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# I N S I G H T S

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FOR FAMILIES

## □ Get children moving □

❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Adapted by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant, from an article by David Bjerklie in Time Magazine

Kids will more active if their parents are more active, according to Dr. David Katz, of Yale University's School of Public Health. The key, says Katz, is to get the entire family to be more imaginative about what activity means. Not everyone likes to play soccer or climb trees, and most kids won't sit still for an hour-long workout, or more likely, sitting still is exactly what they will do.

Katz has developed school programs based on short bursts of activity five or more times a day. The goal is not to follow a single regimen but to create your own.

- ❖ **Pull the plug.** Parents, who are used to laying down the law when it comes to drinking, drugs and smoking, need to set limits for TV, video games and the Internet and make physical activity mandatory. Elevate fitness to a priority.
- ❖ **Walk this way.** There is no better way to begin any fitness program than by walking. You already do it, so just do more of it.
- ❖ **Stay flexible.** Get kids to do their best to stay active on busy days, but also schedule longer activities for days when they have more time. Plan friends-and-family fitness dates.
- ❖ **Game your play.** Fitness is easier when it's fun, and you don't have to limit yourself to traditional sports. Active video games or many of those available on Wii are good options. Kids can also improvise games. For example, balloon volleyball in the rec room, beach-ball tag in the backyard. The point is to move.
- ❖ **Make it a contest.** Challenge friends and family members to see who can do the most jumping jacks or push-ups, who can dribble a basketball the fastest or who can hop 100 yards on one leg. Start slow but build up, and be creative.
- ❖ **Make running fun.** Running is a great way for kids to boost their confidence while getting fit. And running can be a great social experience too. Most towns have "fun runs" open to all ages.
- ❖ **Spin your wheels.** Forget the car and travel by other means – bikes, scooters, roller-blades or skateboards.
- ❖ **Turn on music and dance.** Can the inhibition, crank up the music and shake, bounce and move it. Pick a style, fake it or make one up. And yes, air guitar counts.
- ❖ **Take a hike.** Organize a weekend outing. Find a nearby large park to explore, or make it an urban hike. Plan a picnic, and bring a ball or Frisbee.
- ❖ **Start young.** Get kids moving with games of tag or hide-and-seek. For tinier tots, ask them to run like a gorilla, walk like a spider, hop like a bunny or stretch like a cat.