

READY, SET, GO!

GET MOVING WITH MOVE IT MONSTERS

BY JODI HWANG

Rigorous school schedules and evenings filled with homework often leave kids with little time to be active on a daily basis. With shorter days and colder weather ahead, it may be even harder to find time to help kids get the recommended minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity per day. But physical activity is what kids need most to thrive and it benefits both their bodies and minds.

Studies show that a child's physical fitness can also help academic performance leading to better focus, more positive classroom behavior and even an increase in test scores.

Start your new year off right by helping the kids stay fit and active with Move It Monsters. Created with busy families in

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mind, Move It Monsters will help inspire kids to find ways to move indoors or outdoors. The 26-card set features a monster and a description of its signature move.

Each day allow the kids to pick several cards, then get moving by following the monster's actions. The activity can last for a few minutes or as long as the kids are still having fun.

The cards were a collaborative effort of three Shanghai resi-

dents – graphic designer Amy Vijayanagar, Kathy Wilson and Olivia's Place physical therapist Marla Balzer – who wanted to find ways to make physical activity fun.

"We needed to rethink how we involve kids in physical activity in the sense that moving and being active is more than just what happens at school or on the sports field," believes Balzer.

For Kathy Wilson's family, the

cards provided a way to make after-school homework time less stressful. "We used to struggle with making the kids sit down right off the bus," she says. "Now we do something physical for 5-10 minutes before we start with homework, and they are much more able to focus and actually get done faster than before."

The best part for busy families is that every minute of movement counts towards kids' daily 60-minute physical activity goal, even if spaced in intervals throughout the day.

So, what are you waiting for? Join siblings Kokoro and Masami Murata as they demonstrate these monster moves.



Available through the holiday season, Move It Monsters cards make great gifts for kids, teachers and parents searching for inspiration to get their kids moving. Available from Zocou.com, Obidotoys.com, or pick up a set at Olivia's Place for a suggested donation of RMB50 to benefit Olivia's Foundation. For more information visit moveitmonsters.org.



See if you can leap like Blurr and miss the puddles. Set out several puddles (items like pillows, paper, yoga blocks) in a row and jump over them. Younger kids can step over instead of jumping.





Start by making your body into a table shape with your belly pointing up. Now move like a crab, forward, backward and sideways.

Try to keep your body straight through the middle; don't let your bottom touch the ground. You can race from point to point; move in circles or race a friend.



Pretend a long string or broom handle is a snake. Set up your "snake" on the ground, or get friends to hold the ends. Our models decided to make the snake move.

Jump sideways over the top of the snake until you need a break. How many times can you jump? Try to do five more jumps next time. Doing this with friends? See who can go the longest without stopping.



Sit down with your knees bent, then lift your feet as high as you can.

Bring your upper body and lower body together in a rowing motion. To balance, grab onto your legs or reach your arms out in front of you. Continue until tired.

Do this with a friend, put feet together, hold hands and move back and forth like you are rowing a boat. Try not to lose your balance and sink!

