

Let's Move Together

Structured Play



Children 3 to 5 years of age need at least 2 hours of physical activity a day. One hour of free play like running, dancing, jumping, etc. is great! Another hour of physical activity could be done with "Structured Play."

Structured play is active play and games led by an adult or older sibling, usually following specific rules and practices. It helps children develop motor skills, coordination, listening skills, and following directions, while having fun. It also introduces the idea that being physically active can help them stay fit and healthy.

Try these structured physical activity games with your preschooler:

- **Simon Says.** Children learn to listen to commands that are given by Simon (the "leader"): touch your toes, jumping jacks, hop, step backwards, etc.
- **Musical Chairs.** Arrange chairs in a circle, one chair less than the number of players. Play music and have children walk around the circle. Stop the music and players sit in the nearest chair. The child not sitting in a chair is out.
- **Hot Potato.** Children practice catching. Music is played while children toss the "potato"—a tennis ball or bean bag—to each other while pretending it's hot. Stop the music and the child that has the potato in hand is out.
- **Hopscotch.** Draw hopscotch squares on the ground. The child throws a flat object on a square. The child hops through the squares skipping the one with the object on it. Child picks up the object on its way back. Children practice hopping on one foot, which helps with balance.
- **Move Like an Animal.** Have children imitate animals, such as birds, horses, elephants, and snakes, using movements with arms and legs. Good for large motor skills development.

Try all those games you played as a child! If you had fun, for sure your child will too!



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