



Physical activity guidelines for children

Insufficient physical activity is a risk factor for people who are overweight or obese and for many related chronic diseases. Regular physical activity is associated with immediate and long-term health benefits such as easier weight control, lower blood pressure, improved cardio-respiratory function and enhanced psychological well-being. Active children are more likely to become active adults.

As children age into adolescence, their physical activity declines. Increased use of television, video and computer games has resulted in decreased physical activity in American youth. In addition, school-based physical education programs have declined, particularly at the high school level.



Risks of overweight and obesity in children:

Orthopedic problems

Type 2 diabetes

Premature physical development

Low self-esteem

Asthma

Sleep apnea

Gallstones

High cholesterol

Physical activity guidelines:

It is recommended that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week.

Begin training in good activity habits as soon as possible. Include the whole family when possible. Think of the benefits derived from incorporating physical activity in the daily lives in the long term. Make small changes at a time, and make them gradually.

Windows of opportunity

For a child to become physically able to exercise in adulthood, he or she must do different types of physical activity in childhood. The muscles need to be “activated” for them to be able to work later.

Best aerobic activity for children:

The game of TAG. Children like to run very fast for very short periods, then rest and go again.

outdoors

Toys to have for fun outdoor activity:

- Bike
- Balls for baseball, tennis, soccer
- Frisbee
- Kite
- Monkey bars
- Rope swings or ladders
- Sand box
- Skates
- Sprinklers
- Swing set
- Wading pool
- Jump ropes



indoors

Toys to have for indoor activity:

- Boom box
- Hula hoops
- Jump ropes
- Power Pad
- Soft balls
- Bean bags
- Twister
- Indoor basketball hoop
- Mini trampoline



Children's metabolic systems are ideal for short bursts of vigorous activity followed by periods of low level activities or rest. Aerobic activities for children should include games in which they can have periods of intense activity. The following aerobic activities are ideally suited for children.

aerobic

Outdoor **aerobic** activities:

Basketball

Biking

Bowling

Catch

Fishing

Football

Freeze tag

Frisbee

Hacky sack

Hiking

Hopscotch

Jump rope

Kickball

Kite flying

Miniature golf

Ping Pong

Playing at the park

Rollerblading

Running

Skipping rope

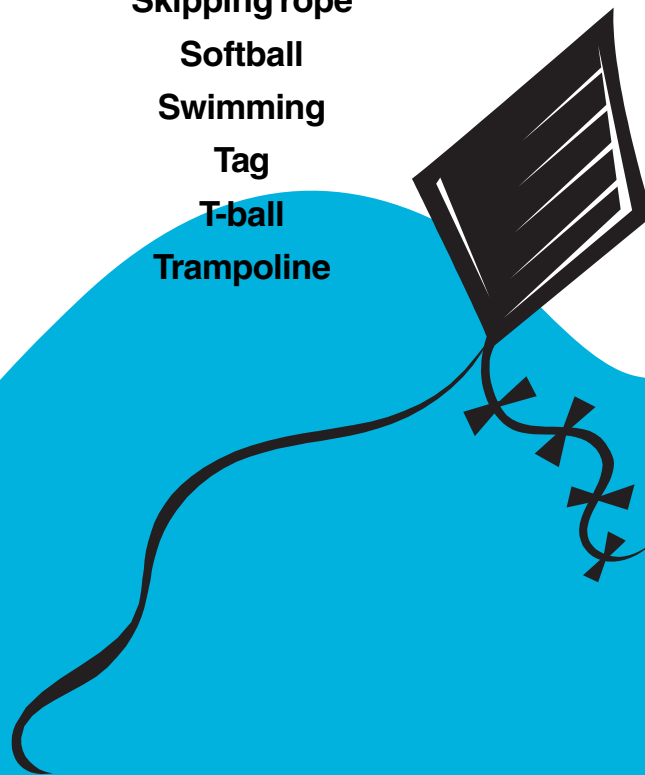
Softball

Swimming

Tag

T-ball

Trampoline



Activities children can do at home:

Remember to have fun!

Outdoor activities:

Bagging leaves
Brushing the dog
Digging in the sand
Gardening
Mowing
Painting
Riding a bike
Raking leaves
Vacuuming the car
Walking the dog
Washing the car
Weeding in the garden
Watering plants

Indoor activities:

Cleaning
Cleaning their room
Cooking
Dancing
Dusting
Folding clothes
Making beds
Picking up toys
Playing hide and seek
Playing with the cat
Sweeping
Vacuuming
Washing dishes

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