

AS CHILDREN GROW, their muscle power increases and physical skills improve. With renewed ability, the energetic pre-schooler is ready for new challenges. For a start, introduce your child to a simple version of your favourite outdoor sport. This will help your child develop gross motor skills like running, jumping, kicking, pedalling, throwing and catching. With regular outdoor activities, hand-eye coordination and sense of balance will also improve.

SHOOT & SCORE
Dads who love soccer can transfer their passion for the sport into a fun activity. All you need is an open space or field, a football and imagination. Start with easy-peasy exercises like rolling or

throwing the ball back and forth to each other. Tag on a simple challenge: if your child catches the ball three times in a row, he or she gets to pick what activity to do next.

You could also instruct your mini soccer pro to kick the ball. If it rolls past a designated point, for example, a frangipani tree, he or she earns a sticker. Collect five stickers and receive a small prize from Dad! Getting deeper into the mechanics of the game, set up a makeshift goal and encourage your child to kick the ball in. If your child scores three times out of five attempts, present him or her with a Dad-made certificate. It's a small touch, maybe a little silly, but if it puts a smile on your child's face, why not?

MAKE A SPLASH
Help your child gain water confidence with some easy activities restricted to the shallow end of the pool. Throw various objects — a

small plastic bottle filled with jellybeans, for example — into the water and allow them to sink to the bottom. Give your child one minute to go underwater to pick up as many of these sunken 'treasures' as possible. Always keep water safety in mind and ensure all activities in and around the pool are supervised.

WHEEL FUN
Try this biking activity with your child at a park. Map out a simple circuit — it could be past the park bench, round the pond and back, and ask your young cyclist to pedal the route three times without stopping. You can also make it more exciting by drawing the circuit out as a colourful map for your child to follow. Make sure your child has put on a safety helmet. If he or she completes the task, acknowledge the achievement with a little treat, such as 10 minutes extra time at the playground. ♥

Game For This?

Encourage your child to love sports and the great outdoors by bending the rules a little.

Physical activity is essential for children as it lays the foundation for a healthy body and mind. Besides helping them achieve optimum development and growth, children who perceive themselves as physically competent (able to bike, run, or swim) also enjoy a boost in self-esteem.

