

Encouraging my child to be active

Adapted from: [Raising Children Network](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au) www.raisingchildren.net.au

Kids will jump at the chance to be active, especially if they know they'll have fun. They'll learn to love staying fit if you find activities that they enjoy and give them plenty of variety.



Try lots of different activities to find something your child enjoys

Helping kids find activities that they like is one of the keys to keeping them active. Dancing, skipping, running, playing ball, horse riding, flying a kite - it doesn't matter what the activity is, as long as they like it.

Tips for encourage my child to be active

- **Be active yourself** and your child will follow your lead.
- Give praise to your child when they are struggling to do an activity, to encourage them to keep trying
- **Spend active time with your child.** Instead of being a couch potato or focusing too much on jobs that need to be done around the house, make some time to have fun playing frisbee, walking and cycling with your child.
- **Kids are often only really active in bursts of a few minutes or less.** This is healthy - encourage it
- Encourage your child to **play outside** and praise them when they do.
- Encourage your older child to take up an **organised sport or group lessons** in swimming or dancing.
- **Get the whole family going:** organise family activities such as walks, swimming, playing in the park, ball games and other outdoor games.



- Let your child 'help' with **daily chores** around the house, such as gardening, washing the car and cleaning. Kids love to copy whatever you are doing.
- Keep an **activities box** at home and in the car with balls, frisbee, kite, beach bucket and spade so that you're always prepared.
- **Balls, bikes and scooters** make great gifts rather than lots of DVDs, computer games and toys that make them sit
- **Take the steps instead of the lift.** Help your child learn how to walk up and down stairs, and practice counting as you go
- **Limit TV time.** Keep an eye on the amount of time your child spends watching TV or using the computer. Aim for no more than two hours a day and preferably less than 30 minutes a day.



Walking

One of the easiest ways to get your child active is to **go for regular walks together.** You can walk to preschool, child care or kinder or school (look for parks along the way).

You can even start when your child is a baby. Young babies can go on outings in a sling, carrier or pram. As they become toddlers, encourage them to walk some of the way. **A three-year-old can walk up to for quite a while,** with rest breaks and at their pace.

Walking to preschool or school every day has many benefits for kids, including:

- fitness for kids and parents
- learning and practicing road rules and road safety
- seeing who and what's in the neighbourhood
- helps their brain development - lots of stimulation
- time for kids and parents to talk and spend time together
- meeting neighbours along the way, and chatting with other parents at the school gate.



Remember to take the dog sometimes as well....they need the exercise and stimulation too.

