

# WATERMELON and WIGGLES



## Make this winter a safe one



- Although many people feel unsure when it comes to staying active in the winter, it is a great season for outdoor activities, such as playing with snow, skating, and sledding. The snow and cold weather can be fun; they can also be dangerous for children if certain safety measures aren't taken.

The following tips will help parents and children enjoy winter activities safely.

- ✿ Keep children indoors whenever the temperature or the wind chill is lower than 16°F (-27°C) – exposed skin will begin to freeze at these temperatures.
- ✿ Building forts and tunnels can be fun, but they can collapse and children might not be able to breathe—make sure it's supervised by an adult.
- ✿ Always sit up or kneel on a sled. Lying down can increase the risk of injury to the head, spine and stomach. Children younger than 5 years should never go down a hill alone.

## Go on a Winter Color Hunt!

Although the majority of the winter environment is covered in snow, there are still many colorful objects that can be found by children.

**Directions:** Give each child a handout with two columns – One column as “Drawing” and the other as “color”.

- ✿ Have children record the different colors and draw the objects that match those colors.
- ✿ You can also include the items they'll find on the list as a scavenger hunt.
- ✿ Have a chart of colors so kids can say what they are. For an added challenge, have children fill in the colors they'd like to find before heading outside.
- ✿ Encourage creativity, who knows what they'll find in a snow-covered landscape!

## HEALTHY Community Connections

### Make and Take Gingerbread Houses:

Decorate a gingerbread house to display during the holiday season. Registration required. 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM on 12/20/18 at the Farmington Public Library. Register at [www.co.dakota.mn.us/libraries](http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/libraries)

**Waggin' Tales:** Bring your kids into the Library to read to certified therapy dogs. It's not only fun, but it also helps develop reading skills and fluency. 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM on 01/19/2018 at the Inver Grove Heights Public Library the South St. Paul Public Library.

## 3 WAYS

to increase children's  
step count this winter:

1

Replace story time with drama plays: have children act out stories and fairy tales

2

Walk with your children to increase physical activity

3

Make TV time more active: have children walk around when a commercial comes on TV

## Parent wellness

### Fitting fitness in

It's terrific if you can find alone time to go to the gym, take a brisk walk with a friend or attend a yoga class; in reality, many parents have difficulty fitting exercise into their already busy days.

Here are exercise tips for busy parents:

- **Make it a family affair:** Involve kids whenever you can. Have a baby? Jog or walk with them in their stroller. Have a toddler? Find something that they enjoy running towards, so they can enjoy it. For a complete list of indoor winter walking options, go to [www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us) (search "Indoor Walking Options").
- **Find others who inspire you:** find inspiration from those around you or online for an added boost in motivation. Take the next step and join or invite others to be active together.
- **Consider the benefits:** Rethink how you approach exercise. Do you see it as an obligation or something to check off a list? Seeing it as physical activity and something that makes you healthier and happier can improve your attitude about it. Find an activity that is fun to you, like skiing, hiking, or biking.

### Working Parent's Wellness Toolkit:

Find additional tips on nutrition, sleep, exercise and stress management for working parents at:

[https://www.brighthorizons.com/-/media/bh/corporate/pdf/webinars/Webinar\\_Resources\\_Working\\_Parent\\_Wellness\\_Toolkit.ashx](https://www.brighthorizons.com/-/media/bh/corporate/pdf/webinars/Webinar_Resources_Working_Parent_Wellness_Toolkit.ashx)

## Resources You'll Dig!

### Parenting Series: Managing Child Anxiety

For many families with school-aged children, the return to school can trigger anxiety and even panic. Learn effective strategies to help your child better manage their emotions, so that anxiety doesn't get the best of them (and you too!).

This FREE Parenting Series takes place at: FACTS, 1385 Mendota Heights Rd., #200, Mendota Heights, 55120. Call (651) 379-9800 ext. 200, or [www.facts-mn.org](http://www.facts-mn.org) for information.

### Early Childhood Resource Directories

These directories list resources such as early childhood mental health providers, family literacy programs, early learning scholarships and more. Go to [www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us) (search "Help Me Grow"), the directory is also available in Spanish.

## Best Practices to engage children through their environments this winter:

- Set up indoor and outdoor spaces where children learn to operate objects in their environment.
- Use moveable toys or accessory materials (crates, puzzles, cable spools etc.) that children can use.
- Repetition is key to help children understand their physical space; therefore, moveable toys shouldn't be changed/removed often.



### Ways to combine physical activity and learning

- Try counting by 1s, 2s, or 3s, as kids skip, jump, or climb stairs.
- Teach about shapes and colors using fabric.
- Teach about time and distance by measuring and timing activities such as walking.