

THRIVE

MOVING TO THRIVE

Physical Activity and Playtime Guide

A THRIVE Parenting Resource



The Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at the Pennsylvania State University developed the THRIVE Initiative with support from the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Military Community and Family Policy.





THRIVE Initiative Overview

The THRIVE Initiative is a partnership between the Department of Defense’s Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State. This initiative is designed to empower parents as they nurture their children from birth until their children reach 18 years of age. The Initiative includes four age-specific program areas:

- Take Root! (0-3 years)
- Sprout! (3-5 years)
- Grow! (5-10 years), and
- Branch Out! (10-18 years)

THRIVE Initiative Program Areas			
<i>Take Root!</i>	<i>Sprout!</i>	<i>Grow!</i>	<i>Branch Out!</i>
Infants & Toddlers (Newborn - 3 years)	Preschool (3 - 5 years)	Grades K - 2 (5 - 8 years)	Grades 6 - 8 (10 - 14 years)
		Grades 3 - 5 (8 - 10 years)	Grades 9 - 12 (14 - 18 years)

Each THRIVE program guides parents as they learn and use parenting skills that are based on science, so they can encourage positive youth development and resiliency across their child’s lifespan. The Initiative focuses on three topic areas: 1) positive parenting practices, 2) parent and child stress management, and 3) child physical health promotion.



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INTRODUCTION

This activity guide is a resource, so you can promote more family playtime and physical activity! It is structured to provide suggested activities to address barriers that can prevent families from engaging in fun and physical activities. With this guide, challenges, like a rainy day, being in a car for a long trip, or living in a home with limited space can be tackled! The guide also highlights activities that can be used in different environments. So, whether you are in a hot or cold climate, near the ocean or land-locked, there is something for every family here!

All of the activities listed are labeled to help you more easily identify which activities are a good fit with the needs of your family. The labels include the following:

-  Indoor Activities
(These are great for cold or rainy days!)
-  Limited Space Activities
(Small apartment? No problem!)
-  Movement Activities
(Get up and get going for health and happiness!)
-  Outdoor Activities
(Enjoy the benefits of being outdoors in every season!)

This activity guide allows you to practice creating opportunities for your family to spend quality time together. The activities provide fun ways to spark imagination, develop communication skills, and promote learning. You are encouraged to modify the activities as necessary or to add some creative ideas of your own!

Activity Format

Each labeled activity includes a brief description. The materials needed and instructions are provided for most of the activities. When using these activities, be sure to put the parenting skills you learned during your THRIVE course(s) in action! Most of all - have fun!

Additional Resources

There are plenty of activities available that are quick, easy to prepare, and a ton of fun for your family. Simply search in your internet browser for activities that match your scenario or environment. For example, if you are on vacation and it is a rainy day, search for "activities for a rainy day." You can also find family fun and educational websites listed in the *Resources to THRIVE!* guide. With the activities in this guide and what you find on the internet, you will have new activities to play every day!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS AND IDEAS

Being active promotes **emotional well-being, a better attitude, and physical health**. It also provides an extra energy boost during the day.

Children who engage in at least **60 minutes of aerobic physical activity a day** grow healthier!



Go outdoors!
Hike in the woods or try planning a nature scavenger hunt.

Parents can be role models for active lifestyles and provide children with opportunities for increased physical activity.

Check local community centers or newspapers for family oriented activities!

On a long road trip:
Take walking breaks or visit parks so the children can play.

Involve a group in **planning physical activities for the neighborhood** each week.

During winter:
Involve children in sports, like indoor swimming, ice skating, bowling, yoga, or indoor soccer.



When playing video games, involve movement and exercise.

If stuck inside:
Turn music on and dance with the kids or make a game out of household chores.

PLAYING GAMES WITH YOUR CHILD

Playing games is a great way for parents to bond with their child! It also provides opportunities for parents to develop their child's thinking, organizational, motor, language, and social skills as these skill sets are an essential aspect of most games. When active games are selected, parents can also promote their child's physical health.

The following tips are suggestions for helping you get the most out of playing games with your child:

Choose carefully

Games come in a variety of styles, and it is important to select games that are appropriate for your child's age, development, and skill level. It is also very important to choose games that your child enjoys. Let your child be a part of the decision-making process when selecting games to play.

Be flexible

Situations might arise where modifications need to be made in order to play a particular game with your child. For example, if it rains when you are hoping to set up an obstacle course outside, set one up inside. Or, if your child really wants to play a particular board game that may be too advanced, change the rules, so the two of you can play.

Mix it up

Play a variety of games with your child. By playing different games, you will provide more opportunities to enhance a variety of skills and abilities. Also, do not hesitate to switch to a new game if your child's interest appears to be waning.

Check for understanding

All games have some type of rules or procedures that need to be followed. As you are explaining those rules or procedures to your child, take a few minutes to make sure he or she understands them. You could also provide a quick demonstration of the rules or procedures to help your child understand what he or she is supposed to be doing in the game. Try not to start the game until you are confident your child understands how the game works. Checking for understanding can make the game more enjoyable because you are helping to prevent confusion or frustration.

Be a role model

Games are a great way to teach children about valuable social skills, such as teamwork, taking turns, following directions, regulating emotions, and losing gracefully. As you interact with your child during the game, make sure you are demonstrating these skills. Children learn a lot from observation, so it is important that parents are modeling appropriate, pro-social behaviors for their child.

Look for teachable moments

In addition to being a positive role model, take note of your child's behavior and discuss it with him or her. Children will struggle with teamwork, turn-taking, following directions, regulating emotions, and losing gracefully, and they can benefit from a loving and supportive conversation about these behaviors. Try to ask questions that help your child process his or her behaviors and arrive at his or her own conclusions rather than simply telling them what to do or believe.

Be intentional

Make time to play with your child. Keep in mind, you do not have to block out hours of your schedule to play a game with your child. Sometimes, all you need is 10 or 15 minutes. But without intentionality, it is unlikely that game play will occur. It is also important to remember that not all game play needs to be structured. For example, if you notice that your child is playing with Legos, take a few minutes and join in. Remember to let your child lead the play activity.

Have fun

The most important part of any game is having fun. While it is true that most games will inevitably have a winner and a loser, this aspect of game play should be de-emphasized as it can promote emotions and behaviors that detract from the fun. If you notice that your child is focused on competition, gently remind him or her that it is just a game, and it is more important to have fun than to win. You could also try praising your child's effort to help take the focus off of performance. If your child becomes too fixated on winning and repeatedly displays inappropriate behavior, take a time out from the game to give your child a chance to calm down and refocus.

References/Resources:

Barish, K. (2012). *Winning and losing: Helping children learn to accept defeat gracefully.*

Retrieved from: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pride-and-joy/201209/winning-and-losing>

McBurnie, C. (2009). *Playing games can help children learn, reinforce skills.*

Retrieved from: http://www.extendednotes.com/about/articles/EEN_Article_200912.pdf

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

CHARADES!



In this game, four or more players act out words without talking, while their teammates try to guess the word.

Materials Needed:

- Paper and Pens
- Scissors (to cut paper)
- 1 bowl (or anything that can hold folded paper, like a hat) per team
- Timer or Watch

Instructions:

1. Gather your family and friends and the materials listed above.
2. Divide into teams. Each team must have a minimum of 2 players. Each team gets a piece of paper and cuts it into 6 pieces. On each piece, write a word that fits under the categories on the next page.
3. Fold the slips of paper and place in a bowl.
4. Determine how long you will play. For example: 20 minutes.
5. Teams switch bowls. Then, one team will start by having one member pick a piece of paper and act out the word. This member's team has to guess the word within one minute. After one minute, the next team takes their turn.
6. The team with the most correct guesses in the allotted time wins!

Categories:

- TV Show
- Movie
- Animal
- Person
- Place
- Thing

Create other categories, like relatives or favorite songs, to add your own family flare!

**Have young players?
Stick with one simple
category like animals!**

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

PICTURE THIS!



Teams take turns drawing. Without speaking, players draw an image for their partners to guess. This activity requires a minimum of four players.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pens
- 1 Bowl (or anything that can hold folded paper, like a hat) per team
- Timer or Watch

Instructions:

1. Gather your family and friends and the materials listed above.
2. Divide into teams. Each team must have a minimum of 2 players.
3. Each team gets a piece of paper and cuts it into 6 pieces. On each piece, write words that fit under the following categories: Person, Place, or Thing.
4. Fold the slips of paper and place them in a bowl.
5. Teams will switch bowls. Then, one team will start by having one member pick a piece of paper and draw the word without talking. This member's team is to guess what the drawing is within one minute. After one minute, the next team takes their turn.
6. The team with the most correct guesses wins!

Need a challenge?

Try drawing with your eyes closed or with the opposite hand!



INDOOR ACTIVITIES

TANGRAMS!



Tangrams are puzzles that involve moving geometrical shapes to create pictures or designs. You can find and print tangram images online. Using the given shapes, create images by moving and sliding the pieces into place. This activity is for one or more players.

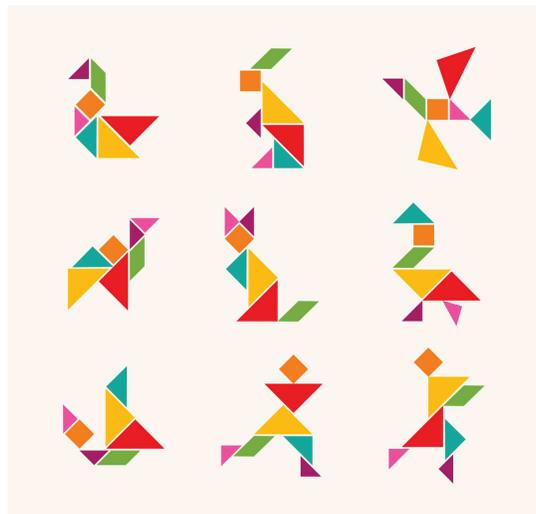
Materials Needed:

- Search for tangram pages on the internet. Print the shapes on thick paper. If possible, use cardstock or magnet sheet.
- Scissors
- Small plastic bag

Instructions:

1. If desired, each child can color the tangram pages.
2. Adults or older siblings can cut the shapes from the tangram print out.
3. Using the tangram images found online, players can move and slide their shapes to match the tangram pictures.

Add physical activity to this game by acting out the finished pictures!



INDOOR ACTIVITIES

IT'S SHOWTIME!



This activity allows your family to express their creativity! Help your children produce a play, talent show, or puppet show. The shows can be presented as private showings of two or for a large audience of family and friends!

Suggested Materials:

- Any household items can be used as props
- Stuffed animals or puppets
- Items needed to highlight a talent or to add interest, like musical instruments

Instructions:

1. Gather as a family and write a script for a play, a puppet show, or a talent show.
2. Act out the script using household items as props.

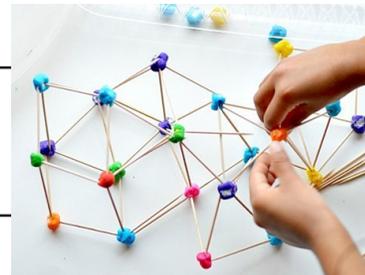
CREATE AND CONSTRUCT!



This activity encourages your family to be creative! Using household items or relatively cheap store bought items, your family can build towers, pyramids, and structures galore!

Suggested Materials:

- Stackable plastic cups, plates, or bowls; or
- Marshmallows and toothpicks; or
- Legos, Lincoln Logs, or any other toy available



Instructions:

1. Gather as a family with any of the suggested materials listed.
2. Challenge each other to build items using only the materials chosen.
3. Variations include the following: name a category, set a timer, or build one giant structure together.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

MY KINGDOM!



Encourage your children to be creative and use household items to build a kingdom!

Suggested Materials:

- Everyday household items (Help your child to pick safe items and check their kingdoms for safety!)
- Imagination!

Instructions:

1. Find a safe place for your child to build his or her kingdom.
2. Encourage your child to use his or her imagination to plan the kingdom.
3. Offer assistance as necessary to build the kingdom structure.
4. Allow your child to play creatively in the kingdom with siblings, friends, pets, stuffed animals, or toys.

Suggestions:

- Couch cushions can be used to build fortress walls that keep out unwanted knights and dragons.
- A blanket draped over chairs provides shelter from the imaginary dangers of a storm.
- A large box can be made into a playhouse for the perfect tea party.
- A blanket draped over a table provides solitude for reading.

Encourage your child to be creative and make the kingdom of his or her dreams!

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!



Children crawl, step, and bend through a maze of string like ninjas!

Materials Needed:

- Yarn, colored string, or crepe paper
- Tape
- Hallway, corridor, or small room

Instructions:

1. Tape the string or paper back and forth across the hallway, corridor, or small room to create an obstacle course. Tape it low and high, so your child must step over and under it and crawl to move through the obstacle course.
2. The child moves through the course trying not to touch the string. If they make it through, they have made this mission possible!

DANCE MEMORY TRAIN!



This is an activity that will build your child's memory and motor skills!

Materials Needed:

- Radio or any music player with speakers

Instructions:

1. Turn on your favorite radio station or music track.
2. Player 1 creates a dance move and shows it off. After five seconds, player 2 goes.
3. Player 2 does player 1's dance move and then creates his or her own new move.
4. The game continues with each player taking a turn to add a new move.
5. The player who can remember all the moves in the right order without an error wins!

LIMITED SPACE ACTIVITIES

ENDLESS OPTIONS WITH A DECK OF CARDS!



If your space is limited, try one of these games. They can be fast-paced and lots of fun!

Materials Needed:

- 1 Deck of cards

Slap Jacks:

Shuffle and split the deck in even amounts between or among players. All the players place their cards in a face down pile. Starting and going around the table clockwise, players take turns flipping one card over, face up, and placing it on a face up pile in the center. Players keep flipping until a Jack appears. The first player to slap the Jack wins and collects all the cards in the pile. The first player to collect the entire deck wins.

War:

Shuffle and split the deck in even amounts between or among players. Players flip cards over face up at the same time. The player with the highest card wins and collects the other player's laid cards. If cards are equal, players flip another set of cards. The player with the highest card collects all the played cards. The first player to collect the entire deck wins.

Other Games:

Try Go Fish, Crazy Eights, Old Maid, or Building a Card Tower! Instructions on how to play these games can be searched for on the internet.

LIMITED SPACE ACTIVITIES

SIMPLE GAMES FOR SMALL SPACES!



Music to My Ears

Have players try to place five cans with varying quantities of pennies (or beads) in the correct order from least to most items. Before playing, with a sharpie, write the number of items on the bottom of each can.

Note: *Be cautious of choking hazards with young children.*

Chandelier

Using paper plates and cans, stack one can and one paper plate until you get 4 layers high.

Tweeze Me

Use tweezers to relocate five small beads or candies from one bowl to another.

Note: *Do not play with young children due to choking hazards.*

Scrumptious Scramble

Assemble the front of an empty cereal box that has been cut into 9, 12, or 16 square pieces.

Popcorn!

1 person tries to keep two balloons in the air.

Leaning Tower of TP

Stack 3, 5, or 7 toilet paper rolls. You can make this task more of a challenge by having the players stack the rolls on an arm of couch, a bed, or anything that is not flat!

SNEAK ATTACK!

- Playing games provides an opportunity to provide healthy snacks!
- Place bowls of fruits and vegetables on the game table for your family to snack on while playing short games.

Remember!

Children need 5 or more fruits or vegetables a day to grow healthy!

MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

DUCK DUCK GOOSE!



Players sit in a circle with their legs crossed. These players are called the *ducks*. One player, named the *fox*, goes around the circle and gently taps on each player's head saying *duck*. As the *fox* is going around the circle, he is considering who to choose as a *duck* to chase him or her. Once the *fox* chooses, he or she says *goose* as he or she taps the person on the head. The *fox* then tries to run around the circle and make it back to the position left open by the chosen *goose*. The *goose* tries to tag the *fox* before he or she sits down in the now open position. If the *fox* makes it back to the open position, then the *goose* becomes the *fox*. If the *goose* tags the *fox*, then the *goose* gets to sit back down and the *fox* must go around the circle again.

HOT ON SPOTS!



Children can learn (e.g., work on identifying shapes, letters, numbers, colors) while also being physically active. This activity is similar to hopscotch. Parents and children play together!

Materials Needed:

- Cardboard or construction paper cutouts of shapes, such as circles, triangles, and squares (large enough for children to hop onto)
- Markers, crayons, or pens

Instructions:

1. Spread the cardboard cutouts along the floor. Tape them to the floor so they do not slip when a child jumps onto them.
2. Each child takes turns jumping onto a shape, letter, number, or color as it is called out by the parent or caregiver.

Suggestion: If playing outside, try drawing the shapes with sidewalk chalk!

MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

TAG, YOU ARE IT!



An oldie, but a goodie! Tag involves players being chased by one or multiple players who have been identified as *it*. The *it* player or players try to tag (or touch with a hand) those being chased. The goal is to not get tagged! Once tagged, the person becomes *it* and must chase the other players.

Note: Before playing, it is recommended that an adult explains how to tag with soft touches on the shoulders to prevent injuries.

Other Tag Games

Freeze Tag: Once tagged, players are frozen in place. Players who are not frozen can unfreeze players by tagging them on the shoulder. Another way to play is for players to crawl under the legs of those who are frozen!

Line Tag: You can play this variation on a surface where lines are on the ground, like a gymnasium floor. Players must run on lines only and try not to be tagged.

Sharks and Minnows: After defining boundaries and identifying a safe zone, one or more players are labeled as *sharks*. The rest of the players are *minnows*. The *minnows* try to get to the other side (safe zone) without being tagged by a *shark*. Once tagged, a *minnow* becomes a *shark*.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITES

ULTIMATE WARRIOR!



Create an obstacle course at a park, in the backyard, or in a favorite room in the house. Using items like pillows, cushions, yarn, jungle gyms, and monkey bars, create an obstacle course that an ultimate warrior must pass through to save the day! Try to include jumping over objects; swinging from bars; crawling through spaces; balancing on small surfaces, like beams; running; and, of course, plenty of fun! Below are some examples to help you get started.

At a park: Have the player swing on monkey bars, slide down the slide, race to a tree, run around it, hop back, and tag your hand to become the Ultimate Warrior!

In the backyard: Player must hop over objects, crawl under yarn without touching it, balance on a log or board, and race to the finish line. If the player does so in less than two minutes, he or she becomes the Ultimate Warrior!

In the house: Player must step from cushion to cushion without falling off into the alligator pit. Then, they must crawl under the *yarn lasers* without touching them. Once through, the player must answer a math, history, or spelling question like: "How do you spell warrior?" Once the player answers correctly, he or she must do 15 jumping jacks and then touch the wall. If the player completes this in less than two minutes, he or she becomes the Ultimate Warrior!

MOVEMENT ACTIVITES

SIMON SAYS!



With no materials needed, this is an easy activity to play with your children! This activity can be played indoors or outdoors, with limited space or plenty of space, and you can make it a creative activity by having your children dress up or use props!

Instructions:

The point of this game is to follow the leader, Simon. One person is selected to play Simon. Simon stands in the front of the group and is responsible for giving tasks to all the other players. Players should only follow a task when Simon starts the instruction with "Simon Says..." The point of the game is for Simon to try and get the players to do a task that Simon did not start with "Simon Says..." For example, if Simon says, "Simon says, 'March in place!'" all the players should march in place. If Simon says, "Jump up and down!" players should not follow this instruction because it did not start with "Simon Says." They should just keep marching in place. Those who do not follow orders correctly are eliminated until a winner is identified.

GLOW IN THE DARK BOWLING!



For those early winter evenings or late summer nights, use this activity to add some fun without the sun!

Materials Needed:

- Glow sticks (3-10)
- 6-10 Plastic water bottles with caps (recycled and filled with water)
- A ball (soccer, basketball, kickball, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Follow the instructions for lighting the glow sticks and place them in filled water bottles.
2. Line the bottles up in a triangle.
3. Each player rolls the ball and has 2 tries to knock all the bottles down.
4. Each bottle knocked over is 1 point. After 10 rounds, the player with the most points wins!

EVERYDAY OPTIONS

There are endless ways to add physical activity to your family's daily interactions! Here are some ideas to help you get started!

- Take a hike in the woods
- Sign up for a local walk, 5k, or race as a family
- Go ice or roller skating
- Look for free events/classes offered at a community center or park
- Fly a kite
- Play a jump rope game
- Walk or bike to school instead of driving
- Take a pet for a walk or play ball with the pet
- Build a tree house
- Play hide & seek
- Plant a garden
- Make a snowman
- Ride bikes
- Climb a rock climbing wall
- Go swimming
- Play ball (basketball, baseball, soccer, etc.)
- Go sledding
- Play a game of Frisbee
- Go to the park and play on the equipment
- Go canoeing or kayaking
- Do an exercise video together
- Lift weights together
- Have a sit up or push up contest
- Play hopscotch
- Run or walk on a local track
- Include physical activity while watching TV (e.g., lift weights during the commercials)
- Involve your family in helping with active tasks, like washing the car or raking leaves

BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN!

GET GOING WHEN GAMING!

Children enjoy gaming. Encouraging them to be more active does not necessarily mean eliminating their electronics. It does, however, mean offering games that promote movement and monitoring the amount of usage. On the next page are suggestions to help you as you select active gaming systems and games.

Be Aware!

Even when using full-body gaming options, children who play video games are not engaging in sustained, aerobic physical activity. Technology is improving, and the newer gaming options are preferable to conventional, sedentary gaming options, but they should not be viewed as a replacement for traditional sports and physical activities.

Examples of Active Gaming Systems:

When choosing a gaming system or electronic games, select those that involve full-body gaming. Full-body gaming is when you get your whole body moving by having to jump, twist, run in place, crawl, duck, spin, dance, and sing!

Gaming systems that rely on technology to track body movements or reactions for the game to progress include the following: Xbox Kinect, Wii and Wii U, and Playstation Move.

Examples of Active Games:

Xbox Kinect-Kinect Sports, Kinect Adventures, Zumba, Dance Central, Fruit Ninja, Let's Cheer, Hole in the Wall, Nike+ Kinect Training, Wii/Wii U: Wii Fit, Zumba, Just Dance, EA Sports Active, NFL Training Camp, Dance Dance Revolution, Playstation Move: Sports Champions, Adidas micoach, Just Dance, and UFC Trainer.

Remember!

Even when you are indoors, it does not mean your family has to sit! Find ways to be physically active with the indoor activities listed in this section!

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

FUN AT THE PARK!



Take your children to a local park where they can run, jump, climb, swing, and enjoy the outdoors!

Suggested Materials:

- Local park, open field, or a tree house

Instructions:

1. Encourage your children to run and play outside whenever possible.

MUSIC TO THEIR EARS!



Do you own any old Tupperware or dish pans that you no longer need? Nail them to an old post in the back yard or place them outside for your child to use as instruments!

Suggested Materials:

- Plastic containers, pots and pans, wooden spoons, strainers, cups, etc.

Instructions:

1. Encourage your children to create a new song or play their favorite song with their new instruments!

Phone a Friend!
Set up a play date with other families to meet at the park. The more the merrier!

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

GOING FOR GOLD!



Host the Olympics with races, tosses, obstacles courses, and brain challenges.

Instructions:

1. Plan and set up an obstacle course.
2. Have the children make their own flags of the country they represent.
3. Award medals!

MINUTE TO WIN IT!



Can you balance an egg on a spoon while hopping on one leg? These activities challenge groups to complete a task against the clock to win.

Suggested Materials:

- Timer (each round is one minute)
- A variety of household items (spoons, paper plates, eggs, blocks, water bottles, etc.)

Instructions:

1. Mark a starting and ending point.
2. Form 2 groups of family members and friends.
3. Explain that the groups will race while balancing items. For example, an egg can be balanced on a spoon, a water bottle can be balanced on a flat palm, or building blocks can be balanced on a paper plate on the players' heads.
4. The group with the most members successfully crossing the finish line within the set time wins.

Picnic Time!

Spend the day outside and pack for a picnic!

Fill your basket with fruits, vegetables, and plenty of water!

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

ENDLESS ADVENTURES!



There are many adventures waiting to happen in the outdoors. Here are some ideas to spark your imagination!

Outdoor ideas:

- Visit your local library for a book to help you identify specific insects, animals, and plants! Plan a hike or a walk to search for them!
- Use sidewalk chalk to draw, play hopscotch, or keep score of a new outdoor game!
- Bring buckets and toys and fill a plastic pool with water or sand for a new play area!
- Add more fun to outdoor play with costumes and a large box that can serve as a playhouse!
- If there is no thunder or lightening, play in the rain! Splash in puddles, fill buckets, and bring bath toys out for some fun!
- Provide bikes, balls, discs, jump ropes, or hula-hoops to add appeal and get your child moving outside!
- Explore a new state park! Many offer hiking paths, camping, and swimming.
- Involve your child in planting flowers or fruits and vegetables!
- Play Shoot and Scoop! Take turns catching three foam or soft balls in a bucket on top of your heads.



**For more information, contact:
THRIVE@psu.edu or 1-877-382-9185**

**Access additional resources online:
www.THRIVE.psu.edu**