

REAL LIFE SOLUTIONS

APRIL 2011

Get your Child Energized

Recent studies report that many children are not physically active on a regular basis. Encourage your child to become involved in sports activities at school or in the community. At home, you can try some of the activities suggested below to help your child be more active and to reinforce the link between diet, exercise and good health.

Grains—the fuel food

Grains (bread, pasta or cereal, for example) are filled with complex carbohydrates, a great source of sustained daily energy. The Food Guide Pyramid recommends that children eat at least 6 servings of grains a day, with the newest recommendation that half of the grain intake be from whole grains. Encourage your child to set a goal to meet this recommendation. Help your child meet this goal by trying new grain-based snacks together and keeping a log of the grains your family eats at home.

Outdoor fitness fun

Children love to be outside and doing an activity with you makes the experience even more special. Try these fun fitness ideas together:



For other related articles check out the Achieve Solutions website found at www.efr.org/eap. To access your EAP services call 515.244.6090, toll free 800.327.4692 or TTY 877.542.6488.

Go on all-season scavenger hunts

Challenge your child to walk more by joining him on a scavenger hunt. Before you set out, write up a list of items that you can both look for. See who can locate these items the fastest. For example, try to find:

- **Items with different colors** – red, orange, yellow, green, blue or purple
- **Objects with a variety of textures** – smooth, fuzzy, hard, soft or wet

You can take scavenger hunt walks together during every season. Winter, spring, summer or fall, there's always something interesting that you and your child can discover. You can adapt your checklist of items appropriately. For example:

- **Look for human and animal tracks** in the snow
- **Search for signs of spring** in new flowers and buds on trees
- **Find interesting shadows** on a sunny summer day
- **Gather colorful leaves and acorns** on a crisp autumn afternoon

Indoor exercise activities

Physical activity doesn't have to mean running, biking or swimming. If the weather keeps you inside you can still keep fit.

Have a dance party

Dancing is a fun way to exercise and something fun that you and your child can do every day. Encourage your child to invent a dance to go along with a favorite song. Give your child the opportunity to be the teacher and instruct you in their new dance. Later, you can introduce your child to the dances you enjoy most, along with your own favorite songs.

Household Exercise Olympics

Many household jobs help to build strong bodies. Create your own Household Exercise Olympics. Together, you and your child can try the following events:

- **Raking leaves**
- **Shoveling snow**
- **Weeding the garden**
- **Dusting all furniture or washing all windows** in a designated room

Try doing these activities together. Afterwards, tally up the "medal" winners in each event and announce the top Olympian in your family at dinner that night.

Source: Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
©2008 Achieve Solutions



EFR EMPLOYEE & FAMILY RESOURCES
800.327.4692 | WWW.EFR.ORG