



JUNE 2008



Family Time Work Time

A BALANCING ACT

Building Strong Families

Busy Kids Are Happy Kids!



SCHOOL'S OUT AND MOST KIDS ARE EAGER FOR A DIFFERENT ROUTINE FROM THE BUSY SCHOOL YEAR.

When at home, make sure your children have plenty to do. It's good for school-age kids to have choices of activities. Make sure all the choices are OK with you! Have your child help you plan some fun family activities. Have picnics outdoors when the weather cooperates. Be sure your child gets some exercise every day. Summer is a good time for bike rides and hikes. Swimming keeps kids healthy and active. This is a good time to find and schedule some swimming lessons if your child does not know how to swim.

Instill a love of reading in your child and go to the public library together. Children who are avid readers do better in school. Many libraries have special summer programs that include different activities for children of all ages. Check with your local library to find out what is happening in your area. Some communities have recreation activities that are held at local parks and playgrounds. Find out if that is happening where you live.

Encourage your child to play with neighborhood friends outdoors. Many kids spend many hours at the computer or in front of the television. You need to have some rules to limit this time for your child. Talk with parents of your child's

friends and organize outdoor play activities for all the children. Take turns planning fun things to do at each others' houses and yards. Be creative and have your child help. Hula hoop contests are fun for kids. Try simple things such as blowing bubbles and playing tag. Organize a game night. Many adults have good memories of playing hide and seek with neighborhood friends. You can also play kickball and badminton if you have room in your yard.

Children of all ages need supervision. Younger children need to always have someone nearby. For older children, a parent needs to keep track of where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing. Be involved in what your child is doing. Keep your child busy and happy this summer!

Let's Play Ball

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES CAN HAVE LOTS OF ACTIVE FUN PLAYING WITH BALLS.

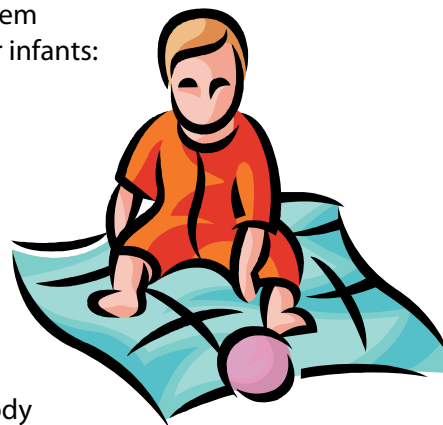
Depending on their age, children can roll, throw, kick, catch, bounce, and dribble a ball. There are many kinds of soft balls that are good for young children's play. These include those made from yarn and sponge and come in various sizes. Young children can have fun throwing balls into a plastic laundry basket or a cardboard box. Lightweight balls are good for older children to use for kicking and dribbling. Older children can play balloon volleyball, but avoid balloons for younger children due to choking hazards.



Fun Times for Infants

INFANTS NEED TIME TO MOVE AROUND EVERY DAY. This helps them develop muscles and learn new skills. Here are some fun activities for infants:

- Tummy time is when you put your infant on a blanket or quilt on the floor. This will allow her to stretch and move her arms and legs. Muscles will be developed to help her learn to roll over, sit up, and eventually crawl and walk.
- Sing or recite a favorite nursery rhyme or song as your infant moves her arms and legs. Gently move her arms and legs to the rhythm of the rhyme or song.
- Place your infant's toys out of reach so she will need to move her body to get them.
- Once your infant is crawling, you can make a simple tunnel for her to crawl through by cutting the ends off a large, sturdy cardboard box.
- Rolling a ball back and forth is a fun game to play with infants.



Poisons Found Around the House

CHILDREN ARE NATURALLY CURIOUS AND OFTEN TRY TO GET INTO THINGS THEY FIND AROUND THE HOUSE. Some household items are poisonous and dangerous for children. Listed below are common household items that you might have in your home. Check the list. If you have any of the things listed, make sure they are stored in a locked area where your child cannot get into them. If your child is ever exposed to a poisonous item, call the **American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222.**

Here are ten common poisons that are often found in homes:

1. Oven cleaner
2. Drain opener
3. Alcohol
4. Furniture polish
5. Medicine
– both prescription
and over-the-counter
6. Toilet bowl cleaner
7. Mouthwash
8. Gasoline
9. Paint thinner
10. Lighter fluid



Family Time/Work Time: June 2008

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

Supported by funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Child Development and Early Learning. Developed by the Better Kid Care Program, 253 Easterly Parkway, State College, PA; Phone 1-800-452-9108. Web site: www.betterkidcare.psu.edu.

PENNSTATE



College of Agricultural Sciences
Cooperative Extension

Developed by:

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

Resources: Nancy Wilson, May 2008, *Busy Kids Are Happy Kids*, *Let's Play Ball*, and *Fun Times for Infants*, Penn State Better Kid Care Program; *What Poisons Are in Your Home?* Safe Kids News, Safe Kids Pennsylvania, Spring 2008, PA Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Preventative Health and Health Services Block Grant

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its work force.

Copyright © 2008 The Pennsylvania State University