ACTIVE PLAY

Tips for Families from the Head Start National Center on Health

THE NATIONAL CENTER ON Health

Healthy Habits Start Early

Good activity habits begin early in your child's life. As early as infancy, you can help your child grow lifelong healthy play habits. Your child learns from you, so while you help him be active, try to do the same activities!

Play Time Can Be Active Time!

For Your Infant:

- Keep your baby active with tummy time and time spent out of the swing or bouncy chair. This will give him plenty of chances to stretch, reach, and kick so he can reach important milestones like crawling and sitting up.
- Avoid putting a TV in your baby's room. The more YOU talk to and play with your baby, the more likely he is to be healthy as he grows.

For Your Toddler:

- Even very active toddlers need physical activity. Keep moving by dancing, jumping, and walking together.
- Try to limit TV watching to 2 hours or less a day. Children who have lots of active play time outside and indoors are more likely to stay healthy and active as they grow up.

For Your Preschooler:

- Help your child to stay active and learn at the same time by spending time outdoors.
- Try to limit TV, video games, and computer time to 2 hours or less a day. Children who watch more than 2 hours of TV a day are more likely to be overweight as they get older.

For Yourself and Your Family:

- When you spend time being active, your child learns healthy habits from you.
- Set playtime, mealtime, and bedtime routines to make daily life easier to handle.
- Talk with your child's pediatrician, Head Start staff, and other parents to get ideas for making playtime active time.