

Ways to make waiting WAAAAY FUN

With all the rush, rush of today's world it's amazing how much time we spend waiting around – waiting in lines at the supermarket, at the clinic, even to get on a ride at the amusement park! Here are some fun, active ways to conquer the waiting-time blues.

Stuck in Traffic? Engage your child in playful activities that can burn away energy and make the time buckled up in a car seat pass quickly. To get little hands moving, try clapping games and songs. Bring out the old favorites like *Eensy Weensy Spider*, *Patty Cake*, *Miss Mary Mack*. Even *Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes* can be played sitting down.

Standing in Line? Turn line-time into gym-time by presenting kids with physical challenges. Can you stand on one foot until I count to 10? How about 20? Can you touch your elbow to your nose? To your toes? Can you hold your arms out to make big circles, small circles – forward, backward?

Tackle the T's. Don't let these two culprits steal activity away!

Time - Whoa! Slow down and take time to walk. Stretch little and big legs by leaving car and stroller behind and walking where possible, whether it's to the park, to the store, to school – even if it's just from the parking lot to the door.

TV - Turn it off, as well as the computer. Schedule home recess – at least 60 minutes each day for active physical play.

ASTRA is **Leading the Way Through Play** by providing quality products that help children have fun, achieve success and lead happy, healthy lives. The largest association for companies in the toy and children's products arenas, ASTRA brings retailers, manufacturers, and industry affiliates together to help deliver offerings that serve children's best interests. To learn more about ASTRA and to locate ASTRA retailers nationwide, log onto www.astratoy.org

*"It's a happy talent to know
how to play."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Proud Member of ASTRA
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ACTIVE PLAY!



READY! SET! GO!

Put your kids on the right track to good health by ensuring that physical activity is a part of their daily routine.

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Leading the way through play



ACTIVE PLAY!

While you may think of your child as a non-stop whirligig, the fact is that kids are less fit and more fat than they were 30 years ago. TV, cars, computers, fast food, endless waiting lines, these are easy targets to blame. Far more crippling has been the general lack of attention even by educators to the importance of physical activity. So fixated have we become on cognitive development and the acquisition of academic skills that motor skills have been shortchanged and physical milestones forgotten. School without recess is part of this disturbing trend.

GET PHYSICAL! It's good for all of you!

Body - Physical activity improves circulation, builds and maintains healthy bones, muscles and joints, and chews away fat.

Mind - Exercise gets the juices flowing, rushing blood to the brain, so the mind processes and retains information and actually thinks better.

Heart - Active play is a natural high, relieving stress, helping kids to relax and sleep better.

Soul - Physical achievement enhances a child's self image and sense of independence.

Go Pro-Active from the start!

Infant-Toddler Years

By 2½, most children have amassed a wealth of physical skills, starting with rolling over to learning how to sit, crawl, stand, walk and run. They love to play, toss and bounce.

- To encourage crawling, place a favorite toy just outside of an infant's reach.
- For the beginning walker, provide pull-up and push and pull toys.
- Provide balls for bouncing, tossing and rolling.

Preschool Years

By 3 years old, most kids can go up and down stairs, jump in place, and throw a ball overhand. By 4 years old, they can catch a bounced ball, jump with a running start, and pedal a tricycle. By 5 years old, they can skip, leading with one foot, and pump on a swing.

- Provide the playthings that encourage these activities -balls, tricycles, scooters, tumbling mats and jumping ropes.
- Visit the neighborhood playground and park where there are swings, jungle gyms & slides.
- Allow time and space for running and jumping.

School Years

These are the years that kids start to put it all together. By age 8, most kids can ride a bicycle, engage in a game of catch, possess enough eye-hand coordination to hit a ball with a bat, tennis racket or golf club, and know how to follow rules.

- Encourage your middle-school child to take up a team or individual sport.
- For non-sports fans, consider performance arts.
- Provide active play alternatives to videos and TV for social time when the friends get together.

For more information on the importance of physical activity and active play ideas, check out some of these convenient online resources:

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/
muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/hesguide/humanrel
www.illinoisearlylearning.org
www.gameskidsplay.net