



s p o r t s

for sharing

Hit a home run of fitness and fun by developing a family sport.
It might be your all-time favorite or something entirely new.
Either way, everyone benefits.



DOES THE FAMILY who plays together stay together? "You bet," says coach Steve Connaughton. And sharing sports—either on the field or from the stands—helps build kids' self-esteem and encourages a lifetime love of health and fitness. "Parents who are positive and supportive are a key part of their kids' development," Connaughton says.

The Burdett family knows this firsthand. When daughter Emily was 5 years old, she picked up a tennis racket and started hitting volleys with her mom, Maria. Big brothers Wes and Kevin were about the same age when they strapped on ice skates to join their dad, Jim, in hockey practice. As the kids have grown, this sports-loving New York family has kept closer by playing together. "It really has been a bonding experience for us," Maria says. "We travel together to the matches. And the kids are really supportive of each other."

Sharing a sport can be challenging for families with multi-age and multi-interest kids. Help make good sports memories by keeping these tips in mind:

Make evenly matched "dream teams" by pairing a star with a less-experienced member to play team sports. The goal is to inspire group competition, not individual competitiveness.

Extend your search into nontraditional options if you haven't found a common sport. Suit up for surfing lessons, archery, or fencing to try something completely different.

Create a sporting tradition and you'll get more than a great workout—you'll make great memories. Try hitting the links at a miniature golf course once a week.



share a healthful diet



A recent study conducted by Joel Stager, exercise kinesiology professor at Indiana University, suggests that chocolate milk may be as effective as leading sports drinks in helping athletes recover from a workout. Have NESTLÉ® NESQUIK® Calcium Fortified Powder and plenty of fresh milk on hand so you can all refuel after your favorite sport with a taste you love and 33% more calcium than a glass of milk alone.

The night before a big game, rally the kids and make tasty Chocolate



Granola Bars (visit verybestbaking.com, keywords "granola bars"). Filled with oatmeal, peanut butter, and NESTLÉ® TOLL HOUSE® Morsels, these yummy bars will boost energy and spark smiles on game day.

Here's an easy dinner idea: Pop a tray of STOUFFER'S® Lasagna in the oven and during the time it takes to heat, get a soccer game going in the backyard with the entire family. When the timer beeps, sit down together to savor a dinner made from wholesome ingredients, 100% real cheese, and made-from-scratch pasta.



Or, plan vacations around favorite activities, such as a hike on a mountain path or a bike ride on a seacoast trail.

Change the rules if your family doesn't get into the groove. Your passion may be waterskiing, but if everyone wants to mutiny after the first spin around the lake, try a diving game instead. Focus on spending time together, exercising, and having fun.

get moving together

Sporting adventures help you bond while having a great time at every stage of your child's development.

start-up sports fans

• ages 2 to 5

At this age, it's all about movement and fun. Encourage free play with running, jumping, and chasing activities. Although they're too young for most team sports, young children develop coordination and physical skills as they enjoy these activities. Root for a favorite team with your child, too.

suit up, too

• ages 6 to 8

"Go for three things: fun, new friends, and developing skills in the sport," says coach Steve Connaughton. Consider hiking or biking—or join an activity your child enjoys. If your daughter loves horses, enroll her in a riding class and saddle up with her. But don't steal the limelight. It's all about being a supporting player and having a good time while being active.

be a rah-rah

• ages 9 to 12

Now's when kids improve their skills to really play the game. Sideline support is a powerful way to share their interests and build confidence. While some kids commit to a team sport at this age, others drop out. If that happens, help your child find the right activity for him. Introduce individual or small-group sports such as golf, karate, hiking, or tennis.



kids make a difference

Reading leads kids on wild adventures and inspires them to make real contributions to the world around them. Each year, The Nestlé Very Best In Youth program, sponsored by NESTLÉ, honors 25 kids ages 10 to 18 who excel academically and strive to make a difference in the lives of others. Winners receive a \$1,000 check made to a charity of their choice and a trip to Los Angeles to be recognized in an awards ceremony. The Nestlé Very Best In Youth Foundation, run by current and former winners, provides ongoing encouragement by also awarding grants to programs started by young people who have participated in the Nestlé Very Best In Youth program. Learn how your child can be a part of this amazing opportunity at nestle-verybestinyouth.com.



fun for kids

This activity has been a long-time favorite of the *Very Best Kids*™ editors. We all remember telling stories with our families, jumping in to add to each others' tales and cracking up over where our stories took us.

That's why we asked Steve Slack, one of our favorite writers, to start a story for you to finish. We all added our own zany ideas and then asked illustrator Jesse Hartland to bring it to life with her original designs.

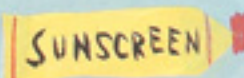
But don't peek at our story just yet! Work together on the questions below, writing answers on a separate sheet of paper. Then uncover the story, fill in each blank, and read aloud.

1. The name of your friend's pet
2. A fruit you like to eat
3. Something in your garage
4. Your favorite color
5. Your favorite food
6. Something that tastes sour
7. Something that rattles when you shake it
8. Something your mom or dad does on Saturday
9. Your favorite zoo animal
10. Something with wheels
11. The answer to number 9
12. Something silly your best friend does
13. A pet you would like to have
14. Your favorite game
15. Your favorite day of the week



enjoy it again!

Visit verybestkids.com/magazine to find an online version of this wacky story. Print out several copies, substitute original answers for new words, and discover a unique story every time!





Swimming with Grandpa: A Very Splashy Experience

Grandpa says he was a champion swimmer, but his medal looks kind of fishy...

My dad loves swimming, too. In fact, everybody in my family loves to swim, even _____ 1. Sometimes, things get kind of crazy. Let me tell you about the craziest time of all.

When we picked Grandpa up that day, he was wearing a shirt that had a big _____ 2 on the front. We had gone only a few blocks when he said, "Let's stop at that store called the _____ 3. I'm hungry for some _____ 4 _____ 5 and maybe some _____ 6 on the side." When we got ready to pay, Grandpa said, "Oh look, I forgot my money. All I have is a _____ 7. Will that do?"

Sometimes Grandpa likes to _____ 8 before he swims, but this day he said, "I want to spend all my time playing with any old _____ 9 that comes along the beach. I thought he was dreaming, but then 10 of them came strolling by. "Hey!" said Grandpa, "Want to play _____ 10 with us? Last one in is a rotten egg!"

All of them went stampeding into the water. People dove to get out of the way! My mom and I helped some little kids and apologized to their parents.

Then something good happened. When people saw how much fun the _____ 5 11 were having with my grandpa, they went back in. Everyone was throwing balls and _____ 12. Grandpa taught the little kids how to do the _____ 13 paddle and shared his snacks with everyone.

Finally, it was time to go. Everyone waved as we drove away. When we dropped Grandpa off at his apartment, he said, "Thanks for a wonderful day. Come back tomorrow and we'll play _____ 14 until at least _____ 15."

