

# Pointers For Parents

## Family Matters: Get Out And Play

(NAPSA)—In the days before computers and video games, children spent much of their after-school time outdoors—at the playground, riding their bikes and playing sports with friends. The result was a generation of kids who grew up active and healthy.

Today, digital distractions give youngsters plenty of reasons *not* to go outside. A recent study found that youths ages 8 to 18 spend over six hours a day using electronic media, as much as 45 hours per week.

“It’s no secret that play is key to healthy child development,” says Darell Hammond, CEO of KaBOOM!, a nonprofit that encourages playtime and helps to build playgrounds. “Studies show that active kids are healthier, perform better in school and learn better social skills than kids who are less inclined to play.”

Fortunately, it’s still possible to help kids connect to the world outside their front door—without spending a fortune. Here are a few suggestions for parents to encourage their children to engage in healthy fun:

- Host a Play Day in your community. KaBOOM! is launching a series of Play Days, encouraging families and kids to play in the great outdoors. Kick it old-school style and play beloved games of yesteryear—including hopscotch, foursquare, double Dutch and kickball. To plan a Play Day or locate one in your area, check out [www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org).

- Build a fort. Using old items from the garage—such as



**For kids, active play can foster better school performance and improve overall health.**

cardboard boxes, camping supplies and beach toys—let your kids build a fort as big or as small as their imaginations can fathom.

- Run through the sprinklers. Skip the neighborhood pool, green up your lawn and give your kids free rein to splish-splash away.

- Keep it simple. Stock up on bubbles, sidewalk chalk and hula hoops for hours of outside fun.

- Spruce it up. Organize your community to clean up and beautify existing play spaces. Working side by side, parents and kids can make a difference right in their own neighborhoods.

For more information, including free planning tips and tools, visit [www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org).