

Lesson 2.4: Play Together (Part II)

Background (Read before you teach): Parents and caregivers can help children be active by providing time, space, and encouragement for active play. Even during bad weather or days when air quality is poor, active games and dancing can be done indoors. For children who resist being active, parents can try playing with them for 10-15 minutes at a time.

Latino parents who provide praise for physical activity and limit time spent watching TV have more active children (Arredondo et al., 2006). Parents can praise children for trying a new game or skill, following the rules, or taking turns. They can also encourage children while they play (“Let’s see how high you can jump.”). Close family ties exist where both parents and children engage in physical activity together (de la Haye, de Heer, Wilkinson, & Koehly, 2014). Thus, being a positive role model for physical activity can also build family unity. Making activities fun, mixing up activities, and giving children a choice (i.e. dance, go to park, or ride bikes) also helps encourage physical activity. Cultural options, such as folkloric dancing, may also increase activity in some children while help preserve cultural identity valued by parents of Mexican origin (Azevedo et al., 2013).

Teaching Tip: It is important to establish a setting where parents can see the benefits to their children, such as increased self-esteem, confidence, and happiness. Children will be more likely to participate actively in a fun, supportive social setting (without bullying from other children). For one of the stations, consider playing twister. Make a twister game by drawing colored circles on an old sheet. Make a spinner from cardboard or simply have a person call out a color and body part (left hand, right hand, left foot, right foot). With one caller, 2 players try to keep from falling or stepping outside the colored circles. Twister and other games are great opportunities to practice other skills, like identifying colors or counting.



Figure 1. Colored circle game.

Target Audience: Latino families with children, 3-8 years

Key Message: Parents can use simple and fun games to help children be active

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to:

- Make a simple toy to encourage active play at home with children
- Identify parenting strategies to encourage children to be active

Materials:

- Supplies and recipes for food demonstration (suggested Southwest Tacos);
- Plain white paper plates;
- Markers;
- 5-6 pairs of scissors;
- 1-2 plastic cones or towel tubes taped to paper plate holder;
- 6 large plastic bottles;
- Small rubber ball;
- 5-10 balloons;
- old sheet for parachute;
- Small stuffed animals;
- Lightweight foam ball;
- Poster board with large circle, tape and pie pieces showing different physical activities (alternatively use a white board and markers)

Set-up: Set-up activity stations in corners: 1) Balloon toss-- blow-up balloons; 2) Bowling—place bottles in v-shaped rows; 3) Parachute—old sheet, foam balls, stuffed animals); 4) plastic cones or towel tube taped to plate

Handouts: recipes, physical activity log sheet

Opening (Anchor): (10 min) Welcome! Review what was covered last time and ask if families have made changes, based on their goals. Congratulate and encourage them to keep on making changes.

Today, we will be talking about the ways that parents can encourage children to get at least an hour of physical activity every day.

Begin the class by making a simple toy:

(Hand out scissors, paper plates, markers; if children are present, engage them in coloring the ring) **Say:** Cut out the center of the plate and color the ring. Let's try out the rings with these cones (or towel tube).



Figure 2. Ring toss game.

Lesson (Add): (15 min) Discuss the following points:

- **Say:** Homemade games can be just as fun as store bought ones and making toys provides an opportunity for more family time. Sometimes, it is not possible to play outside, such as when it is rainy or when the air quality is bad. There are many ways to help children stay active at home whether it is outside or inside. First, let's review the recommended amount of physical activity each day for children and teens.
- **Ask:** Who knows how much physical activity a child 2-17 years old should get? (90-120 minutes for preschoolers; Six years and up: 60 minutes or more of moderate or vigorous activity daily) which means the heart beats faster; breathing is faster and harder; and sweating may occur. Some examples include running, bicycling, dancing, jumping rope, or swimming.
- **Say:** Let's make a story about a child in this town to see how he or she can be active for at least one hour. (Show poster board; As you tell the story, tape pie pieces to the circle to show how different activities add up to 60 minutes) Suppose s/he walks fast to and from school (10 minutes each way=20 minutes); at school s/he plays tag or other running game (20 minutes); after school, s/he rides his bikes or plays ball (20 minutes). The total amount of physical activity for this child equals 60 minutes. **Ask:** What are other ways that children are active in this community? **Say:** (Cover up or remove pie piece with bike) Suppose it rains and he watches TV instead of riding his bike. **Ask:** what are some ways that he could be active indoors, even on a rainy day?

Activity (Apply): (25 min) While the assistant starts the food demonstration, the educator leads the activity.

- **Say:** Let's play! As you play with your children, practice good parenting tips. Remember to praise your children when they try new skills, take turns, follow the rules. Encourage your children while they play ("Let's see how high you can jump."), praise them ("Good job, you are getting better and better"), and be a role model to your children by being active together. This last part will help your child build happy memories of being active with you. Studies show that parents and children who play actively together are closer and get more exercise.
Station 1: Balloon toss: In pairs, participants toss balloons, moving to keep them from falling to the floor.

Station 2: Bowling: One at a time, players try to knock over the bottles with the ball.

Station 3: Parachute game: Four or more players hold edges of sheet, raising sheet up and down, while trying to keep stuffed animals and/or foam balls on top of sheet. Alternatively, try tossing the items off the sheet. Also, try walking in a circle at the same time.

Station 4: Ring toss: Use all the rings made earlier and take turns tossing rings onto towel tube and/or plastic cones. Toss with different arms to increase the challenge.

- **Ask:** What are some other ways that these games and toys can be used?
- **Say:** Over the next week, keep track of your child's activity and find out if he or she is getting enough physical activity. (Hand out log sheets). Bring the sheet to our next class where we will talk about healthy daily routines.
- Food demonstration, tasting and sharing. Pass around the containers, showing participants any foods that might be new or unfamiliar (for example, low-fat products, whole grain alternatives). Explain step-by-step how the food is prepared. Serve samples for tasting. **Ask:** What are some ways that your children can help prepare this recipe? How can you use it at home? What do you like about the recipe? What would you change?

Closing (Away): (10 min) Pair-up and set specific goals

What did you learn? Why is this information important to you? Choose a goal to work on this month (week). Try to choose a simple goal that is doable within a week. Write your goal on the recipe handout. For example: "I will play an active game with my child every day for at least 10 minutes" or "I will acknowledge my children's efforts and praise them for being active". Try choosing one of these games to make and play at home. Ask a friend or family member to help support you in reaching your goal. Invite families to share their goals.

References:

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Draft July20, 2018: Do not replicate without author permission

