

How to be an Active Family Resources



Submissions from Boston Children's Faculty and Staff

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Dear Friends,

Family time is essential for all members, from grandparents to the smallest infant. We hope that you can combine family connections with healthy physical activities that will strengthen your body, mind, and spirit. If you would like to suggest additional activities for this list, please email ofd@childrens.harvard.edu and we will include them in a 2nd edition.



Physical Activities for Fitness: designed to encourage aerobic conditioning; remember to start with moderate effort and increase the effort as your child (and you) becomes stronger:

- Roller skating
- Hula hoops
- Stair climbs, such as at the Porter Square subway station, can be vigorous
- Jump rope, singly and with partners
- Jogging with dogs
- Family games in the backyard or basement/living room, pick-up basketball in the driveway or local park, making obstacle courses with your kids
- Hiking, snowshoeing
- Bicycling (Minuteman Bike Path)
- Recreational sports: pickleball, tennis, soccer, baseball, volleyball, badminton, ice skating, swimming (pools in winter)
- Paddleboarding/kayaking/canoeing in warm weather



Recreational Activities that Encourage Movement: we all need extra movement in our everyday lives in addition to the recommended aerobic conditioning minutes outlined in the previous section; the list below suggests how your family can add recreational steps or stretches to your leisure hours:

- deCordova Museum or other museums with outdoor grounds
- The Trustees' Properties
- Local farms
- In the neighborhood: nature scavenger hunt and walking trails
- Fishing
- Boating
- Local—or non-local—playgrounds
- Frog pond (summer and winter)
- Yoga stretches

1. Creative

- a. Art museums
- b. Pottery
- c. Painting
- d. Photography
- e. Visit neighborhood or ethnic markets
- f. Karaoke
- g. Dancing

2. Intellectual

- a. Museums
- b. Aquariums
- c. Escape rooms
- d. Board games
- e. Make up plays
- f. Visit historical sites
- g. Zoos
- h. Teens can research vintage exercise programs and assess what might still be effective: tip – look at the mid-century Royal Canadian Air Force program for women (XBX) and men (5BX) which are still practiced (google for online videos)



Walking through a museum or exploring a neighborhood can stretch both mind and body

Children with Disabilities

Accessible Trails: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-trails>

Adaptive Sports New England has wonderful programs for families who have members with physical, intellectual or emotional differences. adaptivesportsne.org

Yoga for kids with special needs <https://www.specialyoga.com/>

Yoga for autistic kids <https://voicecolorsyoga.org/>

Article from December 2021 *Pediatrics*:

Promoting the Participation of Children and Adolescents With Disabilities in Sports, Recreation, and Physical Activity:

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/148/6/e2021054664/183444/Promoting-the-Participation-of-Children-and?autologincheck=redirected>

Parks, T-Accessible

Alewife brook <https://www.mass.gov/locations/alewife-brook-reservation>

Arnold Arboretum <https://arboretum.harvard.edu/>

Bell Isle <https://www.mass.gov/locations/belle-isle-marsh-reservation>

Blue hills <https://www.mass.gov/locations/blue-hills-reservation>

Boston Harbor Islands <https://www.mass.gov/locations/boston-harbor-islands>

Brook Farm <https://www.mass.gov/locations/brook-farm-historic-site> <https://newtonconservators.org/events/>

Castle Island <https://www.boston-discovery-guide.com/castle-island.html>

Charles River Reservation Ice Skating rink <http://www.ohranger.com/ma/charles-river-reservation>

Ice skating is available at Daly Memorial Rink, Nonantum Road, Brighton, with concession stand, skate rentals, sharpening and lessons. Rinks are open from mid-November to mid-March.

Chestnut hill Reservation <https://www.mass.gov/locations/chestnut-hill-reservation>

Ice Rink <https://www.mass.gov/locations/dcr-reilly-memorial-rink>

Rose Kennedy Greenway <https://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/>

The Southwest Corridor Park (<https://www.mass.gov/locations/southwest-corridor-park>)

Parks, MA

All State Parks

https://www.mass.gov/visit-massachusetts-state-parks/locations?_page=1

Activities, Primarily Outdoors

Appalachian Mountain Club [Homepage – Appalachian Mountain Club \(outdoors.org\)](http://www.outdoors.org)

Mass Audubon Society <https://web.massaudubon.org/>

- Nature Play Days <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/nature-play-days>
- Scavenger hunts <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/nature-play-days/scavenger-hunt>
- Nature Bingo <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/nature-play-days/nature-bingo>
- Young Explorers <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/young-explorers>
- Early explorers bird watch [https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/results/\(keywords\)/bird](https://www.massaudubon.org/program-catalog/results/(keywords)/bird)
- Programs for Teens <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/families-with-children/programs-for-teens>
- Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/drumlin-farm>

Trustees of the Reservation [The Trustees of Reservations - The Trustees of Reservations](http://www.thetrustees.org)

- Things to do <https://thetrustees.org/things-to-do/>
- Family Fun <https://thetrustees.org/program/fall-family-fun/>
- Stroller friendly hikes <https://thetrustees.org/content/stroller-friendly-hikes/>

If your family would like an urban adventure and you live in metro Boston, take the T to any location in the city and navigate a walking route home. Make the journey appealing by planning stops along the way (shopping, refreshments) and ask a family member to plan the route and track mileage. When you arrive home, have some activities ready for optimal relaxation.

Activities, Indoors and Virtual

"KidPower" exhibit at the Boston Children's Museum (<https://bostonchildrensmuseum.org/visit/floor-plan> - now open at reduced capacity)

Science in the Playground" at the Museum of Science (<https://www.mos.org/exhibits/science-in-the-park>)

YMCA Family Friendly Pilates

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUTmIKvpb40>

Exercise videos for kids: <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

Yoga websites for kids:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga/featured>

<https://www.kidsyogastories.com/>

Fitness instructor Jessica Smith has many free indoor workouts, all levels, on her youtube channel.

Teens can explore the options on wintry weather days <https://jessicasmithtv.com/exercise-videos/> -

Social Media, for Guidance and Tips

<https://www.girltrek.org/> - This organization focuses on the health needs of Black women/girls and has virtual events for families; while group walks are suspended due to the pandemic, GirlTrek still encourages its members to walk for 30 minutes a day. Motivational guides are offered.

Instagram accounts (these are all quite baby/toddler focused):

@hikingwithharps or website: <http://hikingwithharps.com/>

- Montessori-inspired ways to engage your child in outdoor play, foster curiosity and learn independence

@whereisbriggs (<https://www.instagram.com/whereisbriggs/?hl=en>)

@spirit.and.guts (<https://www.instagram.com/spirit.and.guts/>)

- focused on traveling and being active with babies/toddlers

Website resources:

Hikeitbaby- Helps parents connect on group hikes, also lots of info on trails, gear, tips for getting outside with little ones.

<https://mommypoppins.com/boston> Mommy Poppins; website with local family events

Fitness Coach for kids

https://www.simplemost.com/fitness-coach-offers-free-daily-kids-workouts-online/?partner=scripps&au=scrippssyn&partner-sub=KIVI&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=partner&utm_campaign=scripps&utm_content=KIVI

TedX talk about the importance of free play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bg-GEzM7iTk>

Article about important of informal (vs. formal) sport: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/freedom-learn/200911/some-lessons-taught-informal-sports-not-formal-sports>

Books

Great book on the importance of free play by Dr. Peter Gray:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00B3M3KZG/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_bibl_vppi_i0

Two great reads:

Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, by Richard Louv

The Nature Fix, Why Nature Makes up Happier, Healthier, and More Creative, by Florence Williams

Gear

- LL Bean

- Patagonia

- Reima

Discounts

Families who live in Boston and have a library card are able to get discounted tickets to museums and other venues (aquarium, zoo, etc):

<https://www.bpl.org/museum-passes/>

Bank of America Museums in US Program <https://about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/what-guides-us/arts-and-culture.html#fbid=LmVbUFBwu1I/hashlink=museums-on-us>

The YMCA monthly rate for teens is only \$18/month

BCH discounts for employees <https://bostonchildrenshospital.perkspot.com/filter/25/new/0?epid=3>

HMS Outing and Innings (must have HMS ID #)

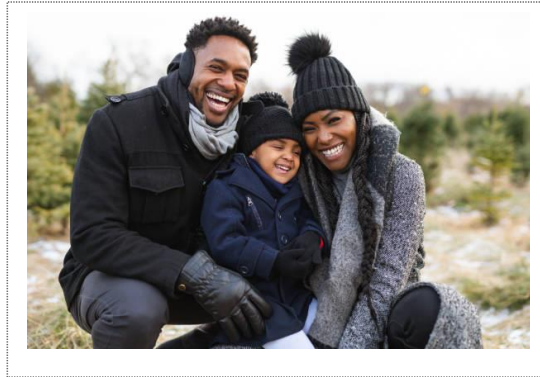
<https://outingsandinings.harvard.edu/Online/login.asp?targetPage=default.asp%3F>

Free admission for 2 with your HMS ID

Sackler Museum of Art <https://harvardartmuseums.org/>

Harvard Museum of Natural History <https://hmnh.harvard.edu/>

Start-up Family Fitness Tracker
Important tips: experiment and select the activities that your family enjoys!



Insert your family photo here

Activity	Date/time	Family Response/ Comments: Was the activity fun and/or worthwhile to pursue in the future? Encourage family members to add comments or suggestions!
<p>Sample tracker: ask a family member to create a customized tracker/planner; the tracker/planner can be posted or kept on a family desk.</p>		