



Family Time Work Time

A B A L A N C I N G A C T

Building Strong Families

Keep Them Active Indoors, Too

Children need to be active every day, but there are times when the weather makes outdoor play difficult. It may seem easier just to turn on the television or computer, or even put in a video game, but it's better for your child to do other things. It's not healthy for kids to sit too much. They need to be active to use up their energy, stay healthy, and learn new things. Another benefit: Busy kids behave better!



Here are some fun activities for indoor play:

- Children love dancing to music.
- Have fun sock skating on a tile floor.
- Play like the animals – your child can imitate favorite animals by making their sounds and moving the way they do.
- Bring home some exercise videos from the library to make exercising more fun.
- Play indoor basketball by throwing bean bags or soft balls into a laundry basket.
- Crumple up old newspapers into balls to have an indoor “snowball” fight.
- Hula hoops can be used for active fun.
- Pile up some pillows and blankets for some climbing fun.
- Gentle pillow fights get rid of energy.
- Choose a safe, soft place for rough-and-tumble play. Children enjoy wrestling and being silly together. Set guidelines and keep track of when your child shows he or she is ready to end the play.

Learning Through Play

Some people think that children learn only when they are sitting down with books, paper, and pencils. Now, most educators agree that hands-on learning is the best type of learning for young children. Active kids are learning kids!

Children need to move around, touch, and use all their senses to explore their world. Remember, when you say, “Don’t touch” to a child, you are also saying, “Don’t learn.” Of course, you need to keep your child from touching unsafe things, but provide your child with lots of appropriate things to explore and figure out.

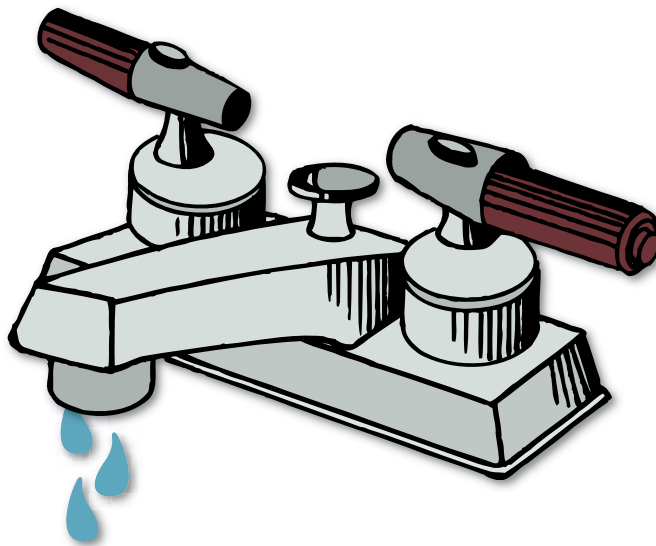
Let your child play with paint, play dough, sand, and water. Counting games are fun with blocks or toy cars and trucks. Sorting, measuring, and comparing can all be learned by playing with small toys and figures. Children practice thinking and problem solving while building with blocks. Scribbling on paper with markers, pencils, or crayons helps with learning to write. These are just a few examples of how your child learns through active play.

Save Money on Utilities



Conserving energy and water can save you money. Making sure your home is insulated and ready for cooler weather can help keep your family warm. Here are some tips for keeping warm, conserving energy, and saving money on utilities in your home during the colder winter months:

- Make sure your house is well insulated. It keeps warm air in your home.
- Set your thermostat as low as you can to be comfortable. Each degree above 68 degrees F can add three percent to your heating bill.
- Check your heat registers to be sure they are not covered by anything.
- If you have a garage, keep the door closed to prevent cold air for getting into your home.
- Check your furnace filter regularly. Clean or replace it when needed.
- Caulk and weather strip your doors and windows.
- Save water by keeping a bottle for drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap each time for a drink of cold water.
- Take shorter showers and use a low-flow shower head to save water.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth.
- Check for leaks in faucets and toilets.
- Only run full loads in your washing machine and dishwasher.
- Use less detergent for washing dishes to save rinse time. Turn off the water between rinsing dishes.



More from Better Kid Care

The Better Kid Care Web Site at www.betterkidcare.psu.edu has more information for parents. Look for other *Family Time-Work Time* issues, *Parents Count*, child care and activity tip sheets, snack ideas, choosing child care tips, school readiness information, and the monthly Better Kid Care E-Newsletter. To sign up for the E-Newsletter, send a request to BetterKidCareNews-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu.

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Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Program Director

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College of Agricultural Sciences
Cooperative Extension

Developed and written by:

Nancy Wilson, Penn State Better Kid Care Program, Penn State University

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