



# 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**

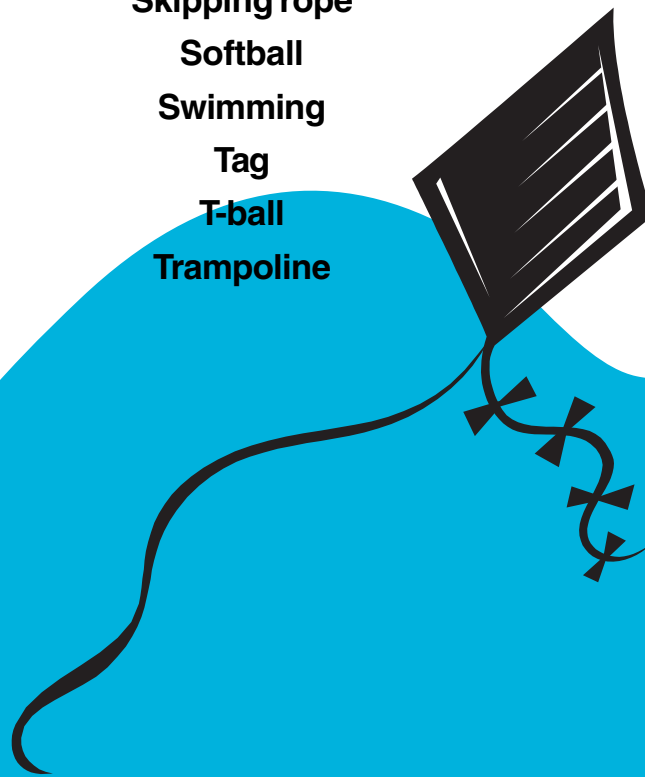
**Softball**

**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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