

KEEP THEM HEALTHY AND HAPPY



a movable feast Shake up your family's weeknight routine by taking your children out for a surprise twilight picnic in a local park—or even in your own backyard. Bring along plenty of blankets and pillows to make it extra cozy. Dining outside will be an unexpected adventure for the kids, and you'll be able to get away with serving sandwiches for dinner — a win-win!

45%

of all zip-line injuries in the U.S. between 2009 and 2012 happened to children younger than 10, according to Nationwide Children's Hospital, in Columbus, Ohio.



A backpack shouldn't weigh your kid down.

→ Lighten Their Load

Thousands of kids are treated for backpack-related injuries such as shoulder and lower-back sprains every year, according to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. Even bags on wheels can be harmful to the shoulders if kids bump them up the stairs, says Jocelyn Idema, D.O., an orthopedic surgeon at The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics, in Maryland. These injuries place children at risk for chronic pain and postural scoliosis. Follow our tips to make your kid's bag safer.

- Try to choose a pack with chest and waist straps to distribute the weight more evenly over his torso.
- Make sure your child uses both shoulder straps.
- Pick a properly sized bag—it should be no wider than his shoulders and should not drop below his bottom.
- Pack the bag carefully: The heaviest things should be in the back, between the shoulder blades.
- Weigh your child's full backpack and pare it down if it ends up weighing more than 10 percent of his body weight.



More Reasons Not to Spank

A new meta-analysis of 50 years of research has provided additional evidence that spanking is not a smart method for disciplining kids. It's linked to aggressive or antisocial behavior, mental-health problems, lower cognitive ability, and problematic parent-child relationships. Instead, the things you do to help prevent bad behavior in the first place may be the most effective. "As a parent, you should be warm with your children, be willing to teach them about things, and be responsive to their needs," explains coauthor Elizabeth T. Gershoff, Ph.D., associate professor of human development and family sciences at The University of Texas at Austin. "Those are the kinds of parenting behaviors that predict positive adjustments in children."
—Zachary Verbit