



Caregiver of Children News – 3/2022



Now Accepting Applications!

Summer Work

IN EASTERN CONNECTICUT

for eligible youth ages 14-24 years old

(pending funding)

WORK AND LEARN!

JOBS MAY INCLUDE

- Human Service Assistants
- Retail & Clerical
- Library and Museum Aides
- Day Care Assistants
- Maintenance
- Customer Service
- Remote Classes, too!



HOW DO YOU APPLY?

Applications can be accessed at www.eastconn.org/youth-employment.

Paid minimum wage (\$14 per hour) to work a total of approximately 80 hours



You must be a resident of one of these towns to apply: Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, East Lyme, Eastford, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Jewett City, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Mystic, New London, North Stonington, Mansfield, Montville, Old Lyme, Norwich, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Willington, Windham, Woodstock and Waterford.



The program is funded by EWIB, local foundations and the State Department of Labor. Full program will run, pending funding



EASTCONN
Where Learning Comes to Life

376 Hartford Tpke., Hampton, CT

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This program is supported by Senior Resources – Agency on Aging with Title III funds made available under the Older American’s Act.





New England Science & Sailing

AFTER-SCHOOL STEM ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

HANDS ON ACTIVITIES

DEMONSTRATE & PRACTICE LEARNING SKILLS

FEEL EMPOWERED

HAVE FUN

Who: Elementary & Middle School Students

When: Elementary - Tuesdays 4pm-530pm

Middle School - Thursdays 4pm-6pm

Beginning Jan 25th & 27th

@ the Mohegan Commons Learning Center

20 E. Baltic St., Norwich

No cost!

Contact Erin Haggan

@ NYFS to register

860-823-3782 x3484



12 Ways Families Can Stay Active After School

<https://www.parents.com/health/healthy-happy-kids/ways-families-can-stay-active-after-school/>

During the summer, kids are an energetic whirlwind: From camp activities to swimming lessons and running through sprinklers, you rarely have to worry about where they're getting their exercise.

But while school is still in session, staying active as a family may feel like a challenge. Unless your child is naturally drawn to after-school sports, it's easy for physical health to go out the window—especially when kids are buried under a mountain of homework, studying for the end of year tests, and distracted by their electronic devices.

Thankfully, there are plenty of creative ways for kids to get moving once the last school bell rings, especially now that it's warm outside. We spoke with three moms to learn their unique parenting techniques that add fun activities to the family planner.

- 1. Take group walks.** Get your family into the habit of taking walks in the neighborhood after dinner. Not only will kids get some fresh air and exercise, but it's a great opportunity to bond, said Danielle Faust, [family lifestyle blogger](#) and mom of two in Florida.
- 2. Sign up for sports.** Of course, after-school sports are the most obvious way for kids to stay active. But sometimes, the competitive spirit or time commitment of school teams isn't a good fit. "Most communities still have local soccer or Little League teams that are a game and a practice a week," said Jennifer Nevins, founder of [keepsake box company Savor](#).
- 3. Be inspired by your kids' interests.** What do you do if your son or daughter is more of an artsy soul or computer geek than an athlete? Faust suggested using their natural interests as inspiration for activities to get them moving: "My kids are really into Minecraft, so we play tag but I tell them they have to move like a Minecraft character."
- 4. Get into the competitive spirit.** There's nothing like a little competition to stoke a kid's motivation to get off the couch. "If everyone has an activity tracker [like a Fitbit](#), you can give little rewards for the best step count," Faust said. "That will make [siblings](#) run to compete against each other!" Record the fun family challenge in the Fitbit app to see how family members are ranking in the friendly competition.
- 5. Go on nature hikes.** Hikes may not get your heart pumping as much as soccer practice, but they're a great opportunity to sneak in [some physical activity](#) while bird watching or looking for collectibles to use for craft projects, Faust suggested.
- 6. Take advantage of indoor play spaces.** So many of these physical activities require the cooperation of the weather. But what if it's too cold or rainy to run around outside? "There are lots of indoor play spaces popping up all over the place," Faust said. "We love bounce houses, indoor trampoline parks, and even "American Ninja Warrior"-style gyms for kids!"
- 7. Encourage "old-school" games from your childhood.** Do you remember when you used to play games of pick-up basketball with the neighbors? There's no reason why you can't pass your childhood games onto the next generation. "When I was growing up in Brooklyn, we were out all day and night playing games on the street," said Lori Lite, parenting author and founder of [Stress Free Kids](#). "Try stoop ball, hopscotch, or jump rope. Parents: get out your old jump rope and you can join in too!"
- 8. Take the stairs.** Encourage the whole family to ditch the elevators and escalators for stairs. Per Nevins' suggestion, you can even make a game out of it with stair races if you live in an apartment building.
- 9. Run together.** If you're a parent who likes to stay in shape, you may be used to going on morning jogs by yourself—but there's no reason why kids can't get involved too. "My son, who is 8, loves to go on runs with me," Nevins said. "The sense of accomplishment makes him feel great. Plus, we add things like taking turns counting off the light poles as we pass them, and the time goes by."
- 10. Put on a YouTube tutorial.** "Yes, that thing that often keeps them from any physical activity can also be a source of great (and free) exercise for all different ages," Nevins said. She suggested checking out kid-friendly exercise tutorial videos on YouTube.
- 11. Get in touch with your inner "om."** "Try out activities like [pilates or yoga](#) where you can take a more spiritual or metaphysical approach to exercise," Faust said. There are even YouTube channels (like [Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)) that teach kids yoga poses through storytelling.
- 12. Organize play dates around physical activities.** Make exercise a social activity! "The same kid that has zero interest in running or taking a walk with you will jump up and down to do an ice cube relay race or a three-legged race with his friends," Nevins said.

10 Benefits of Physical Activity for Kids

<https://www.parents.com/fun/sports/exercise/10-benefits-of-physical-activity/>

When many people decide to "get fit," they assume it involves rigorous activity. But you don't have to spend hours in a gym to be physically active. People can get in shape by performing everyday activities in the home. Every time you and your child throw a softball, swim a lap, climb a flight of stairs, walk to the store, or carry packages, your health and fitness levels are improving.

When someone is physically fit, she feels and looks better, and she stays healthier. The earlier a child starts getting in shape, the more she'll reduce her risk of numerous illnesses. Here are some of the benefits that physical activity offers your child:

1. **It strengthens the heart.** The heart is a muscle, and like other muscles, its performance improves when it's regularly challenged by exercise. The heart responds to exercise by becoming stronger and more efficient. Strengthening the heart muscle can help ward off heart disease—the leading cause of death in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—even in early childhood.
2. **It helps keep arteries and veins clear.** Exercise reduces the amount of harmful cholesterol and fats in a person's blood. It increases the flexibility of the walls of blood vessels, and helps to lower blood pressure. This can reduce a person's risk for heart attack and stroke.
3. **It strengthens the lungs.** Working hard increases lung capacity, and their efficiency in moving air in and out of the body. As a result, more oxygen is drawn into the body and more carbon dioxide and other waste gases are expelled. Regular exercise helps prevent the decline in oxygen intake that occurs naturally with age or as a result of inactivity.
4. **It reduces blood sugar levels.** Exercise prevents sugar from accumulating in the blood by triggering muscles to take up more glucose from the bloodstream and use it for energy. This can reduce a person's [risk of developing diabetes](#).
5. **It controls weight.** When a person is sedentary, he tends to be taking in more calories than are needed. These unused calories accumulate as fat. A person who is physically active may have a deficit of calories, which takes fat away and lowers weight. Lowered weight is good for the heart and can be beneficial in people with diabetes.
6. **It strengthens bones.** Just as muscles grow stronger when physically stressed, bones also respond by getting stronger. Adults start losing bone mass in their 20s, but those who exercise regularly [reach greater peak bone density](#) (before the drop-off) than those who don't, according to the National Institutes of Health. Increased bone density helps prevent osteoporosis, a condition in which bones lose density, weaken, and become porous and fragile.
7. **It helps prevent cancer.** People who exercise regularly have lower incidences of cancer. The cancers most affected include colon, prostate, uterine, and breast cancers.
8. **It regulates blood pressure.** Exercise has been shown to reduce stress levels. As the levels of stress in a person's body subsides, his blood pressure and his risk for heart disease decline.
9. **It improves energy levels.** Regular exercise often makes people feel more energetic, allows them to be more active, and reduces the likelihood that they'll tire during the day.
10. **It enhances emotional well-being.** Most people report that they feel calm and have a sense of well-being after they exercise. Exercise, according to one theory, releases beta-endorphin, a natural substance in the body that is hundreds of times more potent than morphine.

A 2019 [study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#) found that serotonin, a mood-regulating chemical the body produces, increases during exercise and can boost the energy and strength of our nerve cells, which may help ward off neurological disorders like Parkinson's Disease. Increased levels of serotonin in the central nervous system are also associated with feelings of well-being, heightening of appetite, and lessening of mental depression.

Keeping your child active during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/Article?contentid=3935&language=English>

Learn how to help your child stay active and provide them with the support they need to stay motivated.

Key points

- Find an activity that your child enjoys. This is the best source of motivation!
- Get the family involved. If it is an activity that the family can do (e.g. going for walks), everyone can keep each other motivated.
- Plan ahead to make sure your child knows the daily physical activities. Create a weekly plan to allot time to the activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for people to manage many aspects of their lives, especially physical activity levels. Many children have become more inactive because of changes to their school routine and the inability to participate in community sports and be with their friends and peers. These changes in activity levels can be a risk to your child's health and can also have a negative impact their sleep and mental health. It is important that your child stays active during their free time. Physical activity is an important part of growth and has many health-related benefits.

How active should your child be?

The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines say that children and youth aged 5 to 17 should accumulate **at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day**. This should include doing aerobic activities at least three days a week and activities that strengthen muscles and bones at least three days a week.

Exercise snacking

One way you can incorporate activity into your child's day is with the idea of "exercise snacking". You do this by planning multiple shorter activities, or exercise snacks, for your child that are spread throughout the day. These exercise snacks can add up to meet the goal of 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. This approach also helps to break up the amount of time your child spends sitting.

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How to build your best day

It may feel like a challenge to get your child and family started on a physical activity routine but it can be helpful to create a plan! Using a plan helps to keep your child motivated and to make sure they get 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day. Creating a plan for the week ahead can be a good visual reminder and make the physical activity goals more attainable and realistic. Check out the Build Your Best Day resource for a fun way of developing a day that meets the physical activity recommendations (<http://buildyourbestday.participation.com/en-ca/>).

Doctors, physiotherapists and exercise physiologists use a simple formula called the FITT principle to prescribe exercise. The FITT principle stands for:

- **Frequency:** How many days per week you are physically active?
- **Intensity:** How much effort does your activity take (low, moderate or high)?
- **Time:** How long are you active each day?
- **Type:** What type of activity are you doing (strength, yoga, dance, skating, etc.)?

The FITT principle can act as a guide to help you develop a physical activity plan that is specific for you and your child. You can use each of the components of FITT as outlined below to help you set realistic goals for your child.

- Start with a smaller goal such as having your child being active three days a week and then increase the number of active days over time.
- Start with low intensity activities if that is best for your child and help them build up their tolerance. It will be more enjoyable for your child to go at a pace they can keep up with.
- Get your child exercising for 30 minutes a day at the start, half the recommended amount of activity and build from there.
- Remember that your child does not have to do all the activity at one time. For example, it can be two activities of 15 minutes each.

As important as each of the components of the FITT principle are, the most important thing is that your child just gets moving every day. Here are some examples of lower and higher intensity activities that your child could do.

Lower intensity

- Going for walks
- Yoga
- Low intensity cycling
- Low intensity/low impact fitness videos
- Walking on a treadmill

Higher intensity

- Sports (soccer, basketball, volleyball, etc.)
- Dancing
- Fitness videos
- Jogging/running
- Running around with friends outside

Use this time to try something new

Your child's preferred activities might not be available at the moment, but you can still promote active time. Your child can use equipment available at home (e.g., treadmill, elliptical, bicycle) or a fun fitness video on YouTube. YouTube has a variety of videos for dancing, full body exercises, strengthening and yoga. You may want to expose your child to a variety of activities to see which they prefer. Finding an activity that your child likes will be the most important factor in keeping your child active and motivated to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Let's get started!

- Below is a list of activities. Suggest these to your child and find what sparks their interest.
- Create a weekly plan to visually lay out what activities to do and when to do them by organizing each day.
- Participate in the activities with your child when possible.
- Take advantage of weekends to plan family activities involving movement.
- Set reminders to get up and move around every hour.
- Set mini goals with your child. This could range from doing 10 minutes of any activity three times per day to accumulating 30 minutes of movement each day.
- If your child owns an activity tracking device, they can track their daily steps. Setting a step count goal can be a great way to create mini challenges.
 - These devices can also track amounts of exercise and give reminders to move.
- Encourage, encourage, encourage!!!
- Positively reinforce any effort your child makes to be active.

Examples of activities

Outdoor activities

- Walking
- Skating
- Cycling
- Tobogganing
- Skiing/snowboarding
- Running around/playing outside

Indoor activities

- Dancing
- Yoga
- Online fitness videos
- Using any at-home equipment (free weights, resistance bands, treadmill, etc.)
- Children fitness videos

Online platforms for children:

- <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga> (Cosmic Kids - Yoga)
- <https://family.gonoodle.com/channels/indoor-recess/> (GoNoodle - Activities)
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/MovetoLearnMS/playlists> (MovetoLearn - Exercise)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oe_HDfdmnaM&list=PLCpoNIIHvo1TVazT_kiWL194kefYiAed1&index=21 (Just Dance playlist)

Online platforms for adolescents:

- <https://www.downdogapp.com> (Down Dog Yoga)
- <https://www.fitnessblender.com> (Fitness Blender - Workouts)
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiQyPKgbtKzdPqALmEylu5B3cWBhY0N0w> (Beginner HIIT Workouts)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbYZH3Eu6hs&list=PLGS4SAu2F13fVzyTI-sCpXrPu42AKkNNO> (Just Dance playlist - more videos to explore on YouTube)

Additional benefits of physical activity

Sleep

Physical activity is not only important for reducing the amount of time your child is inactive but it will also help improve their sleep quality. Having an increased level of physical activity throughout the day can contribute to a better sleep schedule and quality of sleep.

Here are some suggestions to help your child get a good night's sleep:

- Have a relaxing bedtime routine. Your child should go to bed at about the same time each night. You should keep their room cool, dark and quiet but open the curtains or turn on the lights as soon as they get up in the morning.
- Your child should always fall asleep in their bed. They should use their bed for sleeping only. Your child should avoid doing homework, using a smartphone or tablet, or playing video games while in bed. They should turn off screens at least 30 minutes before the time they want to sleep. Children aged 14 to 17 should be in their bed with the lights out for 8 to 10 hours every night. Children aged 5 to 13 should be in their bed with the lights out for 9 to 11 hours every night.
- Napping during the day can make it difficult to fall asleep at night. If your child wants to nap, they keep it short (less than 30 minutes). Definitely do not nap after dinner.
- Get exercise every day.
- Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks), especially after mid-afternoon. On weekends, no matter how late your child goes to bed, they should get up within 2 to 4 hours of their usual wake up time. This is especially important if they have trouble falling asleep on Sunday nights.
- Make sure your child is not trying to do too much. Make sure your child still has time to have fun and to get enough sleep. If your child is having trouble sleeping because they have too much on their mind, suggest they keep a diary or to-do lists. If they write things down before sleep, they may feel less worried or stressed.

Mental well-being

The COVID-19 pandemic and related social restrictions have affected how we feel. Keeping a healthy mind by doing physical activities, as well as mindfulness, can help your child cope with the current situation and general life stressors. Below is a list of mindful resources to help with coping.



We hope you find the March edition of our Caregiver of Children newsletter informative.

Senior Resources currently produces a monthly caregiver of children newsletter. We are looking for feedback on any ideas you may have for future editions.

Please contact Robin Brewer with any ideas/suggestions or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list.

Robin Brewer: RBrewer@seniorresourcesec.org or 860 887-3561 x 124.

To read previous editions of this newsletter please visit:

www.SeniorResourcesEC.org/stay-informed/grandparent-newsletter