

# FIT WIC ACTIVITIES



READY... SET... GO PLAY!





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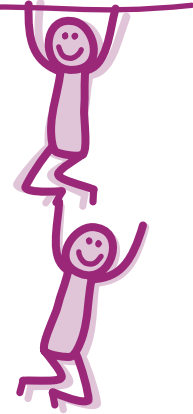
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# INTRODUCTION



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.

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?



# WIC ACTIVITIES



## 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 concepts 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.

## How the Fit WIC Activity Book helps children learn:

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 play skills and build confidence and self esteem.

## The activities are divided into three sections:

- everyday 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 and 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 everyday! 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 everyday, like going outside to play and helping out around the house. Try to get outside to play everyday 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 *Everyday 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.

Hang the pyramid on your refrigerator or near the door to help remind you and your children to be active everyday.

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.

Your child should **not** be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping. Limiting TV time will help your child get the recommended amounts of active playtime.

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

# KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID

READY... SET... GO PLAY!



**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



## 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 doll, toy car or other quiet toy.
- Offer to read your child a story— try “The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV” or choose another from the list at the end of this section.
- 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. 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 time activity)  
outdoor play (trip to the park or grocery store)  
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



# READING SUGGESTIONS FOR QUIET TIMES



Look for these children's books at your local library.

## Being Active

*The Snowman*

by Raymond Briggs

*Over, Under & Through*

by Tana Hoban

*Jump Frog, Jump*

by Byron Barton

*My Very First Book of Motion*

by Eric Carle

*Toddlerobics Animal Fun*

by Zita Newcome

*Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV*

by Stan and Jan Berenstain

## Growing Vegetables

*Growing Vegetable Soup*

by Lois Ehlert

*This Year's Garden*

by Cynthia Rylert

*Pumpkin Pumpkin*

by Jeanne Titherington

*The Carrot Seed*

by Ruth Krauss

*How a Seed Grows*

by Helene J. Jordan Kaurkhalsa

*Native American Gardening*

(stories, projects, and recipes for families) by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac Numeroff

## Foods and Eating

*Alphabet Soup*

by Kate Banks

*Gregory, the Terrible Eater*

by Mitchell Sharmat

*What a Good Lunch!*

by Shigeo Watanabe

*Bread and Jam for Frances*

by Russell Hoban

*How Pizza Came to Queens*

by Dayal Kaurkhalsa

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

by Eric Carle

*Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs*

by Judith Barrett

*If You Give a Moose a Muffin*

by Laura Joffe Numeroff

## Grains

*Pancakes, Pancakes*

by Eric Carle

*The Cake That Mack Ate*

by Rose Robart

*The Popcorn Book*

by Tomie dePaola

*The Little Red Hen*

by Paul Galdone

*Bread, Bread, Bread*

by Ann Morris

## Fruits and Vegetables

*Soup for Supper*  
by Phyllis Root

*The Pea Patch Jig*  
by Thacher Hurd

*Apples and Pumpkins*  
by Anne Rockwell

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

## Protein

*Peanut Butter and Jelly*  
by Nadine Bernard Westcott

*Green Eggs and Ham*  
by Dr. Seuss

## Breakfast

*Pancakes for Breakfast*  
by Tomie dePaola

*Oh Dear!*  
by Rod Campbell

*Anytime Mapleson and the Hungry Bears*  
by Mordicai Gerstein

*The Three Bears*  
by Paul Galdone

*Like Butter on Pancakes*  
by Jonathon London

## Food Shopping

*The Food Market*  
by Peter Spier (a board book)

*The Supermarket*  
by Anne and Harlow Rockwell

## Cooking

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

*My Kitchen*  
by Harlow Rockwell

*Cooking With Kids*  
by Caroline Ackerman

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

## Foods and Counting

*Ten Apples Up on Top*  
by Theo LeSieg

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

## Food Folklore

*Johnny Appleseed*  
by Steven Kellogg

*Stone Soup*  
by John W. Stewig

## Cultural Stories

*Fiesta U.S.A.*  
(Hispanic American folklore)  
by George Ancona

# EVERYDAY... 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 in puddles, splash through sprinklers, 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

go for a walk outside (dress warmly!)  
play in the leaves or in the snow  
help rake leaves or shovel snow  
make a snowman, a snow angel or snow fort  
go sledding  
go ice skating  
play inside  
help with chores  
play music... stretch, dance, climb,  
jump, skip, march

## Warm Weather Activities

play outside  
jump in puddles  
weed, water and rake the garden  
run through a sprinkler or splash in a wading pool  
play with sand, pails and shovels  
play with water  
help wash the car  
ride a tricycle or bike  
go to a park or playground  
skip, run, jump, hop, swing

## EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES



Take advantage of your child's natural activity level by teaching him to help you inside or outside the house. Helping around the house teaches children responsibility and self-respect. Children like having responsibility. 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*) for ways to turn routine housework into games.

### TASKS YOUR CHILD CAN HELP WITH

#### Indoor Helping Activities

- pick up her toys
- make beds (pull up the covers)
- carry laundry
- pick up and put away dishes, pots & pans
- clean floors (sweep, mop, vacuum)
- pick up the living room
- dust furniture
- carry and put away groceries
- set the table for family meals
- water plants
- feed and care for pets

#### Outdoor Helping Activities

- sweep the porch
- pick up the yard
- hang out laundry
- carry out the trash
- wash the car or brush off snow
- stack firewood or pickup kindling
- wash the dog



# PLAN FOR ACTIVE TIME

**FEBRUARY**

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

**Hang a calendar on your wall or refrigerator**

## 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.



## SKILL-BUILDING PHYSICAL PLAY

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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 and help her feel comfortable about being active the rest of her life.**



# TOYS THAT ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL PLAY

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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

## Hoops

Make your own with 6 feet of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch flexible plumbing pipe. Join the ends by inserting a 3 inch piece of  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch plastic piping. If it does not fit snugly, you may need to tape the joint. Decorate with colored plastic tape, if you like.

## 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.

**Some of these equipment ideas might make good gifts from parents, relatives or friends**

### For 3 to 4-year-olds

- throwing targets
- 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



## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES



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

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

### 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!

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### Bubble Chase

1 or more players

**Equipment:** bubble solution; wand for each player

**Procedure:** 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!

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#### Homemade Bubble Recipe

$\frac{2}{3}$  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!



### 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.



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### Hula Hoop Chase

1 or more players

**Equipment:** For each player—a large plastic hoop (to make your own, see “Toys That Encourage Physical Play” page 14)

**Procedure:** 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.

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### Hula Hop

1 or more players

**Equipment:** 1 or more large plastic hoops (to make your own, see “Toys that Encourage Physical Play,” page 14)

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

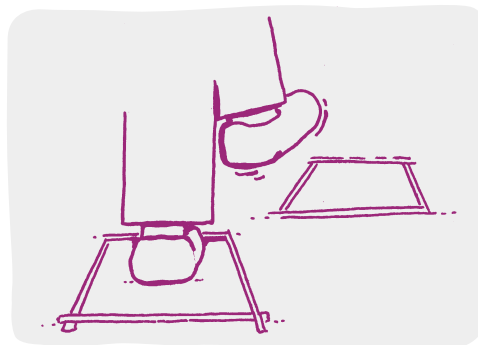
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### Square Hop

1 or more players

**Equipment:** sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**Procedure:** 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.



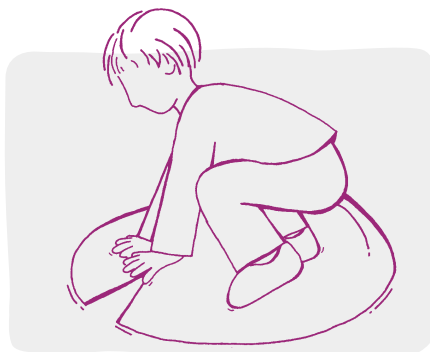
**Variation:** Children who aren't skilled at hopping on one foot yet can try this activity jumping with two feet.

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### Frog Hop

1 or more players

**Procedure:** 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!



**Variation:** 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.

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## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES

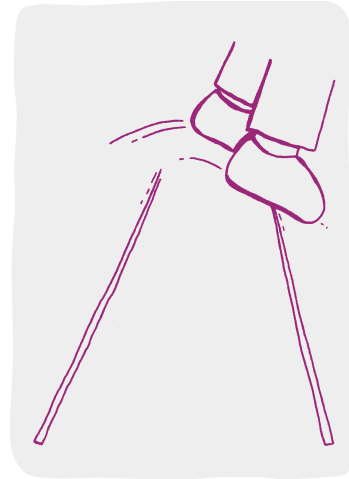
### Jump Right Over

1 or more players

**Equipment:** sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**Procedure:** 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.

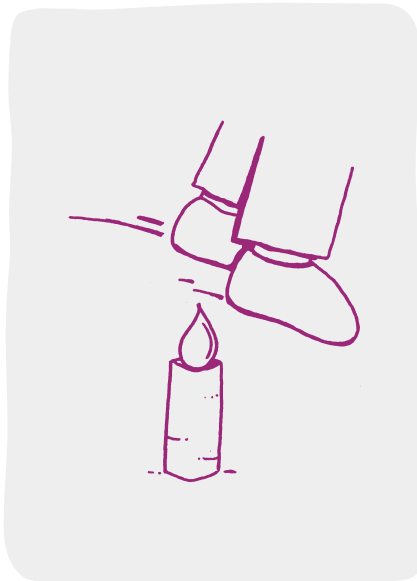
**Variation:** Draw a single line and let your child practice jumping and hopping over it. Inside, use masking tape to make one or two lines on the floor.



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### Jumping Jack

1 or more players



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

**Procedure:** 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,*

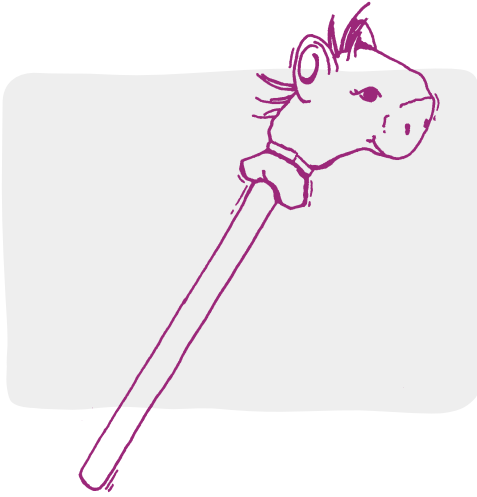
*Jack be quick,*

*Jack jump over the candlestick.*

Practice jumping high, medium and low.

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## RUNNING & JUMPING GAMES



### Galloping Pony

1 or more players

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

**Procedure:** 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.

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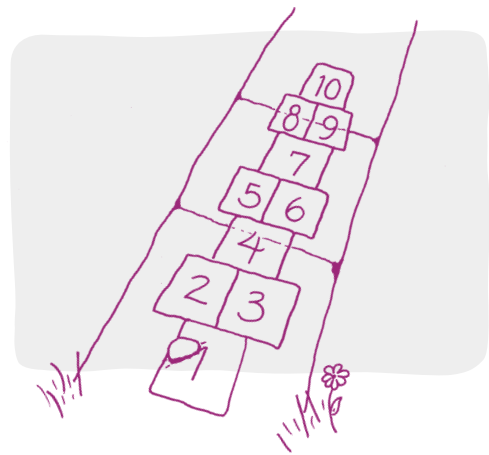
### Hopscotch

1 or more players

**Equipment:** sidewalk chalk or masking tape, beanbag for each player

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

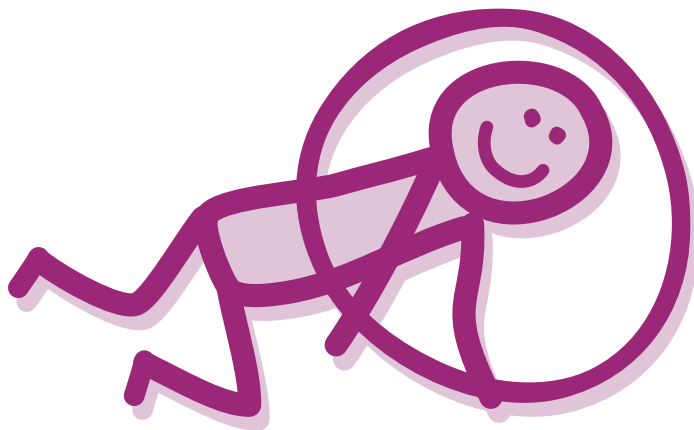
Have your child toss the beanbag onto square one and then hop or jump onto square one (on one foot or both feet, depending on your child's ability) and pick up the beanbag. Toss the beanbag onto square 2 and so on. When she gets to the top, turn around and go back down to square one. If there is more 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 or two feet.



# TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING

- forward
- backward
- over
- under
- around
- through
- up
- down

- wiggling
- slithering
- cartwheeling
- creeping
- somersaulting
- sneaking
- surrounding
- dangling



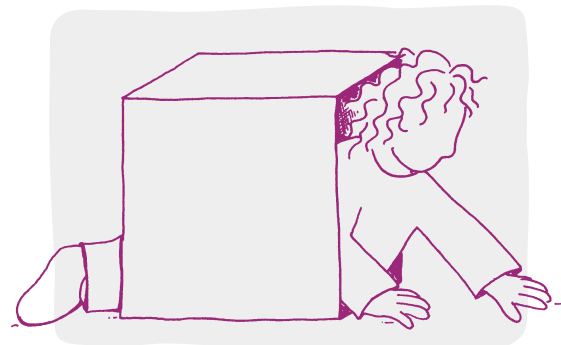
## TUMBLING, ROLLING, CRAWLING & CLIMBING

### Creeping, Crawling, Climbing

1 or more players

**Equipment:** large boxes, chairs, tables, sheets

**Procedure:** Create an obstacle course with several objects your child can pass over, under and through. Try it outside with lawn furniture and cardboard boxes of various sizes. Large cardboard boxes can be cut to create a tunnel, or just left open at both ends.



**Variation:** Let children creep and crawl safely through, under, over and around large objects in your home. Drape sheets over chairs or tables or use large boxes to create “tunnels.” Have children pass through the tunnel, moving forward and backwards, slowly and more quickly.

---

### Hula Crawl

2 or more players

**Equipment:** large plastic hoop for each player (to make your own, see “Toys that Encourage Physical Play,” page 14)

**Procedure:** 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

**Procedure:** 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

**Procedure:** Have your child lie down on the ground on her back. Help her put her feet and hands up in the air, pull her knees into her chest, and hold onto her knees with her hands. Ask her to rock back and forth along her spine.

---

### Forward Roll

1 or more players

**Procedure:** 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

**Procedure:** 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.

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### Climb Every Mountain

1 or more players

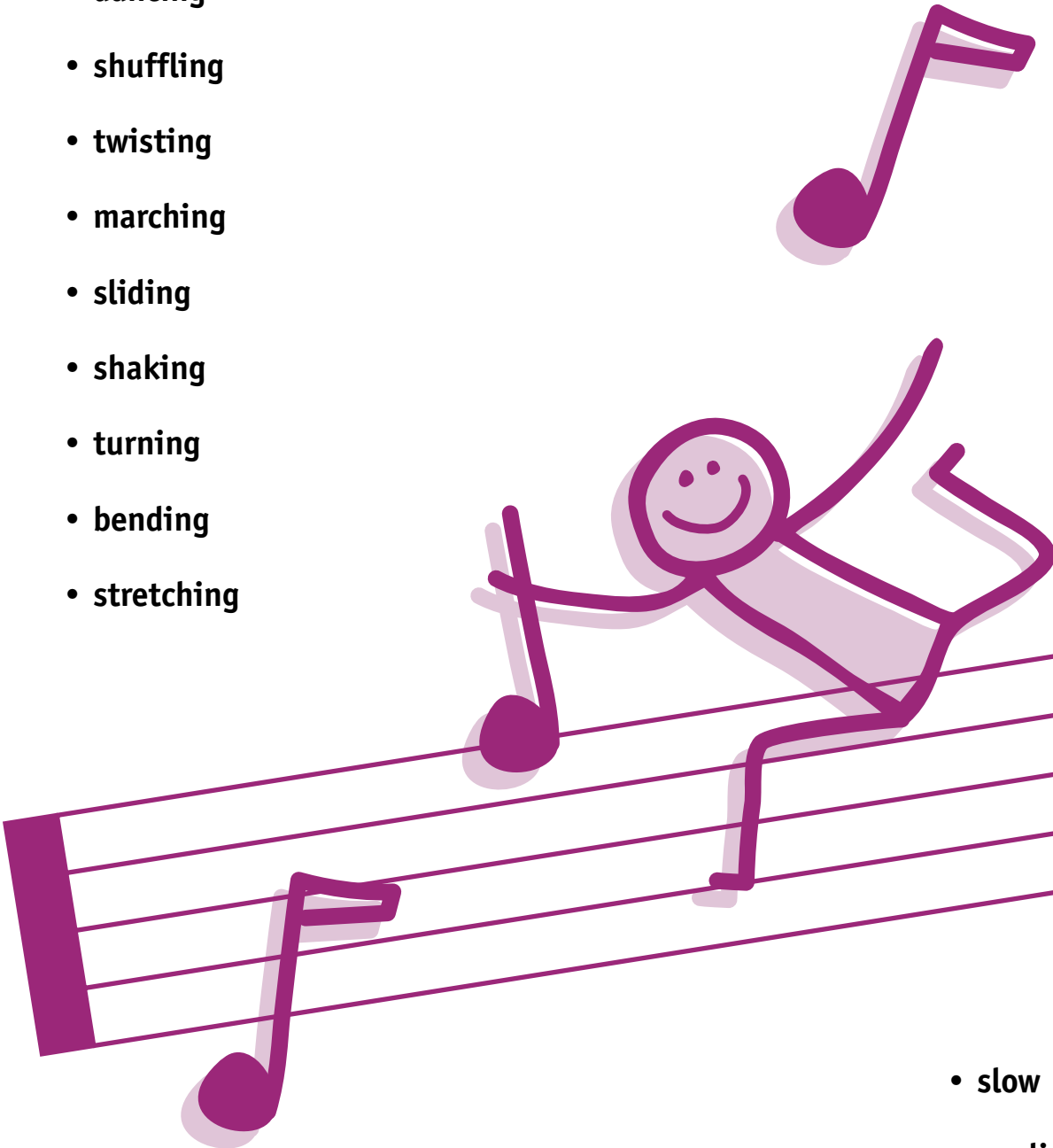
**Procedure:** Find a hill or build one out of snow or dirt and climb to the top. Roll back down on your side!

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## RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT & BALANCE

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



- slow
- medium
- fast

### Freeze Dancing

2 or more players

**Equipment:** music

**Procedure:** 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 cassette tapes and 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..."

---

### Tight Ropes

1 or more players

**Equipment:** sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**Procedure:** 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

**Equipment:** large plastic hoop for each player (to make your own, see “Toys that Encourage Physical Play,” page 14)

**Procedure:** 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!

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### Limbo

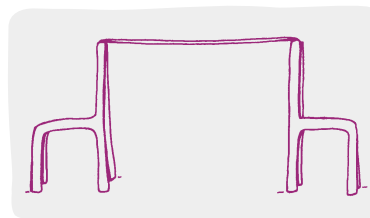
1 or more players

**Equipment:** 2 chairs, masking tape or string

**Procedure:** 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.

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### Mirror Me

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

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

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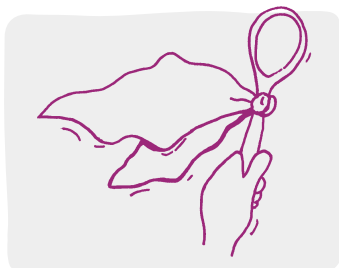
### Marching Band

1 or more players

**Equipment:** containers with lids, dried beans, spoons, pots and pans, rubber bands

**Procedure:** 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.

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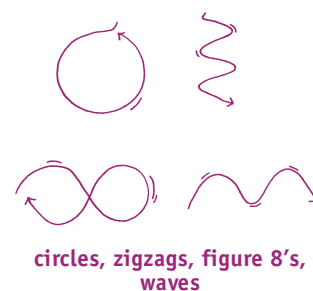


### Scarves and Ribbons

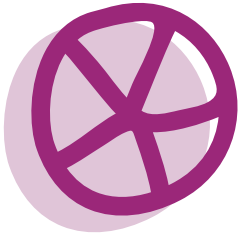
1 or more players

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

**Procedure:** 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.



## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES



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

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



## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

### Tidy-Up Toss

1 or more players

**Equipment:** an empty box

**Procedure:** Have your child pick up outside toys and drop in box for points. Or have your child toss a ball, beanbag or snowball into empty box or bucket outside. Try both overhand and underhand throwing. Let your child step back to toss the ball, bean bag or snowball from farther away as her skills get better.

**Variation:** *Inside, have child pick up toys, books, games and drop in box for points, or toss ball or bean bag into empty box, laundry basket or wastebasket.*

---

### Trash Bag Toss

1 or more players

**Equipment:** For each player—unused trash bag, newspaper

**Procedure:** 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.

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### Kick Course

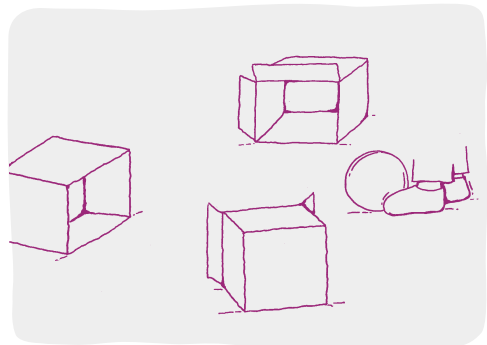
1 or more players

**Equipment:** ball for each player, containers such as boxes, wastebaskets, crates, some open on both ends

**Procedure:** 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.*

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## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

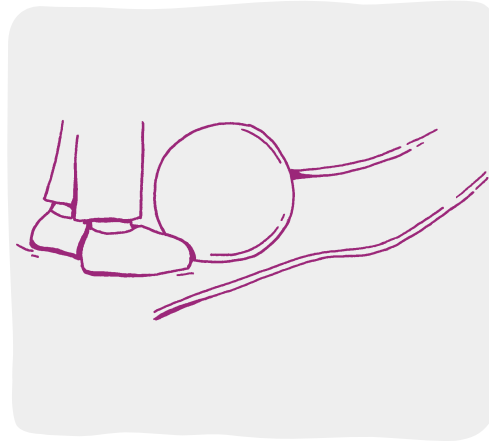
### Foot Dribble

1 or more players

**Equipment:** ball for each player; snow shovel or rake; sidewalk chalk or masking tape

**Procedure:** 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.*



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### Milky-Crunchy Knock Em' Down

1 or more players

**Equipment:** empty milk jugs, cereal boxes or 2 liter plastic bottles; ball

**Procedure:** 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.

---



## Balloon Body Juggling

(best for 5-year-olds)

1 or more players

**Equipment:** balloon for each player

**Procedure:** 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.

**Safety caution:** Do not use balloons with children under 4 years old. Balloons can be choking hazards—only adults should inflate balloons.

---

## Racquet Balloon

1 or more players

**Equipment:** 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

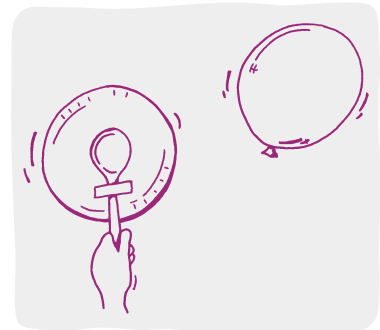
**Procedure:** Make a racquet with a coat hanger (see “Toys that Encourage Physical Play.” page 14).

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.*

**Safety caution:** Do not use balloons with children under 4 years old. Balloons can be choking hazards—only adults should inflate balloons.

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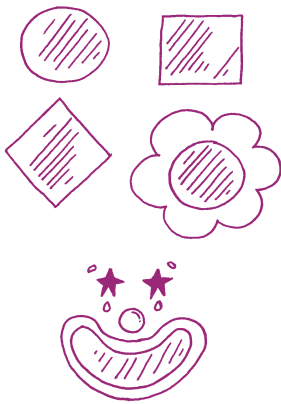
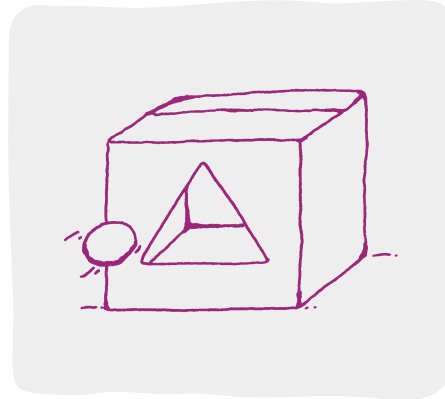
## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

### Bean Bag Target Toss

1 or more players

**Equipment:** large cardboard box; 2 or more beanbags for each player

**Procedure:** 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.



shape ideas

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.

**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.

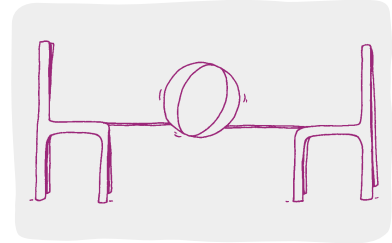
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## CATCHING, THROWING, KICKING GAMES

### Beach Ball Bounce Back

2 or more players

**Equipment:** 2 chairs, masking tape or string, beach ball

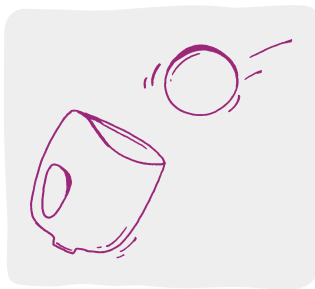


**Procedure:** Make a “net” outside by placing the 2 lawn chairs about 4 feet apart and attaching tape or string across the seat of each chair. Hit, toss or bounce the beach ball back and forth over the net. Help your child practice hitting hard and soft, high and low. If you can’t get outside, you can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

Do not use balloons with children under 4 years old. Balloons can be choking hazards—only adults should inflate balloons.

---



### Milk Jug Catch

1 or more players

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

**Procedure:** 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!

---

## 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



## Read, Run and Race About

2 or more players

**Equipment:** Action storybook

**Procedure:** 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.

---

## Airplane

1 or more players

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



## Cape Capers

2 or more players

**Equipment:** For each player—small blanket, towel or cloth scrap for cape

**Procedure:** 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 "Wooooo!"*

*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.*

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### Making Shapes & Animals

2 or more players

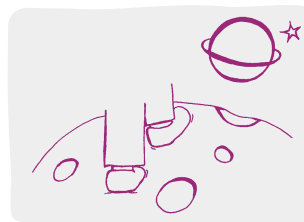
**Procedure:** Call out a shape...round, flat, wide, narrow, long, short, pointed, crooked, zigzag...let your child make her body into that shape or move in a way that acts out that shape. Have your child use his body to imitate an object—a table, a chair, a flower, a teapot, etc. Or, call out the name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

---

### Make-Believe Walks

2 or more players

**Procedure:** 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

**Procedure:** 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.

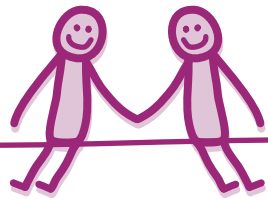
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### Lightning and Thunder

2 or more players

**Procedure:** One player is "lightning." The rest are "thunder." On the signal, lightning moves quickly throughout the yard or room. 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.

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## PLAYGROUPS

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Playgroups are a wonderful opportunity for parents to meet other parents, and for kids to meet playmates in a child-safe place. They usually meet for an hour or two on a weekly basis and are free. Call your local Parent Child Center for up-to-date information about meeting times and places. Invite a friend to play or meet at a park, playground or recreation path.

### **Barre-Montpelier Area**

- The Family Center of Washington County 828-8765

### **Bennington Area**

- Sunrise Family Resource Center 442-6934
- Town of Dorset Nursing Association 867-5922

### **Bradford Area**

- Orange County Parent Child Center 222-5856

### **Brattleboro Area**

- Early Education Services Windham County 254-3742

### **Brandon Area**

- Neighborhood Connections 247-4155

### **Burlington Area**

- Lund Family Center 864-7467
- VNA / Maternal Child Health Services 860-4420
- Milton Family Community Center 893-1457 or 893-6502

### **Grand Isle Area**

- Champlain Islands Parent Child Center 796-3013

### **Middlebury Area**

- Addison County Parent Child Center 388-3171

### **Morrisville Area**

- Lamoille Family Center 888-5229

### **Newport Area**

- NEKCA/ Child & Family Development Program 334-4072

### **Randolph Area**

- Orange County Parent Child Center 728-6155

### **Rutland Area**

- Rutland County Parent Child Center 775-9711

### **St. Albans Area**

- The Family Center 524-6574

### **St. Johnsbury Area**

- NEKCA/Child & Family Development Program 748-8997

### **Springfield Area**

- Springfield Area Parent Child Center 886-5242

### **White River Junction Area**

- The Family Place 649-3268

# PLAYGROUNDS, PARKS & TRAILS



Explore places to play and make new friends. Outings are more fun with friends along. Invite a friend to play or meet at a park, playground or recreation path.

## Playgrounds

Most towns have elementary schools with playgrounds, and most welcome younger children to play on the playground equipment as long as the school children are not using it at that time. Middle schools 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. Schools are usually listed in the phone book under the town listing.

## Parks, pools, skating and more

If you are new to an area (or even if you have lived in the same place for a long time) it's a good idea to call your Town Clerk or Town Office to ask what parks and recreation areas are available for children's play activity. 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
- Walking or ski trails
- Ice skating areas
- Children's programs
- Recreation center
- Swimming lessons
- 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 Vermont State Parks in Your Area

Vermont 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 3 years old and under. For children 4 to 13 years the fee is \$2.00 and for 14 years through adult, the fee is \$2.50 per day. Day recreation areas open at 10:00 a.m. and close at sunset. Pets are not allowed.

There is an Internet web site for all the state parks at:  
[www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/parks/index.htm](http://www.state.vt.us/anr/fpr/parks/index.htm)

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 Waterbury is  
(802) 241-3655.

You can also locate State Parks using a Vermont State map.

## Green Mountain National Forest

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

The GMNF is divided into two sections. The south half extends from the Vermont-Massachusetts border to State Highway 140 in the town of Wallingford. The District Office for this section of the forest is located in Manchester Center.

The north half extends from U.S. Route 4, northeast of Rutland, to State Route 17, in the town of Bristol. The north half has two districts, with offices in Middlebury and Rochester. Trail maps and detailed information about facilities are available at these offices.

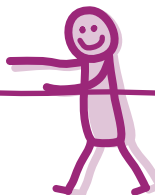
There is also information available on their website at:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/recreation%20management/recreation.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/recreation%20management/recreation.htm)

Another web site with a guide to the GMNF is:  
[www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us\\_national\\_forest/vt\\_green.htm](http://www.gorp.com/gorp/resource/us_national_forest/vt_green.htm)

## Rail Trails of Vermont

Many former railroad track beds across the state have been converted to walking or recreation paths. There is a listing of these trails on the Internet at: [www.new-england-rail-trails.org](http://www.new-england-rail-trails.org)

# FARMS & MARKETS



## 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 web site to locate pick-your-own farms around your area in Vermont:

[www.vermontfarms.org/pyown.htm](http://www.vermontfarms.org/pyown.htm)

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 or bugs. Always remember 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 Vermont that welcome the public for tours or visits.

You can locate a farm to visit on this Vermont Farms website:

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

You can get a brochure from the Vermont Farms Association listing farms that are open for visitors and those that have pick-your-own, by calling this toll free number: (888) 892-6748

## 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 Vermont are listed on this website:

[www.vermontfarms.org/farmmkt.htm](http://www.vermontfarms.org/farmmkt.htm)

Some farmers' markets accept Vermont Farm to Family coupons available through the Health Department for WIC participants, and through Community Action Agencies to other eligible families. Get a list of these markets when you get your coupons from WIC or Community Action.



## 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 a real 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. 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 Vermont State Information booths for flyers about places to go and things to do. Parent Child Centers are 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. Parent Child Centers are listed in the *Playgroups* section on page 45.

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

Statewide list of festivals:

[www.vtfestivals.com](http://www.vtfestivals.com)

Another listing:

[www.linkvermont.com/events.htm](http://www.linkvermont.com/events.htm)

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.





**PLAY EVERYDAY!**

