

healthy & fit on the go

play - Go for a walk or a bike ride, go swimming at the beach, jump rope, build a snowman, rake leaves and jump into the pile, play tag or hide-n-seek, play soccer, basketball or softball, swing on the swingset, slide down a snowy hill.

get outside - Have a picnic at the park, in your backyard (or in the living room), look up at the stars or clouds and tell stories about them, go on a scavenger hunt, play fetch or walk with the dog, walk over and visit a neighbor.

take a tour - Research your community and visit the local sites as if you were a tourist, involve family members in learning about attractions in advance and planning the mini-trips.

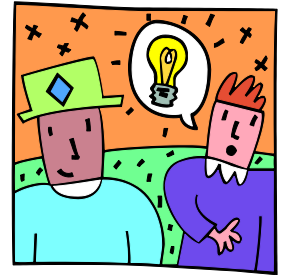
visit the farmer's market - Let each family member choose some produce and help to plan and prepare the family's meal with fresh, local ingredients. Ask the farmers how they prepare foods that are new to you.

family night - Set aside one night a week to gather as a family and enjoy indoor activities together: rent old or classic movies, play board games, play card games, play charades or storytelling games, create a journal of your family's stories.

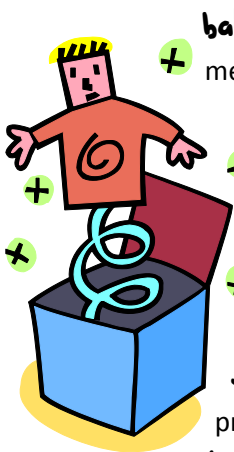
creativity - Assemble a box with home-made play dough, art clay, water paints, finger paints, tempera paints, paint brushes, paper, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, markers, pens, glue, glitter, scissors, paper punches and other found objects (try garage sales). Designate a time and place for family members to get creative together.

public library - Make it a habit to visit the library regularly: use the internet, borrow books, tapes and videos or DVDs, attend story hour or other library events, read the newspaper and magazines you don't subscribe to, reserve a study room and work on a project while others do homework. Make sure everyone has their own library card.

nearly free family fun



low-cost playthings



balls - Collect a variety of balls to play with: tennis, racquet, super-bouncy, foam, rubber, large, small and medium. Use an old bed sheet as a parachute and bounce a variety of balls up, down and side to side.

jump ropes - A length of rope or elastic can be used for single, double and triple jump-roping. Hold the jump rope between 2 people and do the limbo, or tie it between two objects and use it as a net for volleyball.

boxes - Scavenge large and small boxes for building things such as forts, castles and walls. Paint them or decorate them with markers and paper. Collect paper towel cores and use them as tunnels for small cars or as swords for play fencing.

sand box - No box needed. A mound of sand in the back yard or piled into a small plastic kiddie pool will provide hours of imaginative play. Add water and build sand castles.

plastic jugs - Empty laundry soap jugs, 2-liter soda bottles or milk jugs can be used for indoor bowling, or as targets for bean bags. Cut to use as scoops to play catch or dig.

painter's tape - Make a balance beam on the floor by laying lengths of tape the width of your foot, create your own obstacle course with tape or old coasters laid on the floor.

tablecloth or sheet - Drape over a couch, chair or table to make a fort or space ship. Hang as a stage curtain or backdrop for a play or puppet show, tape or draw a target in the middle to hit with soft balls.