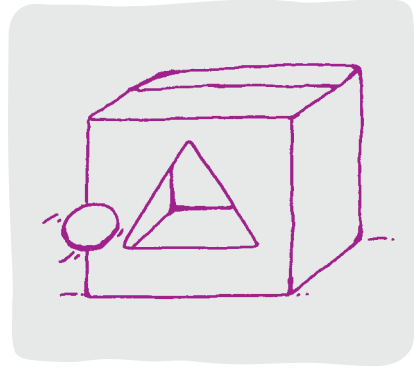
## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

### Bean Bag Target Toss

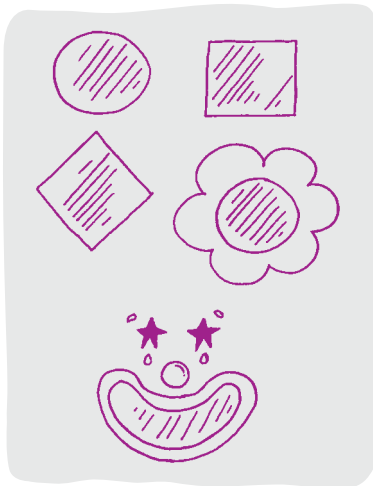
1 or more players

**What you need:** Large cardboard box; 1 or more beanbags for each player

**How to:** Cut one side of a large cardboard box into a square, circle, triangle or other shape, or cut multiple shapes. Decorate the box if you wish.



Throw beanbags into openings in the box. Try helping your child learn to toss underhand and overhand, and try having him stand different distances away from the target. You can mark the distance from the target outside with chalk or a line in the dirt or inside with masking tape on the floor.

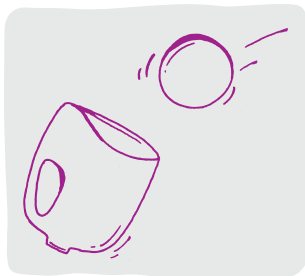


shape ideas

**Variation:** If you have one or more hula hoops, lay them on the floor and let your child toss the beanbags into the hoops.

**Remember:** If it's too hard, your child will feel like a failure and if it's too easy your child will get bored. Try to find the right distance so your child can get the bean bag into the hole about 7 or 8 times out of 10.

## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES



### Milk Jug Catch

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — clean, empty, plastic milk jug; ball, bean bag or snowball; tape

**How to:** Cut the bottom off an empty plastic gallon milk jug to use as a catcher. Save the top end with the handle. If the cut edge is sharp,

cover it with tape. Make a catcher for each player.

Go outside and let your child place a ball, bean bag or snowball in the catcher, toss it up and then catch it. He can also throw it underhand to another person. The other person catches it in her catcher and throws it back. If your child is successful, let him step back and try tossing the ball, beanbag or snowball from farther away.

**Variations:** Make a ball by crumpling up a piece of paper. You can make small, medium or large balls. Paper balls work well for tossing outside or inside.

The catcher can also be used to scoop up leaves or snow!

---

### Beach Ball Bounce Back

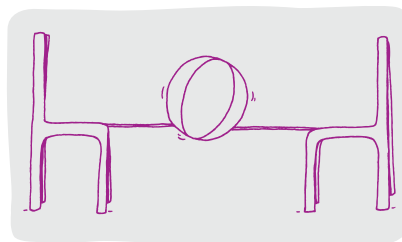
2 or more players

**What you need:** 2 chairs, masking tape or string, beach ball

**How to:** Make a “net” outside by placing the 2 lawn chairs about 4 feet apart and attaching tape or string across the seat of each chair. Hit, toss or bounce the beach ball back and forth over the net. Help your child practice hitting hard and soft, high and low. If you can’t get outside, you can make a net inside.

**Variation:** Use an inflated balloon in place of a beach ball. The balloon will move more slowly, making it easier for your child to hit the balloon over the net.

---



## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

**SAFETY CAUTION:** Do not use balloons with children under 4 years old. Balloons can be choking hazards – only adults should inflate balloons. Some children may have a latex allergy.

### Balloon Body Juggling

(best for 5-year-olds)

1 or more players

**What you need:** Balloon for each player

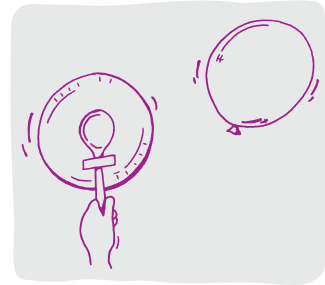
**How to:** Have your child toss a balloon into the air. You or your child calls out the part of the body to be used to strike the balloon (e.g. knee, foot, elbow). The balloon can also be batted, kicked or bounced between two players using different body parts.

---

### Racquet Balloon

1 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — wire coat hanger, old pantyhose leg, nylon knee high or large sock (or wooden cooking spoon or ruler, strong paper plate); masking tape; balloon; beach ball or paper ball



**How to:** Make a racquet with a coat hanger (see “Toys that Encourage Physical Play” page 24). Outside, have your child hit the balloon or a ball in various ways with the racquet — hard, soft, overhand, underhand, etc. Play with a partner, bouncing the balloon or ball back and forth.

**Variation:** Make a racquet by securely taping a paper plate to a spoon or ruler. Let your child hit the balloon or ball in various ways with the racquet. This variation works well for inside Racquet Balloon.

## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

### Toss & Catch

2 or more players

**What you need:** Several soft balls of different sizes and textures, such as beach balls, punch balls, foam balls, sock balls, crumpled paper balls.

**How to:** Place the balls in a safe area where you and your child can play toss and catch — outside is best but you can do this indoors, too. Toss one of the balls to your child, choosing from the vocabulary below to direct the motions. Have child catch the ball and then toss it back to you using the same motions. Move on to try another type of motion. Repeat with different sizes and types of balls.

**Overhand, underhand, add a bounce**

**Slow and fast**

**Hard and soft**

From **close** up and from **far** away

Up **high** and down **low**

**Variations:** Let child try bouncing, tossing in the air and catching different types of balls by herself. It's easier if you use larger, softer balls and stand closer together, and more challenging if you use smaller, firmer balls and move farther apart.

---

# PRETEND GAMES & iMAGINATION

- zoom like a plane
- fly like an eagle
- stretch like a cat
- strut like a rooster
- leap like a frog
- run like a cheetah
- trek through the jungle
- move like lightning

- move around
- through
- up
- down
- fast
- slow



# READY, SET, PRETEND!

**Check out these books at your local library.**

*The Snowman*

by Raymond Briggs

*I Went Walking*

by Sue Williams

*From Head to Toe*

by Eric Carle

*Pretend You're a Cat*

by Jean Marzollo

*Mud Puddle*

by Robert N. Munsch

*Come Out and Play*

by Maya Amjera and John D. Ivanko

*My Pony*

by Susan Jeffers

*Stellaluna*

by Janell Cannon

*Little Fern's First Winter*

by Jane Simmons

*Stranger in the Woods*

by Carl R. Samms II and Jean Stoick

*Ducks on a Bike*

by David Shannon

*How I Became a Pirate*

by Melinda Long and David Shannon

*While You Were Chasing a Hat*

by Lilian Moore

*If You're Happy and You Know it*

by Penny Dann

*The Teddy Bear Picnic*

by Jimmy Kennedy



## Read, Run and Race About

2 or more players

**What you need:** Action storybook

**How to:** Choose a favorite action storybook and encourage your child to copy the actions and expressions of the characters as you read the story out loud to her. Try the books listed on the left. Look for them at your local library or book store.

---

## Airplane

1 or more players

**How to:** Have your child put out her arms and move around like an airplane...take off, fly, zoom, land.



## Cape Capers

2 or more players

**What you need:** For each player — small blanket, towel or cloth scrap for cape

**How to:** Using a small blanket or bath towel, show your child how to put it over his shoulders like a cape, holding the ends of the blanket or towel with their hands outstretched. Play make believe together as you say this rhyme...

*Flap your wings like an eagle in the sky...*

*Then soar like an airplane flying high...*

*Float like a ghost and say "Woooo!"*

*Then drift like a giant cloud in a sky of blue...*

*Become a super hero, dash and dart about.*

*"I'm coming to the rescue!" is what you shout.*

---

## PRETEND GAMES & IMAGINATION

### Making Shapes & Animals

2 or more players

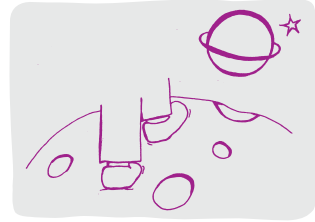
**How to:** Call out a shape...round, flat, wide, narrow, long, short, pointed, crooked, zigzag...let your child make her body into that shape or move in a way that acts out that shape. Have your child use his body to imitate an object — a table, a chair, a flower, a teapot, etc. Or, call out the name of an animal, and let your child act, move around and make sounds like that animal.

---

### Make-Believe Walks

2 or more players

**How to:** As your child walks outside or inside, help her imagine walking through different places...in the forest, through the jungle, on the moon, on the hot sand of the desert, through the snow, in the mud, etc.



### Let's Pretend

2 or more players

**How to:** Pretend you and your child are on a farm, and act out the things that happen:

Drive a tractor, plant crops, bale hay, pump water, feed and milk the cows, strut like a rooster, stretch like a cat, fetch like a dog.

**Variation:** Choose any other active theme and act out things that happen.

---

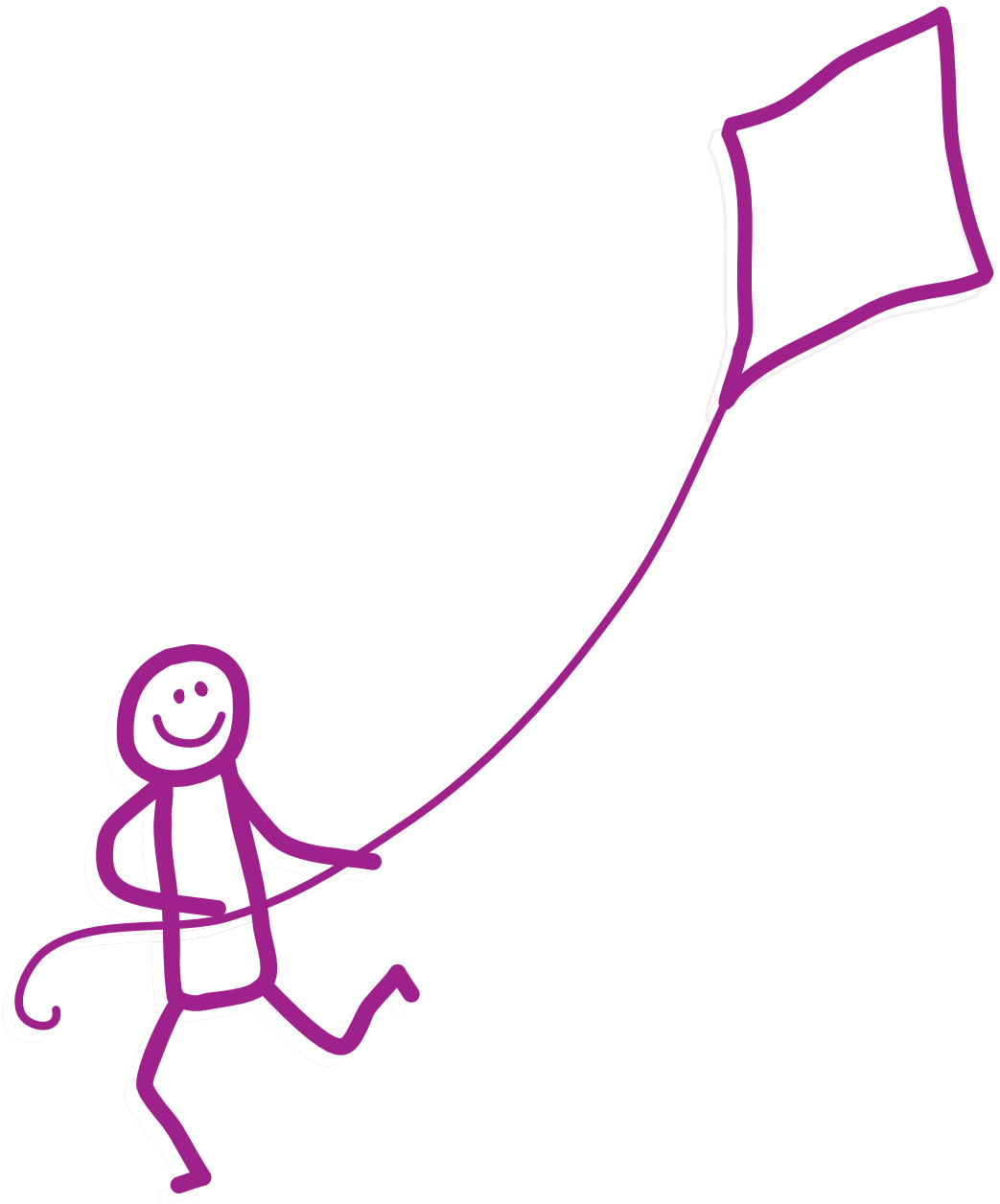
### Lightning and Thunder

2 or more players

**How to:** One player is "lightning." The rest are "thunder." On the signal, lightning moves quickly throughout the yard or house. The players who are thunder follow behind lightning, making the sound of thunder rumbling. Switch roles so that each child has a chance to play lightning.

---

# SPECIAL OUTINGS & EXPLORING



READY ... SET ... GO PLAY!

## KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID



**TURN OFF THE TV & GO OUTSIDE!**

Playing outside is a great way to be active and have fun.

## EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY

plan outings often

visit a park or playground  
find a new trail to walk, ride or hike  
visit a local farm or farmers' market  
join a play group

go ice skating or sledding  
visit a museum or library  
participate in family events  
check out community events

## BUILD YOUR SKILLS

aim for at least 60 minutes each day

running  
jumping  
chasing  
hopping  
crawling

climbing  
rolling  
tumbling  
dancing  
balancing

twisting  
marching  
bending  
stretching  
catching

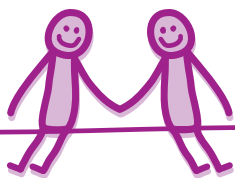
throwing  
kicking  
dribbling  
bouncing  
swinging racquets

## PLAY EVERY DAY

aim for 60 minutes or more each day

go outside  
take a walk  
help around the house  
ride your bike  
help in the garden  
make a fort to crawl in & around

rake leaves & jump in the pile  
take care of pets (walk a dog)  
pick up toys  
help shovel snow  
make a snow angel  
invite a friend to play



# PLAYGROUPS

Want your child to make a friend and feel good about herself? Would you like to meet other parents? Want to have fun while doing it? If you answered yes, you should start a playgroup. It is easy to do.

## 1. All it takes is one other interested parent.

Start talking about your ideas for a playgroup with some other parents. It could be your friends or maybe another WIC mom. You could put a few flyers up at your WIC office, church, community center, pediatrician's office, or preschool. Be sure to include a way to contact you and that you are looking to start a children's playgroup.

## 2. Talking out the details.

Once you have one or two interested parents, arrange a time to meet and talk. You could meet at a public place such as the library or a local park. You will want to figure out how often and where you want to meet for the playgroup, and talk about the kinds of activities you'd like to set up for your children. If you are comfortable, exchange names and phone numbers.

## 3. But where can you meet?

Playgroups don't have to be held in a home: some playgroups take place in a community hall, church or park; or maybe at your WIC office.

## 4. Just right – playgroup size and length of time.

It is best to keep the group size small. For preschool age kids, a good size is about 6 to a group. Try to keep the playgroup to less than two hours. It's always better to make the session shorter than longer. Mid morning or after naptime is often a good time.

## 5. More than fun and games.

Children that are in playgroups learn play skills like taking turns, sharing and how to solve problems. For parents, a playgroup helps you to feel more connected and supported.

**Call the Family Resource Connection at 1-800-298-4321 for playgroups in the area you live or ask your WIC staff.**

### **Once you have a playgroup, parents can take turns to:**

- Bring healthy snacks and drinks.
- Choose what activities to do and be the leader.
- Bring the Fit WIC kit and book.

# PLAYGROUNDS, PARKS & TRAILS



Explore new places to play. Outings are fun with old friends as well as good opportunities to make new friends.

## Playgrounds

Most towns have elementary schools with playgrounds that welcome younger children to play as long as school children are not using it at that time. Middle and high schools often have playing fields or open areas that are safe for younger children to run freely and play outdoor games when school sports are not happening. Call your local school to find out about their playground and field policies.

## Parks, pools, skating and more

Whether you are new to an area or not, it's a good idea to call your Town Clerk to ask what recreation facilities are available for children. Depending on the size of your town, there may be a recreation department or committee the Town Clerk can refer you to.

Some things to ask about are:

- Parks
- Recreation areas
- Pool or swimming beach, swimming lessons
- Walking or ski trails
- Ice skating
- Children's programs
- Recreation center
- Playing or ball fields

You may want to call neighboring towns too. Ask whether their facilities are open to non-residents. Even if there is a fee for some activities, they are often low cost.

## Explore New Hampshire State Parks in Your Area

New Hampshire State Parks offer a variety of active play opportunities from nature walks to swimming to overnight camping. Day use is always free at State Parks for children 5 years old and under. For older children and adults, there is a small fee. Day recreation areas usually open at 9:00 a.m. and close around sunset. Many parks allow pets, sometime with restrictions.

There is an Internet web site for all the state parks at:  
[www.nhstateparks.org](http://www.nhstateparks.org)

This site describes each park, giving driving directions, description of facilities, activities available, phone number and the dates they are open.

The phone number for State Parks headquarters in Concord is  
(603) 271-3556.

You can also locate State Parks using a New Hampshire State map.

## White Mountain National Forest

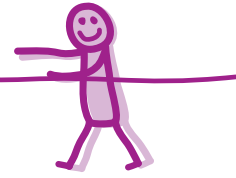
The White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) maintains picnic areas, campgrounds, hiking trails, natural areas and much more. The Appalachian Trail runs through the WMNF, but there are also many shorter walks and hikes laid out which are appropriate for young children.

There is also information available on their website at:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r9/white](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white)

Another web site with a guide to the WMNF is:  
[www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us\\_national\\_forest/nh\\_white.htm](http://www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us_national_forest/nh_white.htm)

## Rail Trails of New Hampshire

Many former railroad track beds across the state have been converted to walking or recreation paths. There is a listing of these and other trails on the Internet at: [www.traillink.com](http://www.traillink.com) (search New Hampshire).



## Pick Your Own

Take the kids to a pick-your-own orchard or farm for a fun outing and for savings on healthy foods. You may find strawberries in the early summer, other berries throughout the summer, and apples in the fall. Call ahead to find out when various crops are ready and available for picking. Look in your yellow pages under Fruits & Vegetables to locate a grower. You may also want to check this website to locate pick-your-own farms around your area in New Hampshire:

[www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications/index.htm](http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications/index.htm)

Select: New Hampshire Harvest-Your-Own Guide

Another fun outing is to pick wild berries. Ask neighbors, friends or relatives if there are any wild berry patches around your area. Dress your child appropriately for the area; consider long sleeves and pants in case of briars. Always remember insect repellent and sun protection, too.

## Visit a Farm

Children love to see big animals up close. You may have a farm neighbor who would let you visit. There are also many farms around New Hampshire that welcome the public for tours or visits.

You can locate a farm to visit on the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food website:

[www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications/index.htm](http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications/index.htm)

Select: Experience Rural New Hampshire

## Take the Kids to a Farmers' Market

A trip to a farmers' market is fun for the kids, and a great way to get wholesome, locally grown produce. Children may be more likely to eat foods they helped choose, and you can feel good about supporting your local farmers. Markets are typically open from mid-May to mid-October.

Farmers' markets around New Hampshire are listed on these websites:

[www.agriculture.nh.gov/publication/index.htm](http://www.agriculture.nh.gov/publication/index.htm)

[www.nhfma.org](http://www.nhfma.org)

Some farmers' markets accept New Hampshire Farmers' Market coupons available through the Health Department for WIC participants. Get a list of these markets when you get your Farmers' Market coupons from WIC.



# LIBRARIES & SPECIAL EVENTS



## Check Out the Library

Call your local library to find out if there is a story hour for preschool children. If you can, make going to the library an active outing by walking there with your child. While you are there, help your child pick out a book you can read together for quiet times. Don't miss the list of children's books in the *Quiet Times* section of this book. Also, look for books that will inspire her to be physically active by copying the actions of characters. A list of books for each skill set is provided on pages 26, 34, 38, 44 and 52. Children learn new words and ideas best if they involve their brains and their bodies!

Your local library is also a good place to access the Internet sites listed in this section of your book if you don't have access at home or work.

## Find out about Special Events

Fairs, Kids Days and Festivals are great ways to get out, meet people and have fun. Look for announcements in your local papers and write them on your calendar so you won't forget. Even the small, local papers that list things for sale often have announcements of special events and recreation opportunities.

If your town has a Chamber of Commerce, call them for information about special events. Check out roadside New Hampshire State Information booths for flyers about places to go and things to do. The Family Resource Connection is a great resource for low cost activities in your community. Call them often to ask what's happening around your area for families and children. Call the Family Resource Connection at 1-800-298-4321.

If you have access to the Internet, try these sites to find fun things to do.

Statewide list of festivals:  
[www.nhfairs.com](http://www.nhfairs.com)

Another listing:  
[www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov)

If you have trouble linking to any of the sites listed in these pages, try finding the site by doing a search. Web addresses do change!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO  
THE MANY WIC FAMILIES  
WHO MADE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF TIME & IDEAS  
TO THE FIT WIC PROJECT.







STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

