

Computers & Kids

NEWS

March 2008

COMPUTER
EXPLORERS

Pump It Up Now & Benefit for Life!

Get Preschoolers Hooked on Exercise! By the time children get to primary school, little time is left in the day for unstructured exercise. The good news, however, is that preschoolers love to move! Get ideas for jumpstarting a lifetime of fun activities at PBS Kids Active for Life site: www.pbs.org/teachers/earlychildhood/articles/activeforlife.html.

Get Children's Hearts Pumping! According to the Australian Society for the Study of Obesity, rates of childhood obesity in Australia are at one of the highest amongst developed nations. 25% of Australian children are currently overweight or obese, a huge jump from 5% in the 1960's. Children should have at least 60 minutes of unstructured exercise time each day. Although battery-charged riding toys are the vogue, offering pedal toys, climbers, and obstacle courses will pique a child's interest and create healthy bodies. For ideas on exercise for children 0-5, http://fitness.gov/funfit/kidsinaction/kidsinaction_02.html.

Strike a Pose! Did you know that balance is not a talent we are born with? Learning balance begins at infancy and stabilizes around ten or eleven years old. Make learning balance fun by challenging your children to balance on homemade stilts made of coffee cans & string. Or incorporate different body parts into a balance game, like balancing a book on your head. Riding scooters and bicycles develop balance and body awareness. Balance is a skill that children will take with them through their lives and forever reduce their chance of injury. Get children posing with great Yoga for Kids videos at www.ctds.info/yoga_video_for_kids.html.

Fine Tuning! Fitness for preschoolers is about more than just the major muscle groups and getting the heart going. Active rainy day activities can engage the fine motor skills when they involve cutting, stringing beads, or even using chop sticks to pick up snack food. For great fitness activities, including those for fine motor skills, visit Preschool Rock at <http://fitness.preschoolrock.com/>.



Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,

At a recent Toy Fair that gave us a first look at the technology toys coming out, the Tag caught my eye. Tag is an electronic pen with a built-in computer processor that turns a book's text and pictures into sound. Somebody really did put a reading teacher inside a pen. Tag can store up to five books in memory from your computer's USB port.

A new title from Nintendo called Endless Ocean is a great example of how education products are showing up on more game consoles. More of an experience than a game, Endless Ocean lets you swim and explore using the Wii Remote. As you move through gentle beds of swaying kelp, you discover hundreds of marine creatures, like sharks, dolphins and blue whales.

So there you have it. A smart pen that can read aloud, and a simulation that lets you jump into a tropical ocean without getting wet!

Warren Buckleitner, PhD, Editor
Children's Technology Review