

Playing Together for Health and Fitness

Being active is one of the best (and easiest) ways for American families to spend time together. With a small investment in time (and maybe a little equipment), your family can enjoy a long list of physical and emotional benefits. What is your family waiting for?

WHY play together as a family?

- 🚲 **A family that plays together, stays together.**
- 🚲 **Regular fun activities lead to physical fitness.**
- 🚲 **Children who are physically fit do better in school.**
- 🚲 **Being active helps maintain a healthy weight.**
- 🚲 **Active play is good for kids – and their parents too!**

WHAT activities work best for families?

Kids need 30 to 60 minutes of daily activity for optimal health. P.E. classes and athletics count. So do sports like Little League and soccer, swim classes and family activities.

- 🚲 **Aerobic activities:** Walk the dog. Bike to the store. Swing at the park. Dance down the sidewalk. Slide at the playground. Fun, fun, fun for everyone!
- 🚲 **Helping activities:** Kids like to help, and "chores" can be fun with the right attitude. Sweep the floor to music. See how quickly you can clean up the yard.
- 🚲 **Fun activities:** Focus on the fun and nobody will feel like they are doing exercise. Kite flying? Chasing bubbles in the wind? Splashing in a pool?

HOW can we fit fitness into a busy schedule?

- 🚲 **Walk to and from school:** If you live near school, start walking, biking, or riding a scooter as often as you can. Go both ways or just one way. After school, spend time at the playground or stop at the park for a game of folf (Frisbee golf) or baseball.
- 🚲 **Create a fun zone at home:** Turn off the TVs, computers and video games. Make a place to play inside (clear a piece of carpet to toss foam balls or dance) and outside (flower or vegetable gardens, basketball hoops or an old-fashioned tree house).
- 🚲 **Join a club:** Sometimes it is safer or warmer to play indoors. Check out the options in your area. Some health clubs and gyms have fun family programs. Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA/YWCAs often provide free or low-cost family memberships.

