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What supervised indoor play offers your child

Children's play not only is a great learning experience, it also can affect their approach to physical exercise and activities in years to come. We take a look at what supervised indoor play centres could offer children.



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Indoor play is not only great fun for kids but adventure play centres also provide huge health benefits with youngsters climbing, swinging, jumping, and pulling their way around the exciting play structures. They see it as play but they are in fact gaining 'Exercise in Disguise'.

Reports from the UK Department of Health show that less than a third of young children are sufficiently active, one in six is obese, and all this is resulting in an alarming rise in ill health and increasing long term costs for the NHS. To add weight to the argument it is predicted that a million children in England will be obese within five years and 50 per cent of the whole population will be obese by 2050.

Children's play to improve fitness

The problem is twofold, firstly the popularity of screen based entertainment means that as a society, our activity levels are simply not high enough and secondly too many children get a poor inadequately balanced diet. There is little point in the likes of Jamie Oliver campaigning for healthy eating if this is not combined with increased physical activity levels. Parents must encourage and support both of these goals, in a way that is engaging for children. This is where the fun filled visits to indoor play centres come into their own.

The benefits of indoor play are vast explains Janice Dunphy, chair of the Play Providers Association (PPA)- the association representing over 100 operators nationwide. Janice commented 'Kids develop socially, physically and emotionally through play and the PPA has coined the term "exercise in disguise" to describe what our member sites offer. The children are too busy having such fun, that they don't realise the great benefit it does for their long term health.'

As an example, research conducted recently, showed that in a 2hr play session at one centre; that the high intensity activity provided an average of between 6,000 and 8,000 steps towards a child's recommend daily amounts (12,000 steps a day for a girl and 15,000 steps a day for a boy) which is an astonishing figure. If you looked at calories used during this time by the same child, it would probably be an even higher percentage.

Activities at indoor venues such as the climbing walls and the activity walls, use far more energy still, and will importantly aid the development of arm and shoulder muscles in children thus improving motor skills & coordination which can help with a child's handwriting for example. Play centres also provide a great party location and offer fantastic family meal options.

In today's digital age of video games and television, it's very easy to lose sight of the short and long term health benefits of physical activity for children. As adults, many of us started the New Year with resolutions of a healthier lifestyle, but do we make the same promises for our children? Promoting exercise and healthy living from an early age gives children a better chance of growing into fit and healthy adults.

Members of the Play Providers Association (PPA) commit to maintaining high standards of quality and service consistency conforming to and exceeding all relevant industry standards.

Do visit the PPA website to find your nearest PPA member centre at playproviders.org.uk where you can be guaranteed great facilities and excellent value for money.

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