

# Let's Eat—and Learn—Together!

Eating together as a family is an ideal way to build healthy eating habits. But that's not all that happens when you gather around the table for a meal. You also build bonds, and you can even help your youngsters practice skills they're learning in school. Use the advice in this guide.



## Make time for meals

Is getting a nutritious meal on the table every night a challenge with your busy schedule? You're not alone! These tips can make it easier.

### Plan ahead

Each week, talk about your schedule, and let your child write mealtimes on the calendar. It doesn't have to be dinner. If you know you're working late one evening, have him pencil in breakfast together. Share a picnic before his baseball practice. Or look forward to capping off a hectic week with a Saturday brunch.

### Find shortcuts

No time to cook *and* eat? Skip the cooking part! Stop by the grocery store for a rotisserie chicken, microwavable "steam in the bag" potatoes, and a salad from the salad bar. Or make double batches of soups and casseroles on weekends, and freeze half to defrost during the week. Another idea is to set out a buffet of food you don't have to heat up, such as cold leftover chicken, cheese cubes, whole-wheat crackers, carrot and celery sticks with hummus, grapes, and apple slices.

### Use teamwork

Involve your youngster in every aspect of family meals—from helping you prepare and cook food to setting the table and cleaning up afterward. He'll gain experience following instructions and measuring ingredients. As he becomes more independent in the kitchen, his help will save you time.

*Tip:* Encourage family bonding by turning off the TV and putting silenced phones in another room during meals.



## Introduce new foods

Inspire your child to try healthy new foods—and let her see you eating them, too. Then, for a fun math activity, she could graph family members' reactions to new foods.

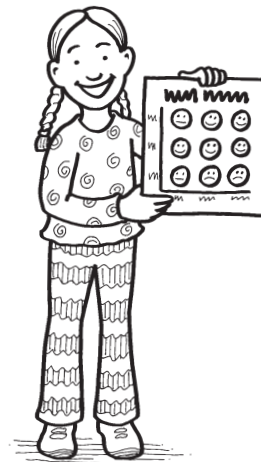
**1. Choose.** Take her food shopping with you, and pick out something that's unfamiliar to both of you, like kimchi, bulgur wheat, acorn squash, or dandelion greens. Look up recipes in cookbooks or online to learn ways to cook what you select.

**2. Try.** Serve the new food at the start of a meal, when your youngster is hungry and more likely to try it. Encourage everyone to take some. Talk about the taste and texture, and what you like (or don't like) about it.

**3. Graph.** Now your child can make a graph with a column for each family member's name and blank rows to fill in as you sample more foods. Have her record each person's opinion by drawing an emoji: 😊 = "Love it," 😐 = "Just okay," or ☹️ = "Not a fan."

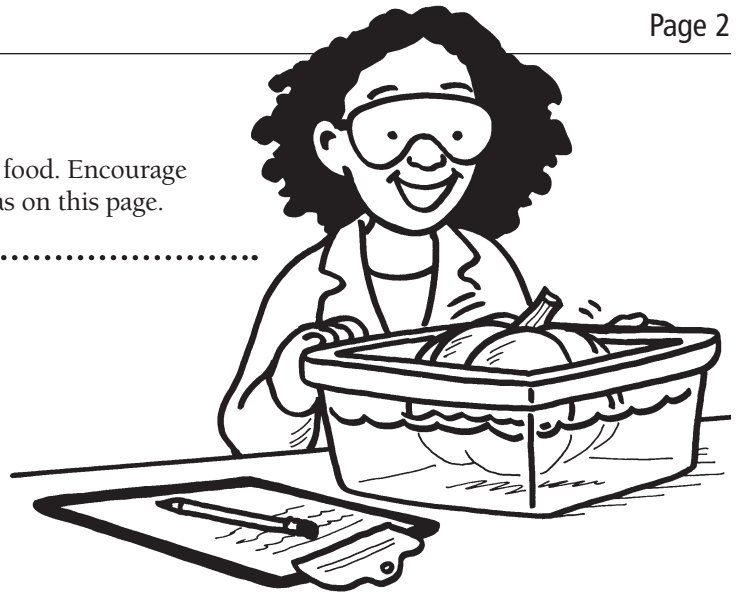
**4. Share.** After a week, let her report her data: "More people loved acorn squash than anything else we tried" or "Bulgur wheat got two more 'Love it' smiles than dandelion greens did."

*Tip:* Don't give up on 😐 or even ☹️ them in different ways, and your youngster may update her answer with a 😊.



## Bring learning to the table

Mealtime does double duty when you combine learning and food. Encourage interesting conversations and skill-building games with the ideas on this page.



### Dinner discussions

Strengthen your youngster's speaking, listening, and thinking skills with these ideas.

● **Conversation starters.** Have family members write questions on individual index cards. (Examples: "What would the world be like if dogs were in charge?" "What is an unusual subject you wish they taught in school?") Keep the cards in a recipe box. At dinnertime, place the box on the table, and let your child pick one to start a discussion.

● **What we learned.** Take turns sharing one interesting thing you learned that day. You'll get to hear about what your youngster did in school, and she'll see that adults are learning every day, too. Maybe she discovered in science class that a pumpkin can float, and perhaps you listened to a podcast about ways to spread kindness. Ask each other questions to learn more.

● **Who am I?** Carry on a conversation while secretly pretending to be a character from a book, movie, or TV show. If your child is a sloth she saw in a movie, for example, she could think about what a sloth would say and how it would speak (slowly!). At the end of the meal, can you guess each other's identities?

### Mealtime games

Ramp up the learning and fun at family mealtime with these friendly competitions that put the spotlight on healthy foods.



● **Add an ingredient.**

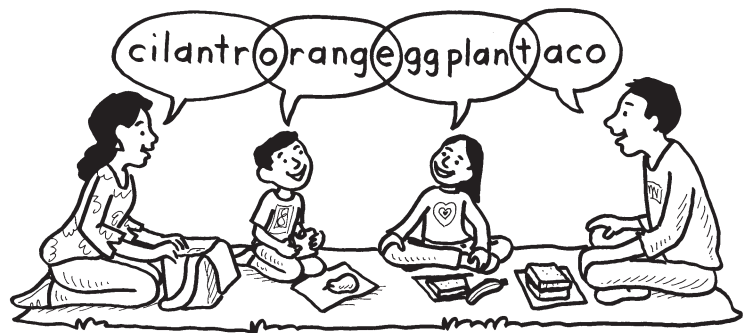
This game helps to sharpen your youngster's memory. Let him pick a food that can have lots of fillings or toppings (pizza, burritos, omelets).

He begins, "In my burrito, I like..." and names a food (say, black beans). The next person repeats his filling and adds one ("In my burrito, I like black beans and tomatoes"). Keep going until someone forgets an ingredient. The last person who remembered everything starts a new round with a different food.

● **Invent a dish.** Boost creative thinking with this challenge. Everyone secretly writes a food on a slip of paper (spinach, blueberries, sweet potatoes, salmon). Your child collects the slips and reads them out loud. Each person describes a dish

that would include them all (example: spinach salad with sweet potato chunks, grilled salmon strips, and blueberry vinaigrette). Vote for the most creative dish. Write a new set of ingredients, and the person named the "most creative chef" from the last round reads them aloud.

● **Make a word chain.** Here's a game that can build your youngster's food vocabulary. Take turns naming any food—the only rule is that it has to start with the last letter of the food chosen by the player before you. So if you pick *cilantro*, your youngster could choose *orange*, and the next player might say *eggplant*. If someone isn't familiar with your food, you have to describe it. *Idea:* For an added twist, if your word begins and ends with the same letter (*endive*), the order of play reverses.



*Editor's Note:* Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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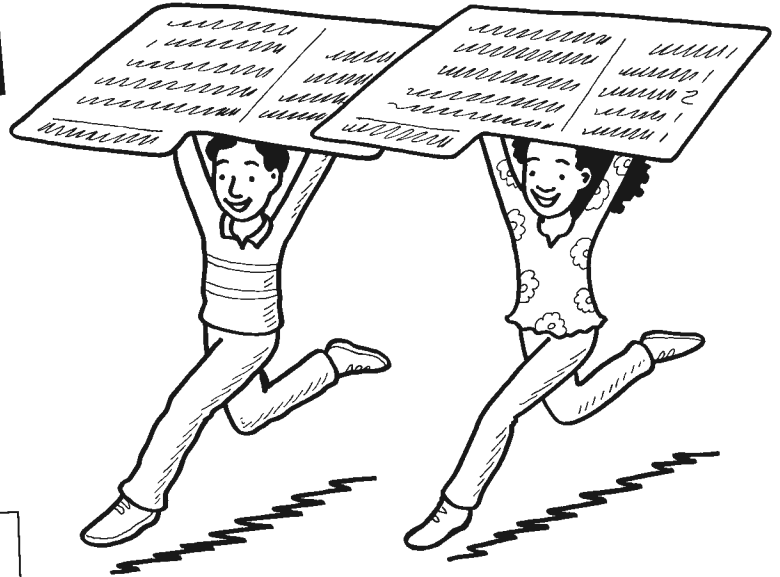
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# Best Recipes

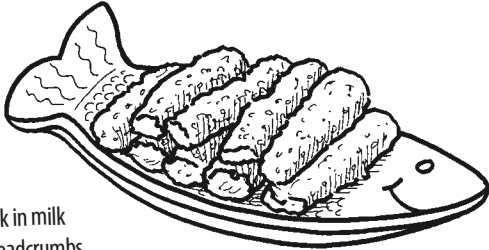
**2018 Edition**

You and your child can have fun in the kitchen as you whip up nutritious meals and snacks. Here are family-friendly recipes to try.



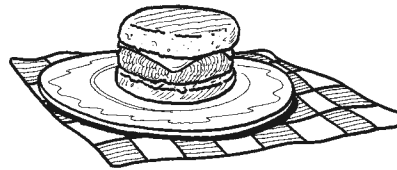
## Baked fish sticks

- 1 lb. cod fillets
- 1 cup nonfat milk
- 1 cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. pepper



Cut cod into strips. Soak in milk for 10 minutes. Mix breadcrumbs with salt and pepper. Drain fish, then dredge strips in breadcrumbs. Put on a baking sheet, and bake at 450° for about 5 minutes on each side, until fish flakes with a fork. Serves 4.

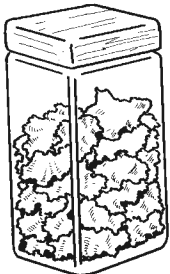
## Breakfast burgers



- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup no-sugar-added applesauce
- 1 tsp. steak sauce
- 6 whole-wheat English muffins
- 6 slices cheddar cheese

Mix meat, applesauce, and steak sauce together. Shape into 6 small patties. Cook in a skillet, 3–5 minutes per side. Toast English muffins, top 6 halves with the patties and cheese, and cover with the other muffin halves. *Idea:* For a make-ahead option, wrap cooked sandwiches and freeze. To reheat, defrost overnight, and microwave for 1–2 minutes, until the cheese melts. Makes 6 servings.

## Kale chips

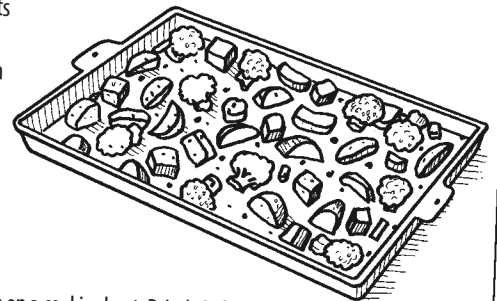


- 1 bunch kale
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. sea salt

Tear the kale leaves into bite-sized pieces, toss with olive oil and salt, and spread on a cookie sheet. Bake at 375° about 15 minutes, until crispy. Store in an airtight container. Makes 6 servings.

## Roasted vegetables

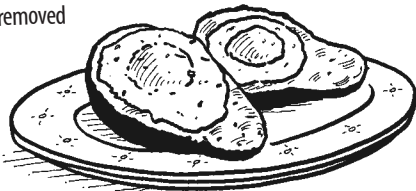
- 1 cup cauliflower florets
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup butternut squash chunks
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. dried thyme
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. pepper



Spread vegetable pieces on a cookie sheet. Drizzle lightly with olive oil, and sprinkle with seasonings. Bake at 425° for 20–30 minutes, until cooked. Serve as a side dish, or use in salads or burritos. Makes 4 servings.

## Avocado eggs

- 1 avocado, sliced in half and pit removed
- 2 eggs
- Hot sauce (optional)

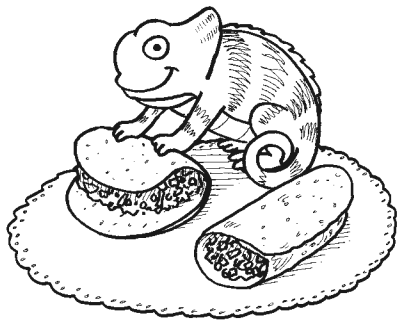


Put each avocado half in a muffin cup or on a small baking sheet, and crack an egg into the hole. Bake at 350° for 10–15 minutes, until egg reaches desired doneness. Add a few drops of hot sauce, if desired. Makes 2 servings.

continued



### Rainbow wrap



- 1/2 cup hummus
  - 4 whole-wheat tortillas
  - 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
  - 1 red tomato, sliced
  - 1 cup cucumber, diced
  - 1 cup carrots, shredded
- Spread hummus on 4 tortillas. Add the vegetables in rows by color. Roll into wraps. Serves 4.

### Banana split

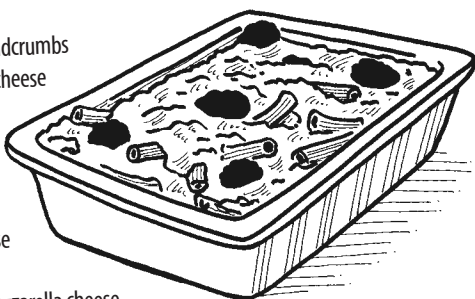
- 1 banana
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt (vanilla or strawberry)
- 1/4 cup mixed berries
- 2 tbsp. granola
- 1 tbsp. chocolate chips



Slice a banana in half. Top with yogurt, berries, granola, and chocolate chips. *Variations:* Try different yogurt flavors, freeze yogurt before serving, or use favorite toppings like shredded coconut or crushed pretzels. Serves 1.

### Meatballs and ziti

- 2 lbs. lean ground turkey
- 2/3 cup whole-wheat breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. ziti
- 16 oz. skim ricotta cheese
- 2 cups marinara sauce
- 1 cup shredded skim mozzarella cheese



Combine meat, breadcrumbs, Parmesan, 2 eggs, and seasoning. Shape into 20 small meatballs. In a skillet, brown the meatballs in olive oil. Place in a baking dish, and bake at 350° for about 30 minutes, until cooked through. Cook ziti according to package directions, and drain. Mix ricotta with the 2 remaining eggs. In a 9" x 13" pan, layer half the sauce, half the cooked ziti, the ricotta-egg mixture, the meatballs, the remaining sauce, and the rest of the ziti. Sprinkle with the mozzarella. Bake at 350° for 1 hour. Makes 6–8 servings.

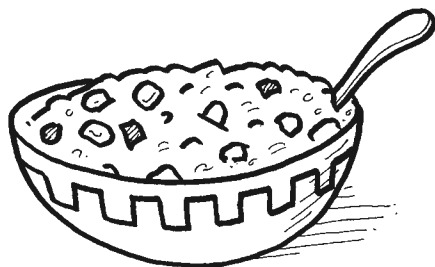
### Garden pita pizza

- 1 large round whole-wheat pita
- 2 tbsp. tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup cherry tomato halves
- 1/4 cup zucchini, sliced
- 1/4 cup pitted black olives
- 1 tbsp. crumbled feta cheese



Spread sauce on pita. Top with vegetables and olives. Bake at 350° for 5–10 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Then, sprinkle on crumbled feta cheese. Serves 2.

### Corn salsa



- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. honey
- 2 cups corn (canned, drained)
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1/4 jalapeno, seeded and minced

Stir together lime juice, olive oil, and honey. Mix

in corn, tomato, and jalapeno. Serve with baked tortilla chips, or use to top grilled fish or chicken. Serves 4–6.

### Scrambled huevos rancheros



- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup black beans (canned, drained)
- 1/4 cup tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 cup green bell pepper, diced
- 1/4 cup red onion, diced
- 2 tbsp. shredded low-fat Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 tbsp. nonfat sour cream
- 1 tbsp. salsa

Whisk eggs in a bowl, pour into a pan coated with nonstick cooking spray, and scramble. Place beans on a plate, and top with the cooked eggs and remaining ingredients. Serves 1.

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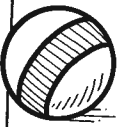













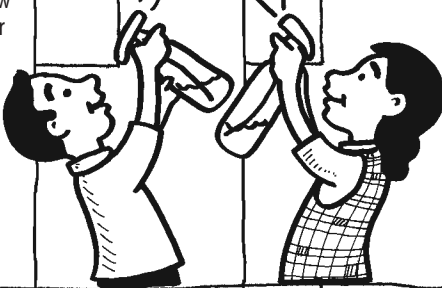
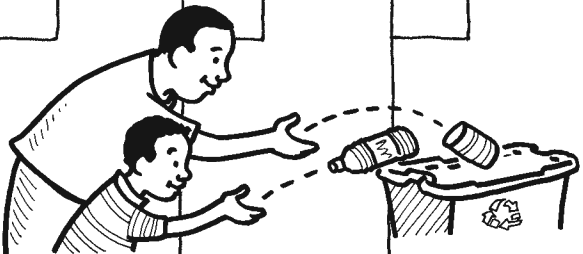

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**Note to parents:** Fill in the month and dates, and keep your children active every day with these fun ideas!





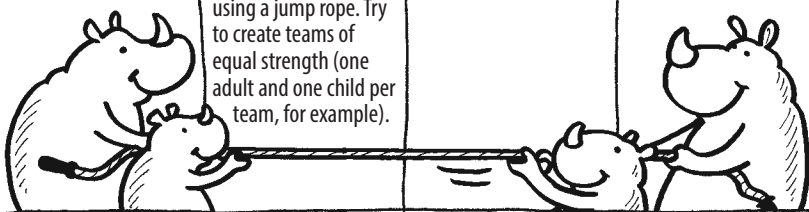



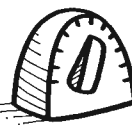



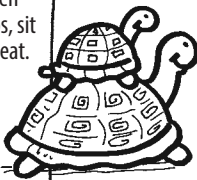

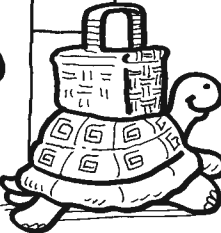
# Fitness Fun for Every Day

MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Toss a ball back and forth. Each time someone catches it, he takes a step back. How far apart can you move and still catch the ball?</p> 	<p>Jump rope while reciting rhymes. For ideas, get a book like Joanna Cole's <i>Anna Banana</i>, or search online for "jump rope rhymes."</p> 			<p>Learn new basketball moves. Try dribbling a ball in front of you, to the side, and through your legs.</p>	<p>Take a nature walk. Starting with A, name living things that begin with each letter of the alphabet (ant, bird, crocus).</p> 	 <p>Play shadow tag on a sunny day. "It" chases the other players, trying to step on their shadows. If your shadow is caught, you're "It."</p>
		<p>Have a dance party. Invite friends to dance to upbeat music. Or play musical chairs, dancing as you circle the seats.</p>	<p>Practice patterns while exercising. For example, alternate hopping and running (hop, run, hop, run).</p> 	<p>At the pool, play "tennis" with a beach ball and two pool noodles. Bend the noodles so you're holding both ends. Use them to bat the ball back and forth above the water.</p>	<p>Tape four rows of three paper plates to the floor, and number them 1-12. Take turns tossing two dice and placing a hand and foot on the numbers rolled.</p> 	<p>Read a biography of a famous athlete. Choose one thing the person does to stay in shape, and try it as a family.</p> 
<p>Invent a new jump, and do it 10 times. <i>Example:</i> Put one foot on the opposite knee, and jump sideways.</p>	<p>Play a fast-paced version of hide-and-seek. Have one person hide a ball or another object, and race to find it.</p>	<p>Teach your parent an exercise you learned in PE class. Do the activity together.</p> 		<p>Cover a die with squares of masking tape, and write an action on each side. Toss it, along with a regular die, to see what to do (squat) and how many times to do it (4).</p>		<p>Give each person a spray bottle filled with water. Blow up a balloon, and have everyone keep it in the air by spraying it with water.</p>
<p>Set up exercise stations in the family room, and "do the circuit." <i>Examples:</i> a mat for sit-ups, a sturdy stool for stepping up and down.</p> 	<p>Be an active helper. Weed or rake a neighbor's yard. Volunteer to tend the garden at your school or community center.</p> 	<p>Hold a broad-jump contest. With sidewalk chalk, mark a starting point. Have each person jump and write his initials where he lands.</p>	<p>Graph family members' heart rates. Take everyone's pulse before and after running a lap around your yard.</p>	<p>Play Follow the Leader at a playground. Lead your parents and siblings up the ladder, down the slide, and across the monkey bars.</p> 		
			<p>Gather empty cardboard boxes and plastic bottles. Stand 6 feet away from a recycling bin, and toss them in.</p>		<p>Have a pillowcase race. Each person stands in a pillowcase, holds the edges up with both hands, and hops to the finish line.</p>	<p>Do 10 exercises in a row. The catch? You can't do the same move twice! <i>Examples:</i> push-ups, lunges.</p>

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# Fitness Fun for Every Day

MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Celebrate the start of a new month with a trip to a skating rink, bowling alley, miniature golf course, or swimming pool.</p> 	<p>Lead an active story time. Read a short book, and have everyone move with the characters (go upstairs, open the door).</p>	<p>Choose a word of the day (<i>play</i>). Every time you hear the word, do 5 jumping jacks or cartwheels.</p> 	<p>Pretend you are picking apples. Stretch up with your left hand, then your right. Repeat 20 times.</p> 	<p>Lift weights while helping to put groceries away. Take turns doing biceps curls with soup cans (5 repetitions with each arm) before putting them in the pantry.</p> 		
<p>Wage a tug-of-war in a grassy area using a jump rope. Try to create teams of equal strength (one adult and one child per team, for example).</p> 	<p>Choose a movement, such as knee bends. Call "Green light!" and everyone does the exercise. Say "Red light!" and everyone stops.</p>	<p>Outside on a hot day, fill balloons with water, and give each person a bowl. See how long you can toss each balloon from bowl to bowl without it bursting.</p> 	<p>Have each family member write his name on an old tennis ball. Take turns rolling your balls across the yard or floor. Who can roll his ball the farthest?</p>			
<p>Combine homework and working out. Jog in place while you recite the states and capitals, for instance. Every time you get one right, touch your toes.</p>	<p>Place old pillows on the floor. Do forward rolls across the room. Then, tiptoe back.</p> 	<p>Go fly a kite! On a windy day, head to an open field with your family. Take along a few kites—and a lot of energy!</p> 	<p>Set a timer for 10 minutes. Straighten up clutter, mop, dust, or vacuum as fast as you can.</p> 	<p>With a friend, kick a soccer ball to each other. Each time, call out a body part (foot, arm, knee) that the other person must use to stop the ball.</p>		
<p>Head to a local baseball field. Throw, catch, and hit a ball. Or make a diamond in your yard using old doormats or small rugs as bases.</p> 	<p>Pretend to be different animals. Hop like a frog, leap like a deer, or slither like a snake.</p>	<p>Put a strip of wide masking tape on the floor or sidewalk. Walk the "balance beam" forward, backward, and sideways.</p>	<p>Play an active version of Mother, May I. Give commands like "Do 5 giant arm circles" or "Do 10 leg lifts."</p>	<p>Plan an "unplugged day" with no TV, computer, or video games. Instead, ride scooters, go on a leaf hunt, or play a neighborhood flag football game.</p> 		
<p>Write exercise challenges on slips of paper. Put them in a bag, and take turns pulling out one at a time. <i>Examples:</i> Do a split, walk on your hands.</p> 	<p>Pack a dinner picnic, and walk around a school track. When you finish your laps, sit in the middle and eat.</p> 	<p>Practice jumping hurdles. Get a running start, and jump over several items (a folded blanket, an upside-down bucket) placed 20 feet apart.</p>  				

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