

# How to Encourage Children to be Active



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# Did you know?



## The Nationwide Health Crisis

- The percentage of overweight and obese children has more than tripled in the last 30 years.
- Incidence of Type 2 Diabetes has increased in the past 15 years. 1 in 3 children will develop Type 2 Diabetes in the future!
- Deaths due to physical inactivity and poor diet are increasing (*JAMA, 2004*)
- 25% of young people do not participate in physical activity
- Children born in the year 2001 will be the first generation to have a shortened life span than their parents

## Screen Time Review



1. "Screen" Time = TV, computers, Game Boys, PlayStations, etc.
2. Young children watch up to 28 hours of television a week
3. Unhealthy snacks are consumed when watching TV
4. Limit Screen time! Get up and MOVE!

Take a parent for a walk!



The following pages are filled with quick ideas that you can play in a variety of settings. Begin with the simple activities first, then progress as age and ability allows. It doesn't matter who you play with, just spread the news of physical activity. Find a little space to move and have fun!

As with any activity it is always recommended that safety be of utmost concern. Make sure the play area is safe for movement (move furniture, watch out for sprinklers if playing outside, etc.).

Have a fun and fit day!

## Locomotor Skills

Walk

Hop

Skip

Jump

Leap

Run

Side-Step

Gallop

Tip-toe

Etc.

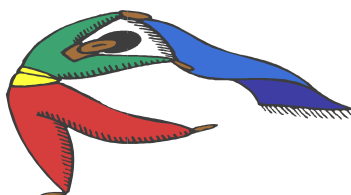
# QUICK PLAY FOR SCARVES

Scarf play holds fascination for children of all ages. The novelty of the item is exciting as well as challenging for older children who can practice basic juggling skills. Scarf play helps with hand-eye coordination. For younger children, the ability to track a moving objects transfers to many games and sports. Make sure your scarves are light-weight (although inexpensive paper napkins work very well too). Use caution since scarves can be very slippery if stepped on.

## SCARVES

### How to Play:

1. Practice school readiness skills. Identify colors, match scarves to same colors, make various shapes with the scarf, etc.
2. Use your imagination to pretend with the scarf. It can be a kite, a cloud in the sky, a beautiful tail on a horse, a butterfly wing, etc. Act it out, move your feet around the play area, and be creative.
3. Continue to move creatively and introduce concepts like: right, left, high, low, out, in, up, down, etc.
4. Pick your favorite song and move the scarf to the beat. The children's song, "The Wheels on the Bus" is a great song to act out with a scarf.
5. Practice tossing and catching with a scarf. Lay the scarf on the palm of one hand, with the thumb and pointer finger of the other hand, pinch the scarf in the middle and lift it off the palm. Now give it a flick into the air and catch it. Keep palms facing out when catching. Toss and catch with one hand, alternate hands, clap once or twice before a catch. For a challenge, try toss-spin around-catch.
6. Pretend to be a magician. Hide the scarf in the palm of your hand and then say, "Abracadabra" as you toss the scarf into the air. For real magic, toss it into the air and catch it behind your back!
7. Toss the scarf and watch it land on different body parts (back of hand, head, foot, back, etc.)
8. Place the scarf over your face and blow the scarf off, then catch it.
9. Try tossing and catching with a partner or a small group. This can be tricky!



# QUICK PLAY FOR BALLS

Everyone loves to catch a ball or two. For children, this skill needs time to be developed and practiced during childhood. Using balls of various sizes, texture, weight, and color offers a new experience every time. For young children (or less experienced ball players) bigger, brighter balls offers more opportunities for success. When you can see the ball and track it, your chances of catching it increases. Be careful not to invoke a fear of thrown balls. Teach children to pass gently and make sure the person they are throwing to is ready to catch!

## BALLS



### How to Play:

1. Using a ball of your choice, practice low, medium, and high tosses. See how many catches you can make. Keep your eye on the ball.
2. Try clapping before a catch. Clap once or twice before catching it. See how many claps you can make using a high toss. Tap your head, then tap your belly and catch. For advanced learners: Toss, spin around, catch.
3. Be creative, think of new ways to toss and catch. **Variations:** Sing the ABC song while tossing back and forth; count by 2/5/10s; recite multiplication facts.
4. Find a friend to play catch with. Begin close together, about 3-4 feet apart. Make sure your partner is ready to catch. A "ready signal" would be looking at the person who is going to throw the ball and having hands ready to catch.

## BALLS GAMES

### Games to Play:

1. "How Fast Can You Go?" Circle the ball around your waist, knees, head. See how fast you can go without losing the ball. Change directions too! For advanced learners, try it with your eyes closed!
2. "Hot Potato." To begin, gather a few people and play Hot Potato. Toss a ball quickly around the circle. See how many catches the group can do without dropping the ball. For additional fun, add a second ball!
3. "It's Time to Clean." Divide into two teams. Using very light-weight balls (balls made out of yarn, sponges, or newspapers) toss the balls off your side to the other side. After one minute, stop the game, count and see which side has the fewest, begin again. This is a fun activity with a great cardiovascular workout!



# QUICK PLAY FOR PARTNER PLAY

Once children have played with equipment by themselves, they are ready to work with a partner. Learning how to wait, share items/toys/equipment, and take turns are an important part of developing positive social skills. Here are a few games to get started!

## GAMES



### Games to Play:

1. "Follow the Leader." This game can be played almost anywhere and anytime. Find a partner and imitate their movements (around the play area/office/home, or on a chair/couch). Add a piece of equipment (ball, ribbon, scarf, stuffed animal, etc.) to really crank up the fun. Everyone loves to be the leader, so remember to switch leaders after 45 seconds.
2. "Back-to-Back Twister." This game needs something to pass back and forth (i.e., ball, bean bag, stuffed animal, etc.) Stand back-to-back with your partner. With feet stuck to the floor, twist to one side, hand your partner the item then quickly turn to the other side to receive it back. Keep twisting and turning. After 30 seconds or so, change directions.
3. "Back-to-Back Stretcher." This game is the same as above but instead of going side to side, you pass the item over your head and then bend down to receive the item between your legs. Keep bending and stretching. Don't forget to change directions.
4. "Pass The Ball." Find a ball to toss and open space. Stand opposite your partner and pass the ball back and forth. Suggested passes: gentle toss, overhead, bounce pass, etc. Feel silly? Make up a few passes.
5. "Partner Step Back." Begin standing 3-4 feet apart. Toss a ball back and forth. For every two successful catches, both partners step back. How far can you step back without missing a catch?
6. "Memory Toss." While tossing and catching, call out words in a category (alphabet, names, flowers, fruit or vegetables, sports, etc.). If you repeat something already said, your partner gets a point. Begin again with a new category.
7. "Race Ya!" Both partners decide on a type of race they want to have (crawling, side-sliding, galloping, snapping fingers, etc.) Check the area for obstacles, always think safety. Determine where the finish line is and begin the race by both partners yelling, "Ready, Set, Go."
8. "Thumb Wars". Stuck inside on a rainy day? Have a thumb war. Once a partner loses the thumb war he/she has to perform a physical activity. The winning partner decides what to (eg., Do 5 Jumping Jacks, squawk like a chicken and turn around 3 times, do 5 sit-ups while singing a favorite song). Use your imagination!

# QUICK PLAY FOR SMALL GROUPS

## Games to Play:

1. "Over-Under Pass." With a small group (3-5), stand in a line with everyone facing the same direction. Begin with an item to pass at the front of the line, pass the item over your head until it reaches the last person. That person runs to the front of the line and begins passing again. For added fun, have a little race with several lines. **Variation:** Pass the item under legs only, or alternate passing over the head then under the legs. If balls are not available, use a balloon. Always use **caution** when using balloons, some children may have latex allergies and balloons can be a choking hazard for young children.
2. "Hip-to-Hip Walkabout." With a small group (2-5 people), stand side to side. Place a ball between everyone's hips (no hands allow) and begin to walk forward in a cooperative effort. Try not to lose the balls! **Variation:** Make a single file line with balls at bellies and back levels. Move forward without losing a ball.
3. "Toss the Veggie." Form a circle with your small group (3-7) and begin tossing your item gently to others. Don't hold onto the item, it might be hot like a potato. One person calls out "Veggie Time!" The group quickly forms a single file line and passes the item over their head and under their legs until it gets to the end of the line. The last person yells, "EAT FIVE A DAY!" Then the group quickly reforms their circle and begins tossing again. **Variation:** For older groups, each person calls out a different vegetable as they pass the item down the line.



💡 Here's an idea you can do anywhere!

## ♪ Move to the Groove ♪



To get started, find your favorite music (and a music player) that makes you want to get up and move. Invite others to join in with you while you pump up the music and get your heart rate thumping for 3-5 minutes. Or, use a couple of the tunes listed on the next few pages to get you started! The following songs listed can be followed with prompts from the lyrics.

# Homemade Equipment

<u>Item:</u>	<u>New Equipment:</u>	<u>Instructions/Description/Uses:</u>
Sponges	Spongeballs	<i>Cut into strips, gather 10-12 strips, use zip ties to secure. Or, leave sponge whole, use to identify personal space, practice locomotor skills or use in an obstacle course.</i>
Yarn	Yarn balls	<i>Wrap 200 times around a piece of cardboard, remove, secure w/ zip tie, cut ends. Use for games that require light weight balls.</i>
Party Streamers/ Ribbons	Wands	<i>Secure streamer paper to 12" dowel w/ staple. Make one for each in hand if possible, develops laterality. Explore, experiment, and dance to music.</i>
Gallon jugs (Plastic)	Scoops	<i>Cut off bottoms, secure w/ electrical tape. Play with tennis balls/koosh balls/small balls.</i>
Film Containers	Shakers	<i>Fill w/ small beans or dried pasta, secure top as needed. Shake like maracas, play with music.</i>
Large tumblers	Scoops	Play with tennis/ping pong/koosh/yarn balls/etc.
Lids or Foamies or	Polyspots	To define personal space for children. Increase spatial awareness, practice locomotor skills, make patterns.
Tongue Depressors	Manipulative	Used to push different objects around - balloons, balls (yarn, sponge, fluff), etc.
Beach Balls	Ball play	Inflate balls for tossing, throwing, catching, kicking, striking play
Stuffed Animals or Beany Babies	Ball play	Use for practice of hand-eye coordination: tossing, throwing, and catching
Old Paint Brushes	Design Maker	Using old paint brush and some water, create shapes, pathways, etc. on sidewalks or driveways to jump over/in/go around, etc.
Other Items Stuffed Animals Cottonballs	Relay races or Obstacle Course	Use objects generally found around the home, play relays of different types (use siblings for more fun!) or create an obstacle course from any of the above items. Also use household items (i.e., chairs to climb to jump over, boxes to crawl into/out of, under/over/between, tables to crawl under, pillows to jump over, etc.)