

## **Outdoor movement ideas for kids**

If you have outdoor space available, encourage your child to get out there and play as much as possible. Free play is excellent physical activity—and if you play alongside your child, you just may get some much needed endorphins. Kick a ball around the yard together, play catch or blow up that inflatable pool to splash around in as soon as it's warm enough.

Here are a few specific activities to try if your kid needs some inspiration to get out there, or if you want to work with them on gross motor skills.

### **1. Hopscotch**

Hopscotch is excellent for helping kids improve balance and coordination because of all of the rapid changes in movement required. Get out the sidewalk chalk and set up hopscotch on your patio or driveway and hop along with each other.

### **2. Obstacle course**

Enlist your child's help in setting up an obstacle course in the backyard. Get creative with what you have available to make it fun and challenging. Use garden stones or an old 2x4 to create a balance beam, mark a pathway for them to run or ride their bike on, set up a big bucket for them to throw a ball in.

If you don't have an outdoor space, you can still turn a playroom, garage, basement, or even your kid's bedroom into an obstacle course. Set up different stations like pillows for them to jump over, a row of chairs for them to crawl under, or a line made from painter's tape on the floor for them to walk or run on while balancing a beanbag on their head.

### **3. Foursquare**

Sometimes the simple, time-tested games are the best! Draw numbered squares on your driveway and challenge each other to bounce the ball to a family member standing in whatever number square you call out. (You *do* need four people for a traditional foursquare game, but if you have fewer than four people in your household, you can create a simple variation by drawing a triangle or a rectangle with fewer spots.)

### **4. Follow the leader**

Line up single file and let each family member take turns being the "leader." The leader decides how the group will move around the backyard. Think crawling around the perimeter, walking backwards (carefully), hopping on one foot, going down the slide if you have one.

### **5. Red light green light**

Ask your kids to stand along the fence in the backyard. Stand across the yard from them. When you call "Green Light!" they can advance toward you and when you call "Red Light!" they stop. Change up the type of movement they use, from jumping to tiptoeing, and make sure to switch roles so they get a chance to lead too.