



Getting your children physically active while having fun can be easy, just make sure that it is safe! Here are some tips...

(dateline) – Today health experts are trying to move the nation's battle against obesity by encouraging kids to have at least 60 minutes of physical activities a day. Schools need to be more active in teaching healthy behavior and increasing the level of physical activity of kids in P.E. classes. At the same time, parents also need to make sure kids get involved in sports at the right age and in the right games.

While doing so, we need to ensure that kids have a safe play environment. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, each year more than 3.5 million children under age 15 seek medical treatment for sports-related injuries¹.

Here are 4 quick tips on what to consider when children are engaged in physical activity:

What to Play – Choose an Appropriate Activity

All physical activities pose some element of risk but the amount of risk varies depending on type and intensity of the activity. Be sure your child is engaged in activities that are appropriate for his or her age, size, ability level and developmental stage². Let them sample a range of sports and see which ones they like before enrolling them in competitive leagues².

What to wear – Proper Equipment is Essential

Make sure you have a full understanding of the proper equipment that is necessary to protect your child in his or her chosen activity. This includes knowing the type of equipment required, but also ensuring it is worn properly and fits correctly². Also, your child shouldn't wear any jewelry or watches when playing. They may injure your child or other players during close contact¹.

Where to play – Check the Play Environment

Whether it is indoors or outdoors, the play space should be on a surface that is relatively even (no sudden holes or slopes) and should be free of any objects that may cause an injury. Ensure that the play space is not too close to surrounding walls, fences, seating, etc².

How to play – Good Coaching and Fair Play

The rules associated with a given activity or sport are there to govern the activity, to pose a challenge that makes the activity fun, and to make sure that it is safe. Foster a sense of fair play in your child at competition and practice and ensure his or her coach does the same. The key is to let your kid enjoy the sports and develop the skills to play well and safely, whether he or she is winning or losing. Coaches should also make sure that children have a good warm-up and cool-down before the game².

Some other things to prevent sports-related injuries and help keep your child safe are:



Head Off Dehydration

Kids are at higher risk than adults when they are active in the heat³. Be sure your child drinks plenty of fluids such as water or sports drinks before, during, and after practices and games, especially in hot weather. Kids weighing under 90 pounds should drink 5 ounces of water every 20 minutes to replenish fluids lost through sweat¹.

Emphasize Alertness

Many kids are so busy watching the ball while they are in a game that they forget to be aware of the other players. Remind your child to look around at all times to avoid potentially harmful collisions¹.

Prepare for Emergencies

Ensure that the coach is trained in first aid and CPR. It's also smart to give your number to the coach so he or she can contact you just in case of emergency¹.

As a parent, PE teacher or coach, please make sure children play safe and smart so they can fully enjoy physical activities and help them live a healthy life!

For more information, ([insert](#) your local call-to-action here)

Additional Resources

¹ http://fitfamilyfitkids.com/resource_library/rl_nav_sports_maze.jsp Navigation the Sports Maze by Mark Hyman, first published in the May 2003 issue of Child Magazine

² <http://www.readysetgo.org/ophea/ReadySetGo/article11.cfm?CFID=484987&CFTOKEN=5565869> Playing it Safe – 4 Quick Tips for Parents by Dr. Doug Richards, Medical Director for the David L. MacIntosh Sport Medicine Clinic at the University of Toronto and Team Physician for Canada Basketball, Volleyball Canada and the Toronto Raptors.

³ <http://www.gssiweb.com/parentrecommendations.cfm> Kids and Sports: Maximizing Benefits, Minimizing Risks. Summary of Facts and Consensus Recommendations from Experts at the 2004 Gatorade Sports Science Institute (GSSI) Conference "Kids and Activity: The Risks and Rewards of Sports and Exercise"