

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Getting Your Children Involved in Sports and Other Activities

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Involving your kids in sports and other physical activities is a great way to promote lifelong physical fitness. With parental encouragement and support, chances are good that a few sports will spark your children's interest.

Take your children to sporting events and share your own interests to cultivate a curiosity about sports and physical activities. When your child is of an appropriate age, provide opportunities for him/her to try out equipment and experiment with different sports and activities.

Your child may show a natural fondness for a certain sport or activity. Start there, but be mindful to keep his/her maturity and skill set in mind. Toddlers and preschoolers are beginning to master basic movements, but they are too young for most organized sports. At this age, unstructured free play is preferred.

As children grow up, coordination and attention span improve. They become better able to follow directions and understand the concept of teamwork.

Here are some guidelines for age-appropriate physical activities and sports:

Ages 2 to 5

- Running
- Jumping
- Climbing
- Kicking
- Tumbling
- Dancing
- Playing catch with a light ball
- Pedaling a tricycle or a bike with training wheels
- Supervised water play

Ages 6 to 7

- T-ball, softball or baseball
- Soccer
- Gymnastics
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Golf
- Track and field
- Martial arts

Ages 8 on up

By age eight, most sports may be acceptable; this includes contact sports. Carefully supervised strength training may also be appropriate at this age.

If your child doesn't seem interested in sports, find other physical activities. Take family walks, bike rides or hikes. Encourage your

children to participate in active games with their friends, or even through video games that involve dancing, virtual sports or other types of physical activity. The important thing is, that your child is active and having fun!

Sources:

Body and Mind!
http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/
CDC Physical Activity Guidelines for Children
<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/children.html>
Small Step Kids
<http://smallstep.gov/kids/flash/index.html>

