

WHATEVER GETS YOU GOING

February 2007

Active Play

Active play will increase the chances of our children being physically active for life; Children are born with certain abilities and interests. Find things you and your child like to do.

If your child is artistically inclined, go on a nature hike to collect leaves and rocks that your child can use in a collage.

If your child likes to climb, head for the nearest neighborhood jungle gym.

If your child likes to read, walk to the neighborhood library for a book.

Imagine the possibility of your whole family getting a better sleep, feeling more relaxed, having more energy, and thinking clearer. These are a few things possible when physical activity is included in our everyday lives. Plan active play into your day! And most importantly, have fun!

GO ...play with your kids!

Active Play

We often hear parents say that their children are naturally physically active all the time. In reality, 2/3rds of Canadian children are not active enough for optimal growth and development and it is a known fact that children become less active as they get older. Television, video games and busy schedules can fill up a child's (and adult's) day, leaving no time for physical activity. As parents and caregivers, we need to help children form good habits early!

We are also noticing many school-age children do not have the skills to engage in active play with their peers. These children are the same children who choose not to engage in games and activities that they do not feel they are able to do well. Basic movement skills such as running, jumping, throwing, catching and kicking do not just happen as a child grows older.

These skills develop depending on a child's heredity, activity experiences and their environment. For example, a child who is discouraged from bouncing and chasing balls may lag in hand-eye coordination. Being physically active with your children at a young age helps to build a foundation of movement skills that are the building blocks for more complex movement tasks.



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Tobogganing

Choose a hill with a gentle slope and a long runoff area. Make sure the hill is free of obstacles and that there is no road, fence, or open water at the bottom. Children under 5 years old should have an adult sled with them. Go down the hill sitting or kneeling on the toboggan, do not go down head first. Wear a helmet. Avoid scarves or clothing with drawstrings around the neck that could cause strangulation. See December 2006 newsletter for a list of popular toboggan hills in Calgary.



To help parents and caregivers understand the importance of supporting and engaging in active play with children whenever possible, the GO₂ preschool action group has focused energies into promoting and supporting this important message. Partners currently involved with this group include YMCA, City of Calgary, Calgary Health Region, Boys and Girls Clubs, University of Calgary and a volunteer representative from the child-care community. This group has also put together comprehensive information about physical activity and preschool-aged children.

Tools and ideas to help you and your family get started.

This can be found at the GO₂ website www.go2calgary.com under "Preschool-Aged". If you are interested in receiving some free resources call 943-8127 or email info@go2calgary.com. If you'd like to get involved with the work of this group, do not hesitate to contact info@go2calgary.com.

Looking for great resources to keep your preschooler active? Find these and more on go2calgary.com

Healthy Start for Life - This information is provided by Dietitians of Canada and 9 organizations. It is for parents and child-care providers of preschoolers and includes an activity planning guide complete with a sample monthly activity plan and suggestions for fun activities to keep preschoolers moving.

Healthy Eating and Active Living for your 1 to 5 year old - This publication from Alberta Health provides information you can use to encourage your preschooler to be active and achieve healthy eating habits.

Moving and growing: Exercises and activities for two, three and four year olds - provided by Child & Family Canada, a Canadian public education website.

Physical Activity Chart - Have fun keeping track of your child's physical activity with the [Physical Activity Chart](#), created by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

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Being Active Indoors

When it's Too Cold to Go Outside

On those days when it is minus 40 with the wind-chill you may not feel like braving the outdoors. However, you and your preschooler still need to get up and be active. Here are some fun winter themed games and activities you can enjoy indoors.

In Your Home

- Make a list of games or activities parents can do with their preschoolers at home. Check out activity ideas under the Pre-school Aged section of the GO2 website. 'Jump the river', 'Over and Under', 'Old MacDonald', 'Teddy Bear Picnic Blanket Toss', 'Tidy the Crocodile Pit', 'Paper Snowballs', 'Wheelbarrow' and 'Shapes' are some activities you will find!
- Put on your favourite CD and dance up a storm! Ask your preschooler to make up some new dance moves with you.
- Doing chores are a great way to move the body. Vacuuming, folding laundry, washing dishes, dusting, and putting away toys
- Build a fort together out of chairs and blankets and large boxes.
- Create a puzzle picture of a snowman on a large paper sheet. Cut out three large white paper circles. Cut a top hat, eyes, carrot, mouth, scarf, mittens, buttons, and boots out of different coloured construction paper. Put tape on the back of the pieces. Place pieces of the puzzle on the floor. Take turns picking up pieces and placing them on the wall until the puzzle is completed. Each time a child picks up a piece, tell them how they should move across the floor (run, walk, skip, hop, etc.) to put the piece on the wall. (adapted from McCall R and Craft D, 2000, *Moving with a Purpose*)



Around the City

Make a list of activities around the city that do not involve being outside. Use the GO2 website to help you!

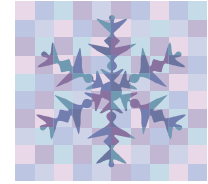
- Enrol your preschooler in swimming lessons, gymnastics, dance, indoor soccer, etc.
- Take a trip to the Zoo to visit the indoor exhibits.
- Take a trip to the Calgary Science Centre and Creative Kids Museum.
- Indoor Ice-skating - Calgary Parks and Recreation indoor arenas. For arena and public and family skating information call the 24 hour playline at 311!

You are limited only by your imagination! Have fun this winter! Being active has a huge pay off to both your physical and mental well-being!

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Winter outdoor fun! 10 family friendly ideas for active play



Angels in the Snow

Lie down on fresh snow. Move arms and legs up and down in the snow forming an angel. Do this multiple times to make a snow angel family.

Dogsled Pull

Make an obstacle course in the snow. Form two teams. Teams must pull each member through the obstacle course on a sled.

Snow hopscotch

Use a spray bottle of coloured water to mark a hopscotch board on the snow. Throw a snowball onto number 1. Hop on every square up to number 10. On the way back pick up the snowball. Now throw it to number 2.

Have a winter picnic

Choose a site with a pit so you can build a fire, either to cook your lunch, keep warm, or both. Pack a lunch including healthy food choices and hot cocoa to keep warm. Go for a walk and enjoy the winter scenery to work up an appetite.

Go to the park

Your preschooler's favourite playground does not have to be used only when the weather is warm. Try spending time at the park in the cold. Just remember to bundle up!

Dinosaur!

Create snow creatures with your whole family.

Drawing in the snow

Fill 3 to 5 spray bottles with water. Add a few drops of different coloured food colouring to each bottle and mix well with the water. Get your preschooler to make a picture on the snow by spraying the different coloured water onto fresh snow.

Build a Snowman

Make sure to have a carrot for a nose, button/stones for eyes and mouth, branches for arms, and an old hat and scarf to keep the snowman warm! If you can't make the snowman in your own back yard, try a local park, school field or green space. To start making a snowman, roll a small snow ball around in the snow to make it bigger and bigger.



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Free Ice Skating

A few parks in Calgary offer free outdoor ice skating, with no hockey, ideal for preschoolers going for their first skating outing. Many communities have a local outdoor skating rink as well. If it is too cold to stay outside, indoor skating rinks are a great alternative. You do not need special skates for recreational skating. Many rinks have skates you can rent or buy a pair of used skates.



- **Olympic Plaza** 228-8 Ave. S.E. ice skating - strollers, toboggans, hockey sticks or sleds are not permitted
- **Bowness Park** located at 8900-48 Ave. N.W. For an old -fashion experience, this is the perfect place for a stroll or going for a skate.
- **Prairie Winds Park**, 223 Castleridge Blvd. N.E.
- **Big Marlborough Park**, 6021 Madigan Dr. N.E.

If you have the space, why not create your own ice rink! See "recipes for a successful backyard rink" at http://www.goforgreen.ca/winter_green/Get_Winter_Green.htm


Winter Wandering

Take a winter nature walk. Look for changes in trees, bushes, and plants. Search for winter colors. You might see some evergreen trees or some berries on bushes. Look closely at the bark on trees. Some bushes keep their leaves in winter and others do not. Look for animal tracks in the snow. What about birds that winter in the north? What signs of birds can you find? When you come back inside, have everyone share what they saw. You could encourage them to draw what they saw outdoors on their winter nature walk.

Some great parks that have their trails cleared of snow in the winter, easy access for preschoolers and lots of signs of animal activity include:

- **Inglewood Bird Sanctuary**, located at 2425-9th Ave. SE has Black-capped chickadees, Canada geese, Mallard ducks, signs of porcupines, mice, magpies, coyotes, deer, and sometimes a glimpse of Bald Eagles, Harlequin Ducks and Great Horned Owls.
- **Fish Creek Park**, has a wide variety of birds and mammals and because of the expansive size can be accessed from several locations.
- **Carburn Park** located at the end of Riverview Dr. SE has lots of different ducks to look for because of the warm water from the Bonnybrook treatment plant.
- **Prince's Island Park** can be accessed from Eau Claire, or Memorial Drive at the Calgary Curling Club. When there is snow, cross-country skiing is allowed at this park, parts of the river remain open throughout the year inviting different ducks and geese, and year round Grey partridges can be found scurrying about the park.
- **Edworthy Park** can be easily accessed in winter off Spruce Drive SW to Edworthy Street, the corner of Shaggnappi Trail and Bowness Road NW
- **Griffith Woods Park** Because there are so many evergreen trees here, this park offer a different diversity of trees and wildlife including Boreal chickadees, and a variety of finches.

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Preschooler Fridays (9) Youth In Action (10) Drop-in Gym (11) Hip Hop (7)	3
4 Alzheimers Run/Walk (4)	5 Free Skate Olympic Oval (1)	6	7 Winter Walk Day (2)	8	9 Preschooler Fridays (9) Youth In Action (10) Drop-in Gym (11) Calgary Winter Fest (3) Hip Hop (7)	10 Nosehill Cross Country (4) Family Fitness Class (5)
11 Calgary Winter Fest (3)	12 Free Skate Olympic Oval (1) Calgary Winter Fest (3)	13 Calgary Winter Fest (3)	14 Calgary Winter Fest (3) Family Skate Night (6)	15 Calgary Winter Fest (3)	16 Preschooler Fridays (9) Youth In Action (10) Drop-in Gym (11) Calgary Winter Fest (3)	17 Winterfest Fun Zone (9) Calgary Winter Fest (3)
18 Calgary Winter Fest (3)	19 Winterfest Fun Zone (12) Calgary Winter Fest (3)	20 Winterfest Fun Zone (12)	21 Winterfest Fun Zone (12) Family Pool Party (103)	22	23 Preschooler Fridays (9) Youth In Action (10) Drop-in Gym (11) Hip Hop (7)	24 Weaselhead Cross Country Race (14)
25	26	27	28 Family Festival (15)			

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If you have a healthy active event coming up, let us know!

events@go2calgary.com



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Detailed Events Listings

1) Free Monday Night Skate at Olympic Oval

Location: Olympic Oval

When: Mondays, 6:30-8:00 p.m. (except Feb. 19, Feb. 26, Mar. 5)

Round up your warm woolies, skates and your family for a free night of skating. Bring one non-perishable food item for entrance into the event. Proceeds are going to the food bank.

2) Winter Walk Day

Location: Anywhere in Calgary

When: Wednesday Feb 7

Contact: calgary@shapeab.com or phone 58906013

Calgarians, pull on your boots and count yourself in, walk to school, work or the grocery store. Register the minutes you walked! Everyone is welcome to join in - Schools, Seniors' Centers, commuters, individuals. Don't hibernate! Dress warm, get outside and enjoy the fresh, crisp Alberta air! On-line registration begins now! A package full of tips and ideas will be sent to you as well as a participant award for every walker in the group.

3) Calgary Winterfest

Location: All around the city

When: February 9-19

Contact: www.calgarywinterfest.com

The whole city comes alive for Calgary Winterfest! Check back here for a list of Calgary Winterfest Collaborative Events to discover the many wonderful happenings around town during the month of February 2007. Choose from cultural events, sports, films, tours and more. Bundle up and take in some of the exciting festivities going on in our city!

4) Nosehill Cross Country Race (8km, 4km, 1km)

Location: Race start is at the North Haven community center

When: Saturday Feb. 10, 12:00 p.m.

Contact: Jim & Terry Morris winterstart@canada.com or Calgary Road Runner website.

The course climbs to the top of Nose Hill then along the undulating trails of picturesque Nose Hill Park before descending back to the start. Depending on the weather prior to race day, the course may include hazards from exposed rocks, mud, snow and icy patches. The 4 km Fun Run will follow the same trail as the first portion of the 8 km race.

5) Family Fitness Class

Location: Village Square Leisure Center

When: Saturday February 10, 11 a.m.

Bring your family and participate in a fitness class together, free with regular admission.

6) Family Skate Night

Location: Southland Leisure Center

When: Wednesday February 14, 6:45 - 8:15 p.m.

Bring the family skating and receive **free** hot chocolate and cookies.

7) Papa John's Family Fun Day

Location: Olympic Oval

When: Monday Feb. 19, Noon - 4 p.m.

Bring your family and skate on the fastest ice in the world, have a slice of pizza and participate in other activities! Free admission with donation to food bank.

8) Hip Hop Dance

Location: Village Square Leisure Center

When: Fridays, 7 to 9pm

Contact: Call 280-9714 for more information or visit calgary.ca

Grab your friends and drop in for Hip Hop at Village Square. For ages 12 to 17. Includes admission to the Pool.

9) Preschooler Friday Festival

Location: Village Square Leisure Center

When: Every Friday (except holidays) , 1:30 to 4pm; Friday Festival at .

End the week with a bang! Your preschoolers will look forward to Friday when they drop in for songs, stories, games and art fun. For more information call 280-9714 or visit calgary.ca

10) Youth In Action Nights

Location: Southland Leisure Centre

When: Every Friday night 7:30 – 10:30

Contact: (403) 251-8122

Join other youth 11-17 years for an evening of music, challenges and good times. The fun includes a pool party, drop in badminton and basketball in the sport hall.

11) Drop-in Late Night Gym

Location: Village Square Leisure Center

When: Fridays, 10pm to midnight

Contact: Call 280-9714 for more information.

Burn off some steam, drop in for Late Night Gym at Village Square. Shoot some hoops, play badminton, floor hockey and more. For ages 12 to 17. Cost: \$1.

12) Calgary Winterfest Fun Zone

Location: Canada Olympic Park

When: Feb 19-21

Action, fun and adventure are the words of the day during these Family Day weekend festivities. Canada's premiere winter sport facility has something for everyone amongst the free games, crafts, performers, climbing walls, hockey shoot-out and petting zoo.

13) Family Pool Party

Location: Southland Leisure Center/Village Square Leisure Center

When: Wednesday February 21, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Have fun while splashing in the waves at the waterpark. Receive **free tubes** while in the pool (while quantities last).

14) Weaselhead Cross Country Race (8km, 4km, 1km)

Location: Glenmore Sailing Clubhouse.

When: Saturday Feb 24, 12:00

Contact: rob.stichbury@shaw.ca or Calgary Road Runner website

The courses will be classic cross-country, run on the Jack Rabbit Trail of the South Glenmore, a hilly, treed course with a spectacular view of the Glenmore Reservoir and Elbow River delta. The distances will be approximately 4 and 8 km with all the variable cross country hazards (mud, snow and ice). Spikes or good treads are recommended.

15) Family Festival

Location: Southland Leisure Center/Village Square Leisure Center

When: Wednesday February 28, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Contact: Call (403) 251-3505 for more information.

Come to our family fun event hosted by our youth council. Participate in games, face painting, bounce in our bounce house and more.