

### 5 Ways to Motivate Your Kids to Get Off Their Video Games and Head Outside

Before the pandemic, kids spent an average of 4 hours a day looking at screens — at least 3 hours a day playing video games. During the pandemic, this average only increased. In fact, out of the 227 million Americans who played more video games in the past year, [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/gaming/2021/07/13/video-games-2021-covid-19-pandemic/7938713002/) reports that 76% were children.  
Unfortunately, too much screen time can impact your child's sleep cycle and decrease their attention span. It can also increase their risk of developing depression, anxiety, or even video game addiction. According to a research-backed guide published on [SymptomFind](https://www.symptomfind.com/), this condition is characterized by a lack of control over gaming, to the extent that they take priority over essential activities like eating. It can cause aggressive behavior, reduced academic performance, and an inactive lifestyle that can lead to obesity and health issues.  
A picture containing grass, outdoor, person

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If you're concerned for your child's health and wellbeing, don't worry — it's not too late! Here are some ways to motivate your kids to head outdoors, become more active, and be the happy and healthy kids they should be.

### ****Sign them up for a sport****

Consider catering to your kids' interests. If they like playing NBA or FIFA on the PS4, encourage them to try out basketball or soccer in real life. If your kids are more easygoing, try golf. As previously discussed on the [PHIT America](https://phitamerica.org/) blog, the sport can help your kid form bonds with other players, relieve stress, and even exercise their mind with the math and critical thinking skills it requires. Meanwhile, more active kids might enjoy tennis. It's a great immunity booster that can even improve academic performance by sharpening mental alertness and critical thinking. Whichever sport your child chooses will be a great opportunity for them to get out of their comfort zone and try something exciting and new.

### ****Do indoors activities outside****

Give your kids a change in environment by doing all the things you do in the house outdoors. Homework? Set up a table outside. Dinner? Flip some burgers on the grill. Entertainment? Nab a mini-projector and a white bedsheet for some family movie time under the stars. You can even set up a play area for younger kids to romp around during the day. This switch-up can help them slowly acclimate to the outdoors.

### ****Go on vacation****

To get your kids up close and personal with nature, you can do better than a picnic at the local park. Why not visit the nearest lake, beach, or national forest? Once there, you can engage in various activities like photo-taking, rock-collecting, bird-watching, or simply sitting back to enjoy the view. This time spent in the sun can do more than improve your kids' mood and sleep schedule. A 2021 study published in [Nature Sustainability](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-021-00751-1) found that it can develop their cognitive abilities, as well.

### ****Plan a family competition****

If you have older kids, consider setting up a friendly competition. You can hide their phones or consoles around the backyard for a treasure hunt, play board games at picnics, or organize bike races around the neighborhood. You can even take inspiration from these "Quarantine Olympics" a post by [Insider](https://www.insider.com/a-family-started-their-own-quarantine-olympics-on-tiktok-2020-4) shared last year. One game involves betting on how many rubber bands are needed to make a watermelon explode. The person with the closest estimate wins!

### ****Set a good example****

Arguably the best thing you can do is to show them how it's done. Kids usually learn by mimicking their parents' actions, meaning you can unconsciously motivate your kids to get off their screens. Stop the Netflix binges and do other things like reading in the morning, working outside with them as they study in the afternoon, or going for contemplative walks at night.  
There are so many things you can do to get your kids moving, and these tips are just the beginning. Ultimately, a little effort is all it takes to have happy, healthy kids in today’s digital age.