

Parenting Together

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Keeping Kids Active during the Winter and Spring

It's that time of year. The days are shorter, the air is colder. And while snuggling up on your couch under a blanket may be all you want to do, the need for exercise doesn't hibernate for the winter.

Thankfully, there are lots of ways to help keep children (and adults!) stay active all year long!



Around the house

We often end up spending lots of time indoors during the cold and rainy seasons so you may need to get creative at home for active play so that your children can enjoy moving around without risk of hurting themselves or breaking something.

Need some new indoor activity ideas? Read below!

- Play games that require movement. Simon Says and Charades require no special equipment, and you can make them as active as you like. "Simon Says hop up and down 10 times!"
- Put on music and have a dance party. Join in and create a conga line or play the Freeze Game (dancing and stopping when the music starts and stops).
- Create a "move jar." Fill it with slips of paper with words, phrases or drawings that call for movement. For example, different animals or silly movements like "zombie walk" or monster truck stunt." Have children take turns picking movements for you to do together.
- Set up an obstacle course or jumping area with cushions and pillows.
- Engage in active play with toys your child enjoys, moving with toy cars and trucks around the house, or pushing a baby doll in a play stroller or laundry basket.
- Use painters tape to make a hopscotch pattern on the floor. Have hallway races crawling, hopping, or tip-toeing. Set up an indoor basketball or tossing game with a laundry basket or box.
- Make story times active. As you read together, act out the actions and words from books.
- Try family yoga. Cosmic Kids Yoga. on YouTube offers many kid-friendly stories to stretch and move along with.



Outdoor Activities

Just because it's cold or rainy out doesn't mean your children have to stay inside. Dress them warmly, in layers, with a hat, scarf, mittens, or gloves — and boots if it is snowy, rainy, or muddy. A good rule of thumb is toddlers & young children should wear one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear. Here are some fun outdoor activities to try once you and/or your children are bundled up nice & warm:

All year long

No matter what the weather is like, you can follow these three guidelines to help you keep your children more active all year long:

- Keep it positive and fun. Children have different interests and enthusiasms. As a parent, you can suggest and encourage activities that your child enjoys.
 - Make movement part of your routine. Find the times for activity that work best for your family, and stick with them. Just because it's cold or rainy doesn't mean that you have to give up on that running-around time when your child gets home from school. If that's when your child has the most energy, keep it going!
 - It's OK to break it up. The American Heart Association's recommended 60 minutes of exercise daily does not have to happen all at once. Ten minutes here & 20 minutes there are just as effective for maintaining health.
- Go for a walk, jog, or bike/scooter ride
 - Create your own scavenger hunt and try to find animals (1 squirrel, 2 dogs, and 5 birds) and objects in your neighborhood (1 rock that looks like a heart, 2 different kinds of flowers). Download a free plant or bird identification app on your phone to learn the names of new flowers, trees, and birds as you search.
 - Take a ball or a jump rope to a playground.
 - Create your own obstacle course, play tag, or run and climb.
 - On snowy days, make a snowman or snow fort. Throw snowballs. Go sledding.
 - Blow and chase bubbles. If it's cold enough, they will freeze.
 - Look for animal tracks (squirrels, deer) and try to identify what they are. Make your own tracks in the snow or mud.
 - If your child has boots, take a puddle splashing walk.

The Book Nook

On a Magical Do-Nothing Day
by Béatrice Alemagna

Nunca más aburridos dentro de casa
by Ángeles Navarro

After the Rain
by Rebecca Koehn

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5 Ways to Keep Kids Active During Winter

<https://www.chkd.org/blog/5-ways-to-keep-kids-active-during-winter/>

How to Balance Kids' Fall and Winter Activities With COVID-19 Safety

<https://bestcare.org/news/20201014/how-balance-kids-fall-and-winter-activities-covid-19-safety>

3 Ways To Keep Your Kids Active This Winter

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