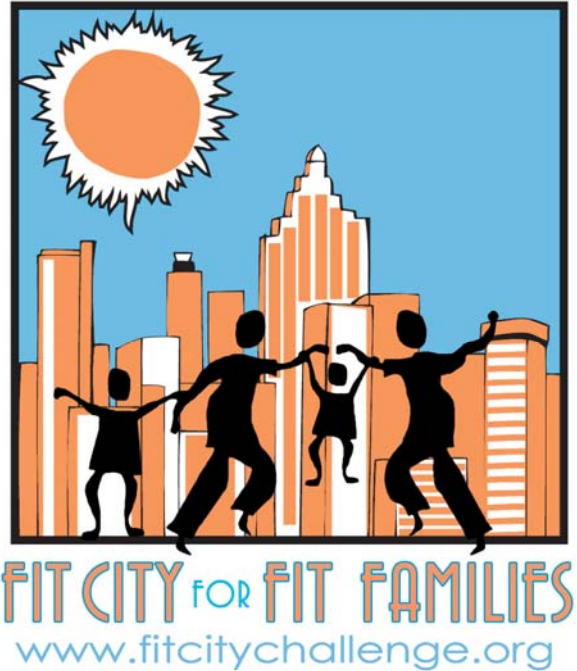


# Childhood Nutrition & Physical Activity

In this resource packet you will find:

- [How to Be Fit as a Family](#)
- [Importance of Play](#)
- [No More Food Fights](#)



Visit the Fit City for Fit Families at [www.fitcitychallenge.org/families](http://www.fitcitychallenge.org/families) for more tips and information.



## How To Be Fit as a Family

A few moments of playful activity and fun can give you a boost of energy while building relationships and memories that will last a lifetime. Set a family activity goal. Here are some ideas for easy and inexpensive fun.



### AT HOME INDOORS

- Play the alphabet game – think of an animal or object that starts with the letter “A” and move like that animal. Do the same with all the letters of the alphabet.
- Charades can be an active game. Marvel at how creative your children can be!
- “Hide and Seek.” Even older children can get involved and have fun helping the younger children find the best hiding places.
- Play music and dance. Sing songs and dance.
- Make chores fun – put on lively music and see how fast you can do the chores.
- During commercials, see how many sit-ups, jumping jacks, or push-ups you can do.
- Play a child’s exercise video and wiggle together (silly is good).



### IN THE YARD OR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Play hopscotch, jump rope, Frisbee, freeze tag, or dodge ball.
- Play games like “Simon Says,” “Mother May I” or “Red Light, Green Light.”
- Set up an obstacle course or host a “Family Olympics” with events you make up.
- Invite other families from your block or neighborhood to join in games, such as capture the flag, tag, touch football, or have a treasure hunt.
- Combine elements of two games or sports to make a new game.
- If it’s raining, put on rain gear and splash in puddles. Look for worms.
- Run through the sprinkler!
- Rake leaves, then jump in them!
- Plant a garden in your yard or in a nearby spare lot.
- Ride your bike or walk through the neighborhood.
- Complete a marathon in 27 days by walking or jogging a mile each day.
- Go up, up and away with a kite flying day.
- Walk your dog or the neighbor’s dog (dogs need exercise too!)





Play is such a vital part of a child's development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. Play is essential to the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children.

### Play allows children to...

- develop confidence they will need to face future challenges
- share and resolve conflicts.
- discover areas of interest with passion.
- engage and interact with the world around them.
- build active, healthy bodies.



### Play allows parents to...

- engage and communicate with their children.
- offer guidance and model appropriate behavior.
- understand their child's views and experiences.
- spend quality time building long-lasting memories.

### Help your family rediscover play time as the simple, yet cherished part of childhood:

1. Turn off the computer or television and encourage your child to be creative.
2. Get out toys such as blocks and dolls that allow them to use their imagination.
3. Give your child downtime. Not every minute of every day must be scheduled.
4. Don't let the pressures of society guide what is best for your child's success. Unconditional love in a supportive home is an important value to give your child.
5. Make time to spend together as a family.
6. Create safe places in the community for your children to thrive and play.

Source: "The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds" released by American Academy of Pediatrics in October 2006.



## No More Food Fights

Establishing healthy eating habits has lifetime benefits. According to child nutrition expert Ellyn Satter, the key to a healthy feeding relationship is a division of responsibility between the parent (or other caregiver) and child.

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### Parent's Feeding Tasks

- Choose and prepare foods.
- Provide regular meals and snacks.
- Make eating times pleasant.
- Offer chances to learn new skills.

### Children's Eating Capabilities

- Children know how much to eat.
  - Children will eat a variety of food.
  - Children will grow predictably.
  - Children's eating will mature.
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## Five easy ways to enjoy meals without squeals

### 1. Make regularly scheduled meals a family priority

Young children need the reassurance of structured meal and snack times. Eating on the run may seem OK for adults, but it doesn't work for most preschoolers. Whether you are eating at home or "on the road," take the time to sit down and eat with your child.

### 2. Avoid pressuring a preschool child to eat

Most adults have good intentions when they try to force children to eat "healthy" foods or to try new items. The problem with pressure is that it doesn't work - ever. Kids like foods LESS if they are forced to eat them - or if they are given bribes or rewards.

### 3. Have realistic expectations for mealtime behavior

Preschoolers like to do well and master new skills - like table manners. Adults need to lay out clear expectations for appropriate mealtime behavior. Kids need to know, ahead of time, that they will have to leave the table if they misbehave.

### 4. Model the habits you want children to develop

Young children do not automatically know how to eat like "big people." They will learn how to eat and how to behave at the table by watching you. You can show children how to enjoy a variety of foods - and how to be adventurous with new foods.

### 5. Share the joy of eating as a family

Eating well is one of life's greatest pleasures. When you're eating at home, turn off the TV, sit down at the table and enjoy some time together. When you're eating in the fast food lane, take time to eat at the restaurant - or make it a picnic in the park.



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