

Pointers For Parents

Playtime...Motivating Kids To Make Exercise Fun

(NAPSA)—You know your kids should be active, but often they can be found hunkered down in front of the TV, video game or computer while the sun shines outside. It's a scene parents everywhere have lamented. The solution is pretty simple: Get them active by making exercise fun.

In fact, don't even call it "exercise." Call it "play" and give them lots of opportunities to do it. If you gently suggest a bunch of activities (running through the sprinkler, playing whiffle ball, drawing a hopscotch grid with sidewalk chalk), they're very likely to take you up on one. And if they enjoy themselves, they may take the initiative next time to choose that activity over being a couch potato.

What's fun to a kid? Sure, they love a day trip to an amusement park or a family vacation getaway, but there are many low-cost, everyday ways for kids to have a great time being active. Each kid will have his or her own favorites, but most will enjoy activities that offer one or both of the following:

- Physical thrills, such as swinging on a swing, splashing into a pool or gliding on skates
- A chance to get better at something, such as riding a bike, catching a ball or jumping rope.

With thrill-seeking kids, be sure to supervise closely. (Riding on a tire swing can be fun, but falling off onto the hard ground isn't.) And when it comes to skill building, be sure to take notice when your child shows improvement. Maybe your child is landing some solid kicks on the soccer ball or jumping rope with increasing speed. Your encourage-

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It's the simple, small things you do each day that are most important to your child's life. That's why we've created the Cheerios Nurturing Circle—a national effort to celebrate and support parents. We've joined with the experts at KidsHealth.org and our passion for being the information you can use to raise healthy kids.

collage night
Have fun all night, create strong memories, and all of energy. Learn how to encourage good behavior and teach your children healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

being active
When kids are active, they enjoy learning, playing, and building their skills. Get tips on getting a child who loves activities—their energy levels are healthy, their self-esteem is high, and they are happy.

ready for life
When kids are ready for life, they're confident, curious, and ready to explore. Discover how to create a supportive home life for your child, and how to help them become the adults you want them to be.

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ment—and your child's own satisfaction—will spur him or her on to keep practicing.

When you find an activity, such as jumping off the diving board, that offers physical thrills and a chance to master a skill, some kids will do it over and over until their skin is waterlogged and the sun is setting on the pool deck. And if you're willing to do more than lifeguard, you can really increase the fun quotient. What's more fun (and funny) than seeing mom or dad bounce off the diving board and land with a cannonball splash?

But regular outings to the pool, the park or even the backyard will yield more than just good times. You'll show your kids that physical activity is a normal and fun part of everyday life—a healthy habit they'll want to continue for years to come.

For more practical tips on how to make exercise fun for your children, visit www.CheeriosNurturingCircle.com.