

# June 2006 Family Fitness Activity Planner

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><b>Think about everyday opportunities to get physically active with your family. There are always household chores and yard work to be done, but they can be much more fun when everyone works together. Even the youngest members of the family can help!</b></p>				1 <i>Animal Relay Race</i>	2 <i>Tug of War</i>	3 <i>Wheelbarrow Musical Sprinkler</i>
4 <i>Family Walk Building Forts</i>	5 <i>Over and Under</i>	6 <i>Counting Steps</i>	7 <i>Outdoor Free Play</i>	8 <i>Indoor Basketball</i>	9 <i>Frisbee Toss</i>	10 <i>Backyard Detective's Scavenger Hunt Sprinkler Fun</i>
11 <i>Family Bike Ride Bandanna Tag</i>	12 <i>Zoo Loo</i>	13 <i>Bean Bag Balance</i>	14 <i>Inch Worm</i>	15 <i>Family Walk</i>	16 <i>Pillow Fight</i>	17 <i>Family Walk Trip to the Park</i>
18 <i>Obstacle Course Wash Family Car</i>	19 <i>Red Light, Green Light</i>	20 <i>Flying Feather</i>	21 <i>Guess What I Am?</i>	22 <i>Octopus Tag</i>	23 <i>Bowling</i>	24 <i>Family Bike Ride Gardening</i>
25 <i>What's Round Throw for Distance</i>	26 <i>Bean Bag Hit</i>	27 <i>Broad Jump</i>	28 <i>Over and Under</i>	29 <i>Hide &amp; Sneak</i>	30 <i>Airplanes</i>	

Use this "sample activity plan" as a guide for planning activities you can do with your preschooler. Adapt it to suit your schedule and activity preferences. Enjoy a family activity on weekday evenings. Try to plan for both unstructured and structured on your weekends and holidays.

**want more activity ideas? visit**  
[www.everydaylearning.net](http://www.everydaylearning.net)

#### Remember:

-Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes a day of "structured\*" and unstructured\*\* physical activity. The structured play/exercise could be conducted in shorter increments throughout the day.

-Preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time (except when sleeping). They should also develop competence in movement skills that are building blocks for more complex movement tasks (i.e. roll, kick, throw, catch).

-Make activity part of your daily routine.

-Enjoy being active with your preschooler daily.

-Eating well and keeping active go hand-in-hand.

Adapted from Dietitians of Canada.  
[www.dietitians.ca/healthystart](http://www.dietitians.ca/healthystart)



\*Structured Activities: Activities you direct or do with your preschooler to keep them moving. Also include activities that you might take your preschooler to like dance class or soccer.

\*\*Unstructured Activities: Supervised free time for children to play actively on their own or with other children (e.g., outside on play structures, building forts, running and jumping)

# Fun Family Fitness Planner Activities

## Airplanes

Children begin flying within the boundaries like an airplane making airplane noise. When the music stops, children stop flying and bring their planes in for a landing, it's time to refuel! Jump 3 times in place to re-start your engine. Direct airplanes to fly in different formations, levels, pathways, and directions.

## Animal Relay Race

Children travel across the room and back while they act like an animal. You can play it as a guessing game (which animal am I?) or one person can call out different animals for the others to imitate. Kids are great at thinking up different animals (hop like a kangaroo, leap like a frog, slither like a snake, swim like a fish, etc).

## Backyard Detective's Scavenger Hunt

Gather paper, pen or pencil, paper or canvas shopping bag, magnifying glass (optional) and make a "Most Wanted" list for your child. This will be the list of things for him to find on the scavenger hunt. Since most preschoolers are also prereaders, draw the items you want him to search for or just explain the items as he goes along. Think about interesting, natural things to look for, and make some easy, some harder.

Head outside, and hand your junior detective a bag to collect his treasures in, a magnifying glass, and the list. (Bundle up if the weather is cold!) Make sure your child understands that he doesn't have to find everything, but he should just have fun trying. Let him at it! Stay nearby to help out (or to explain what some of your scribbles are supposed to represent). When he's done, shake hands for a case successfully solved.

## Here's a sample list of stuff to find:

- Acorn top
- Three-leaf clover
- Rubbing of tree bark (make sure you have paper and crayons handy!)
- Pebble smaller than a dime
- Pebble bigger than a quarter
- Pine cone
- Yellow dandelion
- White dandelion
- Leaf from a tree
- Feather
- Blade of grass longer than your longest finger
- Footprint (he'll have to bring you over to show you this one)
- Bird's nest (again, have him show you this one)
- Maple seed

## Bandanna Tag

Each player, except the "it," places a colorful bandanna in his/her back pocket or waistband making sure the end hangs out. "It" chases the kids or parents trying to grab the bandanna. Once removed, that person becomes "it" and starts the game all over again.

## **Beanbag Balance**

Developing balance and coordination are just as important as strengthening little muscles. This exercise works well with all ages. Place a beanbag, or soft toy, on the child's head. Ask the child to walk from one place to another without dropping the beanbag. To make it easier, have the child hold the beanbag in place. To make it harder have the child walk under or around things. For variation, place the beanbag on another body part, like the back of the hand, shoulder, or elbow. Use a different toy or more than one toy.

## **Bean Bag Hit**

Standing facing each other 10 feet apart. Place a large beach ball in the center between you and your child. Each person has a bean bag and tries to move the ball by throwing the bean bag at it to the other person's side.

## **Broad Jump**

Although skills vary widely, children like to see how far they can jump by marking with masking tape. You may want to mark varying widths to represent a river. For additional safety, children can jump over mats.

## **Building Forts**

Hang old sheets against the wall and place chairs together underneath to make a new play space. Children can pretend this new area is a tent, a clubhouse, even an airplane or ship. Children can pretend to be explorers or airplane pilots, take tickets and serve snacks, and other can be passengers. On a signal from the pilot, the passengers can bump and lurch through a storm.

## **Bumper Bowling**

Have the family go out to the lanes for a little bumper bowling. Bumper Bowling is bowling with the gutters blocked with "bumpers" to keep the game "rolling" for the little ones. Visit one of these bowling centers: AMF Bowling Center at 3610 Wible Rd 834.2695, Regency Bowling Center at 818 Real Rd 325.6428 or AMF Westchester Bowl at 1819 30th St 324.4966.

## **Counting Steps**

Incorporate counting skills into everyday activities. Have children count the number of steps that are in a staircase, the number of steps it takes to get from the door to the corner, or to go from the bedroom to the bathroom.

## **Flying Feather**

Divide children into groups of three and four. Give each group a feather. Encourage children to puff and blow to keep the feather in the air. For older children, set a timer for 2-3 minutes. Keep track of how many times the feather touches a child or hits the floor. When the time sounds, the group with the lowest number of points wins. Divide the children into different groups, and continue playing.

## **Frisbee Toss**

Hang hula hoops at different heights. Give the children Frisbees to toss through the hoops.

## **Gardening**

Gardening not only increases a child's knowledge of nature and nutrition, but it is also a wonderful form of exercise with children. Decide whether you want to plant a square-foot garden, raised garden, or a conventional garden with rows, or a container garden made from empty milk cartons or flower pots. A garden need not be extensive or have dozens of kinds of plants. Parents or local organizations may even contribute soil or fertilizer to the project.

Here are some fun garden ideas to start with:

➤ **COLOR GARDEN**

Plant colorful flowering plants such as yellow marigolds, red geraniums, white daisies, and purple petunias. As the plants blossom, enjoy the colors together.

➤ **PIZZA GARDEN**

Plant a tomato and the herbs needed to make pizza sauce. Try a tomato plant (any variety that grows well in your area, except cherry) in the middle of your garden, surrounded by oregano, basil, and thyme.

➤ **BUTTERFLY GARDEN**

Attract butterflies to your home with plants that provide food and shelter for them. Plants that are inviting to butterflies include the butterfly plant, asters, black-eyed Susans, coreopsis, purple coneflowers, sweet alyssum, and verbena.

➤ **MR. MCGREGOR'S GARDEN**

Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter before planting this garden with your child. Be sure to include carrots, lettuce, radishes, parsley, potatoes, and beans in this storybook garden.

Whichever type of garden you choose, consider the climate and growing season before planting. Use sturdy, well-made tools and equipment. Shovels and hoes with short handles are easier for children to use than full-size tools. Adapt projects to adults' level of experience and children's ages. Encourage children to do a share of all the garden chores with you: feeding plants, moving mulch, thinning, staking, weeding, and edging. Leave room for good old-fashioned digging too. Visit your garden with your children every day to make sure you don't miss its rewards: opening flowers, the first zucchini, fresh strawberries, buzz of honeybees, and whirl of hummingbirds.

### **Guess What I Am?**

Without saying a word, a child tries to act out the movements of some object. Suggestions include an airplane making a landing, a rooster strutting around the barnyard, a cement truck dumping its load, a clock telling the time of day. The child may think up things to do, or the parent may whisper suggestions.

### **Inch Worm**

Child bends over, placing both hands on the floor. The feet are kept stationary while the hands walk forward as far as possible. Then the hands remain stationary while the feet walk forward as close to the hands as possible. Repeat the cycle.

### **Indoor Basketball**

You'll need a wastebasket, paper and masking tape (optional). Tape lines on the floor to mark distances from the waste basket. Your child can "scrunch" up the paper for balls while you do this. It's now time to start shooting "hoops." Begin at the easiest tape line and work up. In our house this activity has been used as a fun math skill game. Make a graph of successful baskets from each line -and how many all together?

### **Musical Sprinkler**

What's great about this aquatic adaptation of musical chairs is that everyone's a winner and everyone gets wet. Someone is appointed to man the faucet. Start with the rotating lawn sprinkler turned off. Players must move around the sprinkler area, jumping, dancing or striking funny poses. When the sprinkler is turned on, they must freeze in position and get drenched until the sprinkler is turned off again.

### **Obstacle Course**

Make an obstacle course using a 2x4 (balance beam), a cardboard box (tunnel), a painter's drop cloth and hula hoops (for jumping). This was a free choice activity that we encouraged children to complete the obstacle course any way that they wanted to. Some children simply worked their way throughout, while others were very creative in completion. The area that allowed for the most creative movement was the

painter's drop cloth which was placed so the kids had to get across it before moving on to the next activity. Children rolled, jumped, leap frogged, walked, cartwheeled and crawled across.

### **Octopus Tag**

A cross between Red Rover and classic tag, this game is bound to become a backyard favorite. Set up a rectangular "ocean." Make sure your ocean isn't too wide. To determine the right width, have everyone hold hands and spread out across the field. Indicate the two sidelines with clothing or other markers. Since the game tends to produce fast Octopuses (meaning the slower, smaller kids rarely get a chance to be "It"), consider teaming a little kid with a faster player to create a two-person Octopus. as described in the Tips section below, and mark the boundaries.

The Fish line up at one end; the Queen (or King) Octopus stands in the middle and cries out, "I am the Octopus, queen of all motion. Let's see if you can cross my ocean." The Fish try to run or sneak across the ocean as the Octopus tries to tag them. If tagged, they become Seaweed. Keeping one foot planted, Seaweed try to reach out and tag the Fish running by, thus turning those players into Seaweed as well. Once the Fish reach the other side, the Octopus and Seaweed say the chant and the crossing contest starts again. The game continues until all the Fish become Seaweed. The last Fish tagged becomes the new Octopus.

### **Over and Under**

You can do these activities with your child encouraging, "over" and "under" movements. After your child does the activity, reverse roles. Try these and make up you own:

- Adult lies on floor. Child walks over adult. Reverse roles. Child lies on floor, adult walks over child.
- Adult balances on hands and feet facing floor. Child crawls under the bridge made by adult's body. Reverse roles. This is an interesting challenge for the adults. Try your best!
- Adult stands. Child crawls through legs. Adult's turn!
- Adult sits on floor with legs apart and straight. Child jumps over one leg and then the other leg. Reverse roles.
- Adult holds rod or wooden dowel at a low height. Child jumps or hops over the rod. Next!
- Explore "over" and "under" by providing ropes, poles, hoops, blankets, and climbing equipment that enable your child to walk, run, climb and jump "over" and "under."

### **Red Light, Green Light**

One child is it. He/she stands away from the rest of the children, with his/her back turned away them. He/she calls, "Green Light!" and the children run toward her until she says, "Red Light". He/she turns around and tries to catch anyone who is moving. If the child who is it sees someone moving, they must go back to the start line. This continues until someone runs up and tags the child who is it. The child who tags the old it becomes the new it.

### **Sprinkler Fun**

Supply the children with a sprinkler to play in on a hot summer day.

### **Throw for Distance**

Children on a line. On cue, "1-2-3 Throw," children throw their objects as far as they can. After cue, children may gallop/jog/side-slide to retrieve their object. Children can be instructed to throw in different ways (e.g., underhand, overhand, right hand, left hand, between legs, etc.)

### **Wheelbarrow**

Have the child lie face down on the floor. Parents grasp child's ankles and lift upwards. Ask the child to push up with his or her arms until they are straight. With his head up, the child should walk his hands forward. The child's body should not sag.

### **What's Round**

Take a walk with your child(ren) through your yard or neighborhood and make a list of all the things that are round.

### **Zoo Loo**

Have the children move their bodies to imitate animals' movements. Music or use percussion instruments to encourage the children to:

- slither along the ground like a snake;
- stomp along like a big black bear;
- hop like a kangaroo that never stops;
- crawl along like a slow old turtle carrying his heavy house on his back;
- fly like a bird so high in the sky;
- climb like a monkey up in a tree;
- gallop like a horse crossing in a field.