



Keeping Toddlers Active

Physical Activity

- Get the whole family involved. Go for bike rides, kick a soccer ball, or play catch. Your child learns how to be active from you.
- Preschoolers have a lot of energy! Turn off the TV and bring your child to the park to climb the jungle gym or play on the swings.
- Give your child plenty of unstructured playtime (games without rules or directions), like running, kicking balls, and dancing to burn off that extra preschooler energy!
- If you have more than one child, get them playing together! Dancing, “follow the leader,” and hide and seek are all good ways for kids to have fun with each other.
- This is a great age to start organized sports like soccer or T-ball. Age 4 is also a great time to start supervised swimming lessons. If these aren’t available near your home, you can still offer toys like plastic bats and balls to make active play fun.

Screen Time

- Make time each day to turn off the TV, computer, smartphone, and iPad. Let your toddler play with other children his age or with his brothers and sisters.
- If the only way you can get a break to do the dishes or talk on the phone is to let your child watch TV, set a timer for 30 minutes. Get as much done as you can in those 30 minutes, then turn off the TV.
- When you let your child watch TV, make sure the show is meant for preschoolers and doesn’t have commercials for unhealthy foods or shows for grown-ups. The easiest way to do this might be by using a DVD or On Demand programming.
- Keep the TV out of your child’s bedroom. Watching TV, especially before bed, can affect your child’s sleep. Instead of letting your young child fall asleep to the TV, create a special bedtime routine that you do together every night, like reading books or singing soothing songs.
- If you’re going to let your child play video games, try to use games that encourage kids to be active and move as part of the game. Set a timer when they play video games to make sure they don’t play for too long.

Sleep

- Somewhere between ages 3 to 5, your child will likely stop naptime. This transition can be hard. Move his bedtime earlier so he still gets plenty of sleep. Preschoolers need 10 to 12 hours of sleep a night.
- Skip watching TV before bed. It can affect your child's sleep and make bedtime more difficult. Instead, have a bedtime routine that you do every night to help your child unwind and get ready for bed. Give him a warm bath, brush his teeth, and read books.
- Keep a regular bedtime and wake-up time, even during vacations. This helps your child keep a regular routine and get enough sleep.