

Pointers For Parents

Step Up To The Plate To Get Kids Outside For More Exercise

(NAPSA)—“Play ball” is one of the most joyous phrases any boy or girl hears. It means the excitement and fun of experiencing our national pastime is about to begin. Added to the mix, the outdoor fun of baseball and softball also hold valuable benefits and can teach life lessons to children.

Turn off the Tube and Get Out and Play

Television remains the number-one enemy to exercise. The average American child spends more than three times as much time in front of the TV or computer as he or she spends being active, according to the Journal of the American Heart Association. The Wisk Laundry Detergent Active Play Survey reported that moms voted TV as the number-one reason why children today spend less time playing outdoors.

“There is no doubt in my mind that parents need help inspiring their children to hit the dirt versus the couch,” stated Major League Baseball icon Cal Ripken, Jr. “As a parent and sports professional, I see how excited kids get when they play baseball, and the life lessons they gain when they slide into home and win a game together with teammates. The challenge comes back to the parents to just put down the remote and pick up a glove.”

An “A” for Effort

Youngsters do not have to be star athletes to enjoy sports and



Baseball icon Cal Ripken, Jr. helps kids take a swing at more active outdoor lifestyles.

benefit from the game. Baseball combines personal performance and group interaction. While players hit, catch and throw, they also have to learn to work with teammates. Bunting and hitting the ball behind a runner, so he or she can advance to the next base, shows how one sacrifice can help the greater team win. Also, the simple act of practice helps create a more physical mentality in children. In addition, it’s an outdoor activity by which they can burn off energy and learn that sometimes the game is about the process, not just the prize.

Hit a Home Run...at Home

Americans spend 90 percent of their lives indoors, according to the American Psychological Association. The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

reports that parents only spend 40 minutes a week playing with their kids. Try these tips to bring some outdoor family time to the home front:

- Plan and play: Encourage your children to enjoy each day to the fullest, exploring and enjoying new outdoor activities. Arrange for more than a play day; schedule a game outside with children of varying ages from around the neighborhood. This also provides ways for your kids to make new friends.

- Be a hero: Parents can enter a national contest, the Wisk Laundry Detergent “Win a Ball Field Makeover,” and have a chance to win a local ball field refurbishment and a visit from sports hero Cal Ripken, Jr. There are also multiple prizes available, including gifts toward new apparel and equipment for your youngster’s team.

- Lead by example: Take 15 minutes every day to walk, play or be active with your child outside. For younger children, this will seem like a long time and for older children, it will appear like a short amount of time and leave them less reason to resist. You will notice that you will not only enjoy the bonding time, but they will ask for more.

For easy tips to ensure your children are all-star dirt lovers and for more information on entering the Wisk “Win a Ball Field Makeover” contest, visit www.wiskpoints.com.