

Healthy Tips for Active Play



Why is active play important?

Active play helps your child learn healthy habits. There are many health benefits of active play, such as:

- Active children are less likely to weigh too much.
- Keeping your child active now helps lower the chance of developing chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes.
- Activities, like running and jumping rope, help your child learn movement skills to develop muscles and strong bones.
- Active play can also help the mind develop. Playing “pretend” lets kids be creative.
- Active children are more likely to be happy and feel good about themselves. Children feel proud after learning how to bounce a ball or ride a bike.



Your child loves to move!

Encourage your child to play actively several times each day.

Active play for children can happen in short bursts of time and can be led by you or your child. Active play can include playing on the playground, playing tag with friends, or throwing a ball.



Do you wonder if your child is active enough?

My child plays outside several times a day or inside where he or she is free to move.

Yes No

I make sure my child's TV and screen time is less than 2 hours a day.

Yes No

I make sure my child is actively moving for at least 60 minutes a day.

Yes No

When actively playing, my child breathes quickly or sweats.

Yes No

If you can usually answer yes to these statements, your child is probably getting enough active play.



How can you raise an active child?

- **Make active play fun for the whole family.** Let your child help plan the fun.
- **Focus on fun, not performance.** All children like to play. They will win when they move, have fun, and are active daily.
- **Set limits on TV and computer time.** Limit TV and other screen time to less than 2 hours a day, as advised by many doctors. Try reading during inactive time rather than watching TV.
- **Be active yourself.** Active parents tend to raise active children. You influence your child's behavior, attitudes, and future habits. Be more active and limit your own time watching TV. Set the example by using safety gear, like bike helmets.



As children grow, they may be ready for new activities.

By **age 2**, they can run, walk, gallop, jump, and swim with adult help.

By **age 3**, they can hop, climb, ride a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels and a safety helmet, and catch, throw, bounce, and kick a ball.

By **age 4**, they can skip, swim, and complete an obstacle course.

There are many activities you can do with your child.

Here are some ideas of how to be active with your child.
Write down your own ideas, too!

Indoor play

Act out a story

Turn up the music and dance

Walk inside a shopping mall

Play games, such as duck-duck-goose, hide and seek, follow the leader, Simon says

Your family ideas: _____

Outdoor play

Family walks after dinner

Play catch

Take a nature hike

Games in the yard or park

Kick a ball



Your family ideas: _____



For more great tips on these and other subjects, go to:
ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers/



Children 0-6 months

You are your child's key to success!

Sing fun songs and fingerplays with your baby. like "Mary Had a Little Lamb." These songs help babies become interested in songs, rhymes, stories, and music.

Move your baby's body to soft music or movement. Play for different body parts and use the names of fingers, hands, legs, head, and toes. This helps babies develop self-awareness.

Play peek-a-boo with your baby. This helps babies develop memory skills and recognize familiar people and objects!

Get your baby's gaze and hold your finger while playing and encourage your baby to reach for any part beyond his or her reach. This helps babies learn their bodies and develop their motor skills.

Bring your baby around other children and adults. This helps babies learn to trust and interact with others.

Tell to your baby all the time. Tell your baby what is happening during diaper changing, bathing and dressing. This helps babies develop their memory skills.



You can do it! We can help!
www.littletexans.org

little Texans
BIG FUTURES



Children 6-18 months

You are your child's key to success!

Celebrate when your baby says his or her first word and repeat the word. This helps babies develop their communication and speaking skills!

Clip and continue when your baby develops new skills, like using a spoon or sitting up! This helps babies be confident in their new skills and abilities.

Give your baby similar toys of different sizes that fit together, like different-sized blocks or measuring cups. This helps babies identify their problem-solving skills!

Help your baby jump, pick up, and move from playfully. This helps children develop their hand-eye coordination!

Introduce your baby to new cultures and adults and allow him or her time to become comfortable. This helps babies develop a sense of other people!

Talk to your baby all the time. When your baby makes noises and sounds, respond with other sounds. This helps babies understand the rules of conversation!



You can do it! We can help!
www.littletexans.org



Children 18-36 months

You are your child's key to success!

Talk to your toddler all the time and repeat it consistently. This helps toddlers develop their communication and speaking skills!

Sing songs with toddlers and collaborate when they remember the words and sing songs on their own. This helps develop their memory skills!

Encourage your toddler to sing, play, dance, and play together and inclusive! This helps toddlers develop their body expression and gross motor skills!

Encourage your toddler to run, jump, climb, and play together and inclusive! This helps toddlers develop their body expression and gross motor skills!

Talk to your toddler about her or his feelings and how our actions affect other children and adults. This helps toddlers develop their social-emotional skills and positive relationships with others.

Read books everyday with your toddler! Ask your toddler questions about different characters and objects in books while reading together! This helps toddlers develop their language and literacy skills!



You can do it! We can help!
www.littletexans.org



Children 36-48 months

You are your child's key to success!

Read with your child everyday! Share reading explores for your child that authors make up words. Use 'big' and 'small'. This helps children develop their memory skills and become interested in books!



Talk to your child about family members and favorite community places like the grocery store or library. This helps children learn about their place in families and the community!

Provide play with your child and encourage him or her to try to keep their imagination going by asking questions. This helps develop their creativity and imagination!

Encourage your child to help clean up his room, and other people's rooms. This helps children develop their behavior and cleanliness!

Encourage your child to meet new people, play with new friends, and participate in new activities. This helps children develop new people and interact with others!

By 48 months, your child will use over 4000 word! Help your child's language and communication development by using the appropriate words to describe objects and actions in their world!

You can do it! We can help!
www.littletexans.org

5 Reasons Children Need to Have Limits on Screen Time

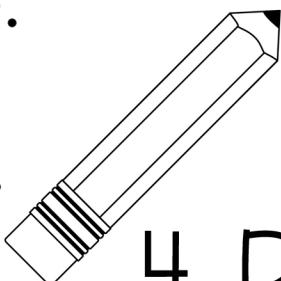
1. Healthy Bodies

Engaging in sedentary screen time activities for more than 1.5 hours daily is a risk factor for obesity in children ages 4 - 9. Lengthy screen time can also lead to speech delays. For each 30-minute increase in handheld screen time, researchers found a 49% increased risk of expressive speech delay.



2. WIRED AND TIRED

Screens can overstimulate a child and lead to sensory overload, difficulty settling down to sleep, lack of restorative sleep, and a hyperaroused nervous system. As a result, kids are often in a state of being "wired and tired" (that is, they're agitated, irrational, and exhausted).



3. FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Coloring, cutting and the pincer grasp. Human hands are made for creating, engaging and connecting! These early skills are important for complete health. Electronic use interferes with the development of these fine motor skills.

4. DOPAMINE

Electronics hook kids because of the "feel good" neurochemical, dopamine. Viewing new and exciting things, gaming achievements, and receiving "likes" all cause dopamine to be released by the brain. Once the dopamine-reward pathway is activated, it tells the individual to repeat what he or she just did in order to get that feel-good dopamine reward again. This results in over-used pathways and classic addictive behaviors. Children's developing brains are especially vulnerable.



5. ATTENTION AND FOCUS

Frequent exposure to screens compromises a child's ability to maintain focus on tasks such as schoolwork. Dopamine is critical for focus and motivation. Once damaged, over-used pathways cannot hold focus. This can lead to attention deficit and depressive thoughts.



5 Things You Can Do Today:

1. Make a personalized family media plan, such as the one found here: <http://www.healthyscreenhabits.org/tools#FamilyTechnologyPlan>
2. Designate "screen free" zones in your house.
(Bedrooms and bathrooms, specifically)
3. Designate "screen free" times in your family.
(Dinner, after bathtime, before school)
4. Limit gaming and electronics. Instead, encourage children to engage in outdoor and creative play and intentionally connect with your child each day.
5. Remove "Autoplay" feature from You Tube.
(Check your settings - it's easy!)

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS GUIDELINES

0-2 year-olds: Avoid screen use other than video chatting with family members.

2 to 5 year-olds: Limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs.

6 years and older: Set limits on the time spent using screens, and the types of media they are using.

Important!

Limit your family devices to "public" spaces in your home. Avoid closed doors.

FURTHER RESOURCES

healthyscreenhabits.org

healthychildren.org

first5California.com

ahaparenting.com

drkardaras.com