

Play Together

fyi.uwex.edu/parentingthepreschooler/

Get Active: Play Together

- ◆ Pick a time of day when you both will be less rushed, hungry, thirsty, or tired. Set a timer for 20 minutes of play.
- ◆ Set aside your list of things to do. Temporarily ignore the messes to clean up or stack of paperwork.
- ◆ Remove distractions. Leave your phone in another room. Shut off the TV and computer. Go outside to play whenever possible.
- ◆ Let preschoolers lead activities by giving them the opportunity to pick the game or make up the rules. See how creative they can get playing Simon Says or Follow the Leader!
- ◆ Give encouragement. Preschoolers need to hear your positive reinforcement.
- ◆ Make physical contact. Try dancing together or “rough and tumble” play like tickling and wrestling, which can help you teach safe touch.
- ◆ Laugh and have fun!



Photograph by Renee Koenig



Photograph by Carmen Saucedo

Children need to move their bodies often. They need a total of 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity each day. Aim to spend at least 20 minutes every day in active play time together.

Children need you to play with them. Physical activity is good for both of you. Active play time together builds important skills for children and strengthens the bond between you.



Photograph by Renee Koenig

Seven Benefits of Playing Together

- 1) **Smarter children:** Research shows that physical play stimulates brain development and boosts school test scores.
- 2) **Builds relationships and other friendships:** Spending a few minutes playing together is an investment in your relationship. You can use playtime to teach cooperation and how to constructively channel competitive energy.
- 3) **Teaches problem-solving skills:** Children learn self-control when they practice taking turns and following the rules of the game. "Oh, I see dad didn't get mad when his turn was over."
- 4) **Develops healthy habits:** More time spent together playing means less time sitting and watching TV or playing electronic games alone.
- 5) **Increases emotional intelligence:** Children gain empathy and learn fairness in winning and losing when you show them your emotions. Children gain confidence when they learn to recognize the emotions of others as well as manage their own emotions during play. "Mom won't like it if I push too hard; then we will have to stop playing tag."
- 6) **Promotes health and fitness:** Physical activity strengthens the body, improves cardiovascular fitness, coordination and flexibility. You will sleep better, too!
- 7) **Brings joy and laughter:** Physical activity reduces stress. Happiness is a great gift you give each other through play.

UW-Extension Family Living Programs

"Raising Kids, Eating Right, Spending Smart, Living Well"



For more information, please contact your county UW-Extension office:

<http://counties.uwex.edu/>

[Link To References](#)

Copyright © 2015 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System doing business as the division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. All rights reserved.

An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.