

# 49 Fun Physical Activities to do with Kids Ages Two to Four

If you have a little one under 5 years old at home, then you've experienced what it's like to try to keep up with an energetic toddler or preschooler. But did you know that kids this age need three hours of physical activity a day?

Children between 2-4 years old don't only need a lot of movement, they also need a lot of variety of movement. So while it's essential to make time for unstructured, active playtime, it's also important to have access to plenty of fun, simple activities that you know will help them get active and develop skills in a variety of ways.

This list of 49 fun activities for kids is the ultimate go-to for any playdate, home child care setting, or a morning or afternoon with a caregiver. Whatever the situation, short attention spans mean that it's a good idea to have a few of these up your sleeve.

## 1. Animal Walk

Inside or out, encourage your child to slither like a snake, hop like a frog, gallop like a horse, or walk like a bear on all fours. **Skills developed:** hopping, galloping

## 2. Keep the Balloon Up

Outdoor on a calm, windless day, or inside, have your kids use their hands or half of a pool noodle to keep a balloon afloat. How long can they keep the balloon off the ground? **Skills developed:** volleying, striking

## 3. Puddle Jumping

Preferably outside in what our two year old called "chocolate water", throw on your kids' most waterproof gear and let them jump in, out, and over puddles. **Skills developed:** jumping

## 4. Wet Sponge Designs

On a hot, summer day, gather up lots of sponges, provide a tub of water for endless resoaking, and have your kids throw their sponges on a wall or on a cement surface to make designs. Sponges can also be used to "paint" walls. **Skills developed:** throwing

## 5. Digging for Treasure

Whether it's an inside or outside sand table or sandbox, kids love to dig for treasure. Hide small toys like plastic dinosaurs, small cars, or marbles, and let your child release their inner pirate as they search for booty! **Skills developed:** lifting and lowering objects, object manipulation

## 6. Run Away From the Monster

Kids love a game of chase, especially with a parent or other adult they trust. A game of running from a "scary" monster will involve much squealing with delight. **Skills developed:** running, dodging, agility

## 7. Simon/Simone Says

While the rules are simple, the options for movement are endless. Simon can have kids jumping like a kangaroo, standing as tall as a house, making funny faces, standing on one foot, or waving their hands over their heads. **Skills developed:** multiple depending on the leader's actions (jumping, balancing, hopping, etc.)

## 8. Leaf Play

Not everyone loves the raking jobs that come in autumn, but kids love leaves. Rake them up and let kids jump into the piles, throw the leaves in the air, and crunch the foliage in their hands. If you don't have a garden or a tree, go for a walk and let kids make music as they crunch through the leaves on the ground. **Skills developed:** jumping, throwing

## 9. Hopscotch

A favorite with kids of all ages, hopscotch is a game that can be played inside or out. Inside, use painters tape on the floor to pattern your own board and use buttons, rolled up socks or beanbags instead of rocks. Outside, use chalk to make a

court and use rocks or the chalk itself as a marker. The rules are simple and the game can be played alone or with friends. **Skills developed:** hopping, throwing

## 10. Fly a Kite

Find a wide open space in a park, a beach, or a field, make or purchase a kite, pick a day which is breezy but not too windy, and head out to watch your child delight in running with their colorful toy. **Skills developed:** running

## 11. Throw Snowballs

Snowballs are the perfect antidote for cabin fever! Have your kids throw snowballs against a surface to make designs as they did with sponges in the summer (see #4) or make a circle or other target in the snow and see how close they can get to a bullseye.

**Skills developed:** throwing

## 12. Ball Kicks

Balls are a staple for so many games and activities. Using different types and sizes of balls, have your child see how far they can kick, or play goalie in front of a wall or fence and see if your child can kick the ball past you.

**Skills developed:** kicking

## 13. Balance Beam

Using an actual gymnastics beam isn't the only way for a child to learn balance skills. Indoors, use painters tape to make a straight line on the floor. Encourage your child to walk forwards, backwards, and sideways. Outdoors, use a plank of wood, a rope, or make a line with chalk for the same activity. When your child masters a straight line, add semi-circles or zigzags to add a bit more of a challenge. **Skills developed:** balancing

## 14. Dance Party

Indoors or outdoors, turn up the music, use lights or decorations for ambiance, and let your kids twist, Macarena, floss, dance like their favorite animal, or freestyle their way to fun. **Skills developed:** agility, balance, coordination

## 15. Mini Sticks

Pass a ball back and forth with your child or have them shoot at a target while teaching them to keep their stick on the ice (the floor) and to hold their stick with two hands. **Skills developed:** striking

## 16. Bubble Play

Ideally an outdoor activity, use various sizes and types of bubble wands and have kids blow their own bubbles or blow them yourself and have kids chase and pop them. **Skills developed:** agility

## 17. Ride a Bike

Whether it's a tricycle, a balance bike, a bike with training wheels, or a two-wheeler, kids love to zoom around under their own steam. **Skills developed:** balancing

## 18. Freeze Tag

If you've got a group of four or more kids looking for some fun, look no further than a good old game of freeze tag. Pick one child to be "it," and have them chase the other kids around. When "it" touches a player, they must freeze (stand still) until another player "unfreezes" them by touching them. When "it" freezes all players, the game begins again with a new child as "it." **Skills developed:** agility, running

## 19. Fill the Bucket Water Game

Provide your child with a cup and two buckets (one smaller, one larger). Place the smaller bucket a short distance from the larger bucket and fill the larger bucket with water. Have your child scoop water from the larger bucket and fill the smaller one. To make the game more challenging, put small holes in the cup or have your child dance as they move from bucket to bucket. **Skills developed:** agility, balancing

## 20. Paper Airplanes

There are so many ways to make paper airplanes at home. Throw them inside or outside and see how high they can fly, how far they can fly, or if your child can throw them through an object such as a hula-hoop. **Skills developed:** throwing

## 21. Avoid the Shark

Cover your living room floor (the shark-filled ocean) with foam floor tiles or towels (taped to the floor with painters tape) and have your child jump from one to the next without getting nabbed by a shark. **Skills developed:** jumping

## 22. Beanbag Toss

Beanbags are an easy-to-grip and throw item for kids. Indoors or out, have kids throw them into targets such as laundry baskets or hula-hoops. **Skills developed:** throwing

## 23. Egg and Spoon

For this ultimate hand-eye coordination and balance game, give kids a spoon and have them balance a hard-boiled or plastic egg from one point to another either indoors or out. How quickly can they go? Can they dance as they move? **Skills developed:** balance, coordination

## 24. Ribbon Sticks

Tie a length of ribbon to the end of a stick or baton and watch as your kids dance and swirl their ribbons in the air. **Skills developed:** agility

## 25. Pillow Walk

Set up a line of couch, throw, or bed pillows on your floor, and have your child walk from one end to the other. It may sound easy but their balance will be challenged! **Skills developed:** balancing

## 26. Kick Bowling

Switch up regular bowling inside or outside by having your kids use different sizes of balls to kick down different objects such as empty bottles or rolls of paper towels. **Skills developed:** kicking

## 27. Climb a tree

Pick a tree with low branches and let your child climb. Be close by for help but let your kids see how far they can get on their own. **Skills developed:** balancing

## 28. Beanbag Balance

Have your child balance a beanbag on their head and walk from one point to another without dropping it. As they master the walk, move the points further apart or make the course a bit more challenging by adding zigzags or circles, or objects around which they have to maneuver. **Skills developed:** balancing

## 29. Jump Waves

Take a day trip to a local beach or lake and simply jump waves as they roll on to the shore. **Skills developed:** jumping, agility

## 30. Bubble Wrap Jump

Bubble wrap is not just for packing fragile objects. Purchase a roll of wrap and on an inside day, have your child jump and pop to their heart's content. **Skills developed:** jumping, agility

## 31. Helicopter

Turn a jump rope around in a circle low to the ground while your child hops over it without touching it. Be prepared to be the jumper when your child wants to turn the rope too! **Skills developed:** jumping, agility

## 32. Obstacle Course

Indoors or out, let your imagination run wild as you set up an obstacle course for your child. Have them crawl under tables, climb over chairs, jump over ropes, hop from cone to cone, crawl through a cardboard box, jump through a line of hula hoops, throw a family of stuffed animals into a laundry basket, etc. etc. **Skills developed:** agility, balance, coordination

### 33. Hike

Get into nature and encourage your kids to climb hills, jump over sticks, and balance on tree stumps.

**Skills developed:** agility, balance, coordination

### 34. Neighborhood Search

Prepare a list ahead of time of items to search for as you and your child leave the stroller at home and take a walk through your neighborhood. Can they spot a stop sign, a blue flower, something with a tail, something round, a fire hydrant, etc.?

Check off the items on the list or use your phone to take pictures to review later.

**Skills developed:** agility, balance

### 35. Jump in the Sprinkler

Set up a sprinkler in your yard and have your kids jump through using animal movements or dance through (singing along may cause hilarious water in mouth incidents!).

**Skills developed:** agility, jumping, hopping

### 36. Catch

Kids learn to catch at different rates but working with them on the skill can begin with throwing them a balloon or a soft object such as a rolled up pair of socks or a light ball will be less intimidating than a heavy or small ball. Start by standing close to your child and as they master the catch, move further away.

**Skills developed:** catching

### 37. Indoor Skating

Have your kids place each of their feet on paper plates, face cloths, or felt squares, and let them slide along like skating pros on hardwood or carpet. Turn on the music and let them skate to the rhythm!

**Skills developed:** balancing

### 38. Skating

Find your kids proper skates and a helmet and head to your local rink either indoors or outside. Fresh air and perhaps hot chocolate afterwards will make any skating time a great time.

**Skills developed:** agility, balance, coordination

### 39. Tee-Ball

With a plastic tee-ball stand, bat, and balls, kids can practice their swing indoors or out. Batter up!

**Skills developed:** striking

### 40. Long Jump

Just how far can your child jump? Challenge them indoors by having them jump on lines made by painters tape on the floor or outdoors on grass or in the sand.

**Skills developed:** jumping

### 41. Yoga

Kids can learn all kinds of yoga movements at this age. Look for classes at your local community center or yoga studio, or teach your children some movements such as a tree pose, downward dog, or sun salutation.

**Skills developed:** balancing

### 42. Tobogganing

The feeling of whizzing down a hill on a sled is unbeatable for kids. In order to make the activity last, though, remember that your child will not only slide down the hill but will also have to climb back up it. Keep the hill to a height they'll want to climb again and again.

**Skills developed:** agility

### 43. Music Parade

Whether you have traditional instruments or pots and pans, kids love to make noise. Gather a bunch of kids and with different instruments in hand, celebrate a real or a made-up holiday while entertaining friends and neighbors.

**Skills developed:** agility, coordination, object manipulation

### 44. Action Songs

Sing together or find recordings of songs that have kids moving their bodies in different ways. Hokey Pokey, Shake My Sillies Out, I'm A Little Teapot, and Zoom, Zoom, Zoom are all examples of fun ways to get kids moving and shaking to

sing along songs. **Skills developed:** agility

## 45. Color Run

On a driveway, sidewalk, or in a park, color four areas (draw circles or squares) with different colors of chalk. Call out a color and have your child run to that colored area. Continue to call out different colors in varying order.

**Skills developed:** running

## 46. Door Fringe

Purchase a door fringe from a dollar or party store or hang streamers from a doorframe. Make sure no one is on the other side of the door as your child runs, hops, or dances through the fringe. Have two or four children hold the corners of a blanket (or towel). Throw a beach ball onto the blanket and listen to the kids giggle as they bounce the ball up and catch it. **Skills developed:** running, agility

## 47. Beach Ball Blanket Toss

Have two or four children hold the corners of a blanket (or towel). Throw a beach ball onto the blanket and listen to the kids giggle as they bounce the ball up and catch it. Skills developed: **throwing, catching**

## 48. Hide and Seek

Kids can hide either themselves or objects such as their stuffed animals in this favorite game played by kids around the world. **Skills developed:** agility

## 49. Limbo

How low can you go? A fun game indoors or out, use your imagination when it comes to using objects under which your child must go under without their hands touching the floor. Objects could include a pool noodle, a broom, or a rope.

**Skills developed:** balancing

### References:

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