

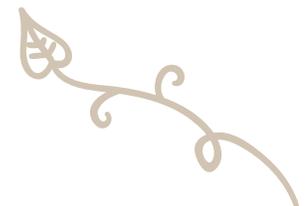
Let's Play!

Activities for Families



**SET
4**

Well-Being and Belonging



Being Calm



What

Try this experience with your child as a way to introduce positive coping strategies when dealing with challenging situations. It is based on the idea that when parents are calm, children learn to calm themselves, too.

1 Create the Environment

- Talk with your child about learning to be calm.
- Ask your child for times when they were upset or struggled to be calm.

2 Try sharing different ways of being calm with your child:

- Try doing calming activities together
 - » Take deep breaths together. “Breathe in while I count to three. Now breathe out while I count to three”
 - » Pretend to blow up a balloon
 - » Blow a cotton ball across a table
- Point out when your child is being calm
 - » “I see that you are breathing slowly. You look calm”
 - » “Holding your stuffed animal helps you calm down, doesn’t it?”
 - » “Your face looks relaxed—you are staying calm”
- Talk about being calm
 - » “Let’s take some deep breaths together before we go outside”
 - » “I feel so much better after I have taken a few big breaths”

Why

Through this experience, children learn to

- Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation
- Express a sense of personal well-being
- Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views
- Build healthy relationships with adults

*Breathe
Deeply*

How

Let your child watch you take deep breaths. Explain what you are doing as you breathe in and out.

Gently blow your breath out slowly onto your child's face, then smile. You can also try blowing out candles or blowing bubbles.

Hold your baby chest-to-chest and breathe slowly for a few minutes—your baby will feel calmer.

Place a toy on your child's stomach, and they can lift and lower the toy with each breath.

Incorporate mirrors so your child can see themselves in different emotional states (parents should try to stay as calm as possible).

Talk about being calm. For example, "Let's think together. What are some things that help us stay calm?" Try to use the suggestions you come up with together (i.e. taking a deep breath, pausing before speaking), then describe and positively reinforce what your child tried.

Here are some ideas, but brainstorm with your child other ideas that will be helpful:

- If you are feeling sad, sick, tired, bored, sluggish—try stretching
- If you are feeling happy, calm, feeling okay, focused—drink water
- If you are feeling frustrated, worried, or feel like you are losing control—take deep breaths
- If you are feeling mad/angry, scared, upset or out of control—take a break

Pause and think about being calm throughout the day...

- First thing in the morning
- At bedtime
- Before and during a new activity
- When you're frustrated or anxious
- When you are in a hurry

Read a story with your child about animals, movement or other ideas that connect with the activity.

Here is a suggestion:

- *Breath* by Scott Magoon

Where

This activity can occur anywhere, preferable in a quiet place away from noise and distractions.

When

This activity can occur during any time of the day.

Reference

The Child & Family Partnership www.reachinginreachingout.com

Relax

Building a Sandcastle or Snowcastle



What

This is a game you and your child can play in winter or in the summer, and it is especially fun with a group of children. Here are some ideas on how to do this:

1 Create the Environment

- Show pictures and discuss sandcastles or snowcastles with your child, and see if they would be interested in making one.
- Brainstorm ideas on what material you would need to make the castle, and see if you have it around the house. Regular sand buckets or plastic drinking glasses can create a magnificent castle of snow and ice, or of sand.
- Model language about teamwork, acknowledging that you are working together and that being a team makes you happy.

2 Building Activities

- When you go outside, designate one area or station for collecting the snow or sand in the buckets, and another area for building the castles to encourage movement from one space to another
- You can help your child fill up the bucket with snow or sand, and then help them turn the bucket over to the area where you are building the castle
- Run with your child from the place where you are collecting the snow or sand to the place where you are building the castle. Try hopping, galloping, skipping, or just walking to the castle from the collecting station.

While you are playing, consider asking your child questions such as

- How tall and big do you want to make the castle?
- How does the snow or sand feel?
- How can you decorate the castle together?

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Build healthy relationships with both adults and other children
- Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, especially with physical activity
- Feel confident and in control of their bodies
- Enjoy being physically active



How

Help your child fill the bucket with snow/ice along with you. Invite children to help turn the container or bucket over and lift it away to make the castle.

Invite children to fill and turn the container over themselves. Encourage them to take turns or co-operate during each task.

Prompt your child to design their own style of castle, and encourage them to find other materials to be part of their creation (for example, rocks, sticks, shells).

Read a story with your child about building, snow or other ideas that connect with the activity. Here is a suggestion:

- *Sandcastle Contest* by Robert Munsch & Michael Martchenko

Where

This activity can occur outdoors.

When

Try these activities in the morning or the afternoon.

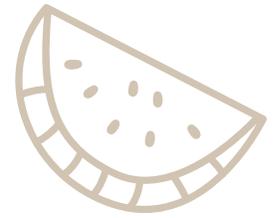
Reference

Adapted from LIVE 5-2-1-0 and Appetite to Play:

<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/games-activities-3-5-yrs/snow-castle-relay>



Creating a Bundle of Fun with Watermelon



What

Children learn through all five senses (touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste). In this activity, you will use a defined food theme, like watermelon (or any other food that your child likes or is interested in) and incorporate all five senses to help children learn about food. The more children understand about food, the more likely they are to try new foods and eat a healthy diet. Learning about food can be fun!

1 Create the Environment

- Notice what types of food your child is interested in. For example, they may enjoy watermelon, another type of fruit, or a traditional food or meal you have in your home or community.
- Tell your child what you notice and ask for more information. "I noticed that you love (watermelon)! What do you love about it?" Tell your child about a similar food that you love and why.
- If your child isn't yet answering complex questions, using visuals will help. Point to a picture or the actual food and label it. "Look! Watermelon!" Offer it for a snack.

2 Explore Food Together

- Have your child help you prepare the food or serve it for a snack. Observe how your child interacts with the food. For example, your child might try to grab the watermelon, bite into the watermelon, or try to pick out the seeds.
- Think of different ways your child can use their five senses to explore this food. You can ask your child questions such as "What does it sound like when you eat it?" or you can model using different senses "The watermelon feels cold/wet/sticky to me." Here are some words that describe watermelon that you could try:
 - » Taste: yummy, sweet, watery, crunchy, fresh, juicy
 - » Touch: sticky, cold, hard, squishy, wet
 - » Smell: fresh, bland, sweet, earthy
 - » Sight: drippy, bright, colourful, speckled, round
 - » Hear: crunchy, mushy, soft, loud

Why

Through this experience, children will

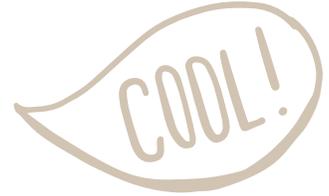
- Build a healthy relationship with food including beginning to develop skills to grow, select, and cook food
- Understand and enjoy the different qualities of food
- Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, including guidelines for good health
- Build healthy relationships with both adults and children (when playing)



How

Ask your child open-ended questions about the food they like:

- Where do you think this food comes from, or where is it grown?
- What colours do you see?
- What does it feel like?
- What do you think it tastes like?



Gather a variety of foods, some preferred and some non-preferred, and have a taste test! Use toothpicks or forks if your child is hesitant to touch foods with their fingers. Model trying a new food by putting your lips and/or tongue to it, describing it, and then putting it down. Keep the activity open-ended and fun to avoid a power struggle over trying new foods.

Let children prepare the watermelon by cutting it with cookie cutters or plastic/butter knives. Be sure to support your child's safety if it's their first time using a knife.

Try out a silly rhyming song, like *Down by the Bay*, and sing together while you're eating or preparing the watermelon.

Try different colours of watermelon or freeze it using popsicle sticks as holders, for a new and different texture.

Using chalk, draw watermelons, vines, and leaves on a sidewalk or on a concrete playground. You can hop through the patch to try to land on the watermelons, hop over them, or you can make up your own game!

Read a book with your child about trying new foods.

Here are suggestions:

- *I Won't Eat That*, by Christopher Silas Neale
- *Sandwich Swap*, by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah

SAFETY TIPS

- Help your child to wash their hands with soap and water before and after preparing food
- Supervise your child when using kitchen utensils, especially knives
- For active play, make sure the area is clear of obstacles before playing

Where

You can try this activity indoors or outdoors.

When

You can try this activity with your child before and during meal times or any time of the day.

References

Appetite to Play. Creating a bundle of Fun – Using Themes to Incorporate Food Literacy.

Retrieved from <https://www.appetitetoplay.com/healthy-eating/tips-ideas/creating-bundle-fun-using-themes-incorporate-food-literacy>

Appetite to Play. Bundles of Fun with Watermelon.

Retrieved from <https://www.appetitetoplay.com/healthy-eating/food-activities/bundles-fun-watermelon>



Hummm!

What

Humming and singing can be a way to work through difficult and challenging emotions that your child might have. Use this activity as a tool to support your child to relax and breathe through a variety of situations.

1 Create the Environment

- If your child is going through difficult or challenging emotions, try sitting with your child in a space that is calming to both of you. Sit up straight but remain relaxed.
- Explain that you have learned something new and you would like to try it together.

2 Make a humming sound. Hummmm!

- With your child, close your eyes and your lips. Hum a few notes to yourself until you find one that you like. Try asking your child to do the same.
- Breathe in deeply. Breathing out, hum your note. Breathe in. Breath out and hummm!
- Ask your child to press their hands to their chest to notice the vibration of the humming. Ask your child what they feel in their hand and in their body.
- Breathe in. Breathe out and hummm! Ask your child to let the humming send peace or calm into their body and their heart.
- Before your child finishes the exercise, ask your child to quiet their humming and take three soft breaths.
- Ask your child how they feel. Try asking your child if they want to try a different note that might make them feel better and calmer

Why

Through this experience, children will

- Recognize, accept, and express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views
- Adapt to experiences of change, surprise, and uncertainty
- Practice ways to keep themselves healthy, including regulating their emotions
- Feel a sense of security, self-respect, and self-regulation
- Build healthy relationships with both adults and others

How

Your child might need practice before doing this activity with you. If so, model breathing and humming for your child and encourage them to try something (e.g., close their eyes, sit up straight, breathe, or hum).

Instead of humming, try a favorite song that is slow and soothing. Or try slowing down a favorite song that is usually fast and exciting.

Show your child how you can use this tool when you feel difficult or challenging emotions. When you start to get frustrated or impatient, notice out loud (“I’m starting to feel frustrated”), and tell your child that you will try and hum. Be honest with your child about whether it helped you. Maybe they will have an idea for another tool!

Have your child sit on your lap, so they can feel both the vibrations of your humming and your deep breathing.

Read a book about relaxing and becoming calm or something else that connects with this theme.

Here are suggestions:

- *Breathe Like a Bear*, by Kira Willey
- *I Am Peace*, by Susan Verde

Where

Try to find a quiet, calming spot. Sometimes closing your eyes and sitting close together covered with a blanket or a jacket can create a cozy spot.

When

This activity can occur during any time of the day.

Reference

Braun, M., & Stewart W. (2017). *Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus and Calm*. [Activity Deck]. Cambridge, MA: Barefoot Books.

Pizza Pizzazz



What

Cooking with your child, or pretend cooking, is a good activity for developing imagination, learning about where food comes from, and engaging in mealtime conversation. Children are more likely to try a variety of fruits and vegetables if they have a chance to learn about them in a fun way. Homemade pizza can be a healthy meal because it includes all food groups.

1 Create the Environment

- Ask your child if they would like to make a (pretend) pizza with you.
- Share a memory of having pizza or ask your child to remember the last pizza they had. Was it a special occasion? Did someone take the last slice of their favorite kind? Was the pizza spicy?

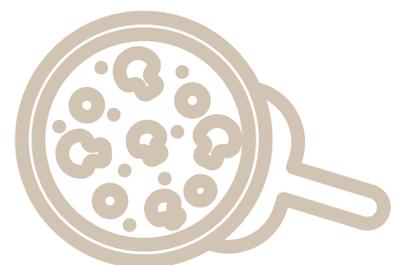
2 Play!

- Play “pizza making” with your child using playdough, blocks, scarves, or other open-ended materials. Let your child lead the pretend play.
- Ask questions like, “Who will make the dough, and who will prepare the toppings?” and “How are we going to cook our pizza?”
- Talk about what kind of pizza you want to eat. “I like (name a food) on my pizza. What do you like on your pizza?” Talk about common pizza toppings and silly or make-believe pizza toppings.
- Pretend to eat pizza together. Sit down and enjoy a conversation while you eat.

Why

Through this experience, children learn to

- Explore the world using their bodies and their senses
- Build, create, and design using different materials and techniques
- Be creative and expressive in a variety of ways



How

Start with pretend play, then you might try making real pizza.

Help your child lead the pretend play by asking questions that encourage imagination—“What should we use to make pizza sauce? What kind or colour of cheese should we use?”

For children who are learning to talk and play, try copying their play, and then introducing one new idea. If your child is focused on building a giant pizza, build a giant pizza alongside them. Then try “eating” a piece and say “Yum!!!” Watch to see if your child copies you.

Add some props like a rolling pin and cookie sheet. Make pizza menus with pictures of foods that go on pizzas.

Try real life pizza making and make individual pizzas using different breads as bases (English muffins, pitas, bagels, roti, bannock, or tortillas). Encourage your child to choose their own toppings.

For special days, make pizza treats, or try some of these ideas:

- Create “Cookie Cutter pizzas.” For Halloween, cut pita bread or English muffins with a jack-o-lantern cookie cutter. Add peppers, mushrooms, ham, or turkey cut into shapes for the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Create “Holiday Pizzas.” Shape dough into a heart for Valentine’s Day or an evergreen tree for a winter celebration.
- Create “Fruit Pizzas.” Use biscuit dough as a base, yogurt for “sauce” and slices of apple, banana, pineapple chunks, and other fruits as toppings. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Read a book with your child about pizza or other ideas that connect with this theme.

Suggestions are:

- *Pete’s a Pizza* by William Steig
- *Pizza at Sally’s* by Monica Wellington

SAFETY TIPS

- Help your child to wash their hands with soap and water before and after preparing food
- Supervise your child when using kitchen utensils, especially knives
- For active play, make sure the area is clear of obstacles before playing

Where

This activity can be played indoors or outdoors.

When

Try this activity before mealtimes or any time for pretend play.

Reference

Appetite to Play. *Pizza Pizzazz*.

Retrieved from <https://www.appetitetoplay.com/healthy-eating/food-activities/pizza-pizzazz>



Sleeping Bunny



What

There are many simple, easy ways to explore movement with children. Rhythmic language and song make movement activities engaging and predictable. Try this poem and the accompanying actions with your child to explore more about body movement.

1 Create the Environment

- Ask your child how they're feeling. Be specific when telling your child how you're feeling (e.g. sleepy, playful, ill, calm).
- Tell your child that you learned a new game that you want to try together.

2 Sleeping Bunny

"See the little bunnies sleeping til it's nearly noon" (have your child pretend they are sleeping).

"Shall we wake them with a merry tune?"

"They're so still, are they ill?"

"No! Wake up bunnies!" (Encourage your child to stand up and do the following actions below).

"Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop" (encourage your child to hop around).

"Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop" (encourage your child to hop around and repeat as many times as you wish).

Why

Through this experience, children will learn to

- Find ways to keep themselves healthy including sleep and physical activity
- Feel confident in their control of their own bodies
- Enjoy being physically active

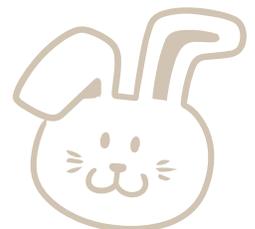
How

Try the Sleeping Bunny poem game.

Instead of hopping, try jumping or dancing, or whatever movement your child might want to try.

Explore what other animals your child wants to pretend to be. Before reading the poem, try asking your child questions such as

- What animal would you like to try next?
- How does that animal move?
- How can you make your body look like that animal?
- How can you make your body move like that animal?



Below are some examples of movements, but use your imagination to explore many ways to move.

Animal	Movement	Reminders
Horse	Gallop	Keep right foot always in front of the left as you step/run
Flamingo	Balance on one foot	Stand up tall, arms out to your side. Lift one foot and balance on the other
Tortoise	Move slowly	Move slowly and quietly
Frog	Squat down low and jump up high	Reach down and touch the ground between your feet, then jump
Bird	Move arms out to your side	Move arms up and down, as in flapping motions
Mouse	Move quietly, walk, step, or jump quietly	Run on your tippy toes as quietly as you can. Jump up and down while landing quietly, so no one can hear you!
Penguin	Step, waddle and kick, with small arm flapping (small movements)	Waddle, kick, waddle, kick!
Dinosaur	Step, stomp, run, or walk	Make big movements—could be light and fast or heavy and slow

These movements could be used for imitating many more animals. Try moving like superheroes, or try moving like nature’s elements such as the ocean, trees in the wind, a growing flower, pouring rain, or a tornado!

With your child, suggest making up a new creature. Discuss how children can act out their creature’s movements! There are many possibilities, but the key is to have fun and get kids moving!

Read a story with your child about animals, movement or other ideas that connect with the activity. Here is a suggestion:

- *The Way Home in the Night* by Akiko Miyakoshi

Where

This activity can occur indoors or outdoors.

Reference

Child Health BC. (2017). Appetite to Play. Retrieved from: <https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/tips-ideas/teaching-fundamental-movement-skills>

When

This activity can occur any time of the year, or any time of the day.





Walking on the Wild Side

What

Exploring outside in the forest, on the beach, in the snow, or in other natural areas can be fun for children. This outdoor activity supports creativity and building confidence.

1 Create the Environment

- On a day you're ready to explore outside, give your child some time to get ready. If possible, give your child a choice about where to go.
- Look at the weather and talk together about what clothing you will need to wear to be comfortable.

2 Walk on the Wild Side!

- Go for a walk with your child or family and create different obstacles out of the natural things you come across. Here are some examples
 - » Jump in or over a puddle
 - » Hop over fallen twigs
 - » Roll down a hill or through a pile of leaves
 - » Balance along fallen trees
 - » Climb a tree or hang from a low hanging branch
 - » Find a rock to throw into a creek, lake, or ocean
 - » Collect a pile of leaves or pinecones. Try picking up one at a time, two at a time....
 - » Find a large rock to climb up and over
 - » Run to one tree, skip to the next, then walk sideways to another

Why

Through this experience, children will

- Feel confidence in, and control of their bodies
- Learn ways to keep themselves healthy, including different physical activities
- Explore the outdoors and learn about nature
- Adapt to and enjoy experiences of change, surprise, and uncertainty



How

Go for a walk with your child, and point out the different natural formations, elements, and growths that you see (e.g., trees, lakes, oceans, rocks).

Support your child if needed, by holding hands, helping them keep their balance, or putting them on your shoulders to feel branches and leaves of trees. Even children who are not yet walking love to climb and be held up high.

Encourage your child to try to balance, hang, or climb without help from an adult. If your child uses a wheelchair or a walker, try zooming fast through a puddle to make a big splash!

When you return home, talk about or write down all the movement or actions you created and see how many different locations you can perform these actions in, such as the beach, forest, mountains, and park.

Read a book with your child about exploring or other ideas that connect with this theme.

Here are suggestions:

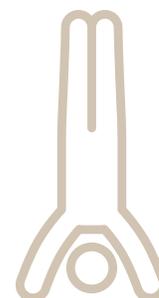
- *Explorers of the Wild*, by Cale Atkinson
- *Sometimes I like to Curl up in a Ball*, by Vicki Churchill

Where

This activity has been created to occur outdoors.

When

Try this activity during daylight hours wherever it is bright enough to move around safely.



Yoga Poses



What

Move through a variety of yoga poses that are safe and fun for kids. Try asking questions to your child while doing the poses.

1 Create the Environment

Breathing

Every yoga class begins with a few quiet minutes to get the body and mind ready for the practice. Breathing helps our minds and bodies relax. You can say, "Let's sit in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Slowly, breathe in through your nose (pause), and out through your mouth (pause). Breathe in through your nose (pause), and out through your mouth (pause). Feel your body and mind getting ready for yoga. Slowly open your eyes." You can ask, "How do you feel inside? How does your body feel? Are you feeling tired, or are you feeling awake?"



For younger children, you can also teach breathing by using a toy that is placed on your child's belly. Watch the toy rise as you inhale and drop when you exhale. You can also do this with an expandable toy sphere or balloon.

2 Poses

Child's pose

Tell your child, "Let's do the child's pose together." (Sit on your heels, lower your forehead to the ground and extend your arms way out in front of you). Ask, "Did you feel your knees pushing on your belly? This pose helps your belly digest food better." Push up on all fours, and return to sitting on your heels.



Downward facing dog pose

This pose helps build strong muscles, increases flexibility of the joints and spine, and builds confidence in our body's ability to move in unique ways. You can say, "Let's do the downward facing dog pose together." (Begin in an all fours position, hands under shoulders, and knees under hips. Curl your toes under. Straighten your legs and then straighten your arms. Hold this upside-down V position for three breaths. Carefully return to all fours). Ask, "How does your body feel? How do you feel inside? "Are you feeling tired, or are you feeling awake?"



Tree pose

Balancing poses, like the tree, improve our ability to focus, pay attention, and concentrate for longer and longer periods of time. Tell your child, "Imagine you are a tall tree with roots growing out the bottoms of your feet. Let's do the tree pose together." (Begin in a standing position with palms touching and thumbs resting on your heart. Shift your weight to your left leg and slowly raise your right foot to your ankle, shin, or inner thigh with your knee facing out. Slowly return your foot to the floor and repeat on the other side). Ask, "Was one side easier than the other? Balancing poses take practice, and you will get better and better!"



Sequences

There are sequences of yoga poses, done without stopping, which make our hearts beat faster, strengthening the heart muscle and giving us energy. Tell your child, "Let's put our downward facing dog and child's poses together." (Begin with the downward facing dog pose, lower to all fours and move into the child's pose, return to all fours and then the downward facing dog pose, back to all fours and the child's pose. Rest here). Ask, "Do you feel your heart beating faster? It's getting stronger!"



Why

Through this experience, children will be learning

- To communicate thoughts and experiences
- To be curious about vocabulary (for example, names of yoga poses) and concepts
- About their personal identity (deeper understanding of self) and mindfulness
- Problem solving
- Positive coping skills
- Personal emotions

How

Try the poses with your child.

Read a book about animals and act out the animals in yoga or other poses. Encourage your child to pose page-by-page along with the story.

Make up poses together: yoga for kids should be creative. Encourage your child to make up new poses and name them. This activity is great for practicing language skills. Make animal sounds. Use action gestures. Hop like a bunny and slither like a snake.

Read a story with your child about yoga, body awareness or other ideas that connect with the activity. Here is a suggestion:

- *A Morning with Grandpa* by Sylvia Liu & Christina Forshay

Explore HealthyFamiliesBC to find more activities to share with your child:

<https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/about-us>

Where

This activity can occur indoors or outdoors.

When

Try this activity any time of the day. You can even try it before sleep for relaxation.

Adapted from Appetite to Play and PBS Kids:

<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/physical-activity/games-activities-3-5-yrs/yoga-poses>

