WHAT IS FUN WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?
Young children love to move and play, because it is fun! Your child's everyday life offers endless opportunities to promote his or her health, wellness, and fitness through a variety of physical activities. Moving fosters brain development and involves the interaction of strength, flexibility, coordination, balance, and endurance. Gross motor skills involving large muscles are used for rolling, crawling, walking, and running. Fine motor skills requiring dexterity and eye-hand coordination involve smaller muscles for activities such as eating, dressing, and writing. Physical activity consists of recreational activities such as swimming or playing T-ball or soccer. Unstructured activities may include riding tricycles or playing at the neighborhood park with other children. Physical activity can be encouraged during everyday routines and playtimes.

WHAT ROLE DOES FAMILY HAVE IN FUN WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY?
Children benefit from loving relationships with family members and caregivers who are encouraging, responsive, and available to share in their learning experiences. You are your child's greatest teacher, because you understand your child the very best and can create opportunities for learning through play. Some of the best interactions occur during family activities such as doing laundry, walking the dog, preparing meals together, playing games, or creating art projects with siblings. Organized and spontaneous activities can provide fun for the entire family and may be shared with family and friends.

WHERE MIGHT I FIND IDEAS FOR FUN WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WITH MY CHILD?
The following resources include a variety of fun ideas for physical activity for specific age groups, special occasions, play dates, or activities provided in the community:

- The APTA Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy Pinterest Page offers movement activities and ideas to promote health, development, and participation for infants and children. Available at: www.pinterest.com/AcadPedPT

- The Bright Futures Activity Book is available for sharing by Bright Futures at Georgetown University. This physical activity book, also available in Spanish, provides suggestions for movement activities with a focus on developing a foundation for healthy living habits. Available at: www.brightfutures.org/activity/index.htm

- The Tips and Tools on Play is a central resource guide developed by Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families. These resources include podcasts, downloadable booklets for families, theme activities associated with the time of year, tips for choosing toys, play activities organized according to age groups, and a slide show that would be useful for community talks about the importance of play. Available at: www.zerotothree.org/child-development/play/tips-and-tools-play.html
HOW MIGHT A PEDIATRIC PHYSICAL THERAPIST HELP CHOOSE PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR MY CHILD WITH A DISABILITY?

Pediatric physical therapists are licensed healthcare professionals with specialized education and experience to promote learning through movement in young children - especially children with or at risk for a developmental delay or disability. Pediatric physical therapists understand physical activity is important for optimal development and use play to meet child and family goals. A pediatric physical therapist is an excellent resource to help you choose or adapt activities to provide “just the right” challenge for your child’s learning and motor development at home or in the community. Pediatric physical therapists also work together within a team, including the family, to provide individualized evaluations, interventions, education and resources to enhance the overall health, wellness, fitness, and development of your child. Other team members might include the child’s teacher, childcare provider, physician, occupational therapist, and speech-language pathologist.
REFERENCES


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