



Helping Hands for Families

Fitness Fun & Family Memories by Dave Pepler

My childhood dream was to someday become a martial artist. To me, Bruce Lee was *the* example of what an athlete and a physically fit person was. Several years passed, but at age 37, I finally found my way into my first Tae Kwon Do class. Tae Kwon Do requires a person to really exert themselves, with all the jumping, twisting and flying techniques. It provided physical and mental challenges for me that helped me stay fit, and I had a great time doing it!



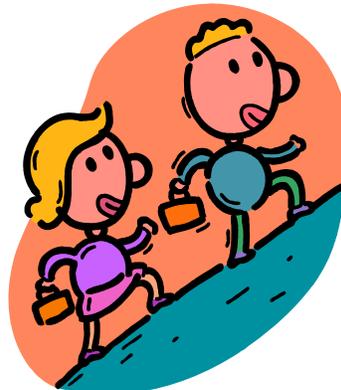
Today I have a family, a wife, two daughters and a son. My children were pretty young when I started Tae Kwon Do, pre-school age, kindergarten and early elementary age. In those early years they used to attend most of my belt level testings' and watched the different challenges I had to endure. My son, who is our middle child, decided at 5 years old that he wanted to learn how to do Tae Kwon Do too. Pretty soon my other two children and my wife decided to give it a try.

Tae Kwon Do quickly became a regular family event.

Our time as a family doing Tae Kwon Do spanned about five years, and we were never closer to each other than when we were all involved in this common activity together. For a while it seemed like this was going to be our family routine indefinitely, but kids grow older, life gets busier and new interests emerge. For me I will always cherish the memories of how we got fit together, and had a lot of fun along the way.

Certainly one of the greatest benefits that came from this time in our lives was the seed that got planted regarding the importance of personal fitness. I am so thankful that I started Tae Kwon Do as an adult so that my kids could be there to see what good things it did for me. Because they got to witness this, I believe they now have their own commitment to taking care of themselves in mind, body and spirit. They have learned that doing this is hard work, and that no one else can do it for them. Now that they are adolescents and young adults, I feel confident that they will choose to make fitness a lifelong habit.

You don't necessarily have to join a program to engage your family in fitness. All you have to do
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**Marquette County
Family Connections
Coalition (MCFCC)**

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**Marquette County Health
Department**
608-297-3135

**Marquette Early Learning
Center & Head Start**
608-296-2141 x 2114

**Marquette County
UW-Extension**
608-297-3141

Family Health WIC
1-800-942-5330

**Marquette County
Human Services**
608-297-3124

**Child Care Resource &
Referral**
800-628-8534

**Marquette County
Economic Support**
608-297-3124

**WorkSmart Employment
& Training Services**
608-242-4564

**Westfield School District
Family/School Liaison
& Guidance Program**
608-296-2141

Montello School District
608-297-7617

Mission

The Marquette County Family Connections Coalition (MCFCC) mission is to link families with community agencies through communication and collaboration.

Fitness Fun & Family Memories (continued)

is find an activity that is fun for all of you, and get busy doing it.

Quite often no equipment is needed either; you just need a place to run around and a chunk of time in your day to do it. The best chance parents have of planting the seed of fitness in their children is when they are young, and being involved by getting fit right along with them. Pursuing fitness really is a family event, and the memories you will create while doing it are treasured and lifelong. Here is a web site to help get you thinking about what fitness activities you and your family would most enjoy. www.kidshealth.org

Submitted by Dave Pepler, Westfield Schools Guidance Program

The Wonderful Thing About Reading... ... is that reading's a wonderful thing!

Reading with your child is one of the best gifts you can give your child. Reading not only builds a better brain by enhancing language and learning skills, it also helps you build some wonderful memories. Make reading together an everyday part of your child's routine. Babies love bright board books with simple yet colorful photos that you can "read" together. Toddlers love books with repetitive text. Your preschoolers love all kinds of books, and will even begin to recognize some simple words.



Looking for something to do? Visit the library! Books, CDs, movies, playgroups and more await you at your local library. Where else can you find so much fun for free?!? Local library numbers:

Endeavor: 608-587-2902
Westfield: 608-296-2544
Montello: 608-297-7544
Neshkoro: 920-293-4026
Oxford: 608-586-4458
Packwaukee: 608-589-5202

Submitted by Stacey Oliphant, Westfield School Social Worker

Keeping Preschoolers Busy and Active

Each month, the *Get Moving Today Activity Calendar* (online) is chock-full of creative ways to get kids (and their adults!) to move in different ways. Here are a few of the ideas!

- Time to practice your jumping skills! Practice jumping far and high. Bend your knees, reach for the sky, and land softly.
- Practice your hopping skills. Hop once on each foot, hop twice on each foot, and then hop three times on each foot. Keep on hopping and counting!
- Sit with your family and take turns laughing. Try to make your laugh extra special.
- Practice throwing soft objects into a laundry basket. Move the basket close to you and then far away.
- Go for a walk with your child. Make a game of it. Have them skip a few steps then run then walk and hop. Count the steps as you go walk 5 steps, hop 10 steps, etc.
- Stomp in the snow! Make patterns in the snow or snow angels.
- Tag or hide-and-seek can be played both indoors and outdoors.
- Have them think of what they would be and move like it. Example: A rolling pin they can roll on the floor. Airplane, train, car, boat, or whatever they come up with.



- Make up games! Follow your child's lead.
- Give the child a paper plate and 1 item on it have them carry it across the room. Then let them try 2 items then 3 and so on!

Here is the web site: <http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/activityresources/activityCalendar/> No access to the Internet? You can take a winter field trip with your child to your local library and use a computer there.

Submitted by Anna Weber, Marquette County Health Department