

## Get-moving games

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Stuck inside? Try one of these get-up-and-go games—appropriate for toddlers on up—from *Active Start for Healthy Kids* by Steven J. Virgilio, Ph.D., a physical education professor at Adelphi University, in Garden City, NY:

### Fun for one

Play "Snake in the Grass." Hold a jump rope flush to the floor, then wiggle it back and forth while your child tries to jump on it and stop the "snake."

### Fit for two

Give one child a foam ball, beanbag, or stuffed animal. Shout out "Elbows!" and have the kids trap the toy between each other's

elbows while shuffling across the room, taking care not to drop it. Choose a new body part—"Belly buttons!" "Foreheads!"—and send them back.

### Crowd-pleasers

For a playdate or a party (though this game's still fun for one), space the kids out around the room. Put on some upbeat music, tell them they're famous athletes, and ask them to mime different moves (shooting a basket, dribbling a soccer ball, etc.) when you call out the name of a sport.

—AMY ROBERTS

On your  
toes!

## Handling a touchy subject

Rachel Krasny, of Scotch Plains, NJ, will never forget the night her mom watched 3-year-old Sarah. "We came home to find Mom horrified—apparently, Sarah had started fondling herself while watching a video," Krasny says.

As disconcerting as it may be for you—not to mention an unsuspecting relative—to see your child masturbate, it's actually quite typical, even for young kids. She may need to comfort herself or ease anxiety,

says Cheryl Roberts, director of education at the Gesell Institute of Human Development in New Haven, CT.

While this behavior isn't something you usually have to worry about, here's how to deal:

### ■ Try to react calmly.

Overreacting or forbidding your child to masturbate could just make her do it even more, and there's no need for her to feel she's misbehaved.

■ Give her something else to do. If the time or place is

inappropriate, distract her. Suggest a favorite CD or snuggling with a lovey.

■ Talk about privacy. A 3-year-old is a little young to fully grasp the concept, but you can tell her that what she's doing should only be done when she's by herself.

■ Trust your instincts. If it seems like your child is masturbating a lot, talk to your pediatrician. Something may be causing her a lot of stress.

—DEB LEHMAN