

# Roughhousing Activity Prompts



Adapted from and Inspired by *Unplug and Play: The Ultimate Illustrated Guide to Roughhousing with Your Kids*

By Anthony T. DeBenedet, M.D., and Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D.

# A Note of Caution

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Roughhousing is great fun. It's also a little dangerous. In fact, roughhousing is great fun *because* it's a little dangerous.

And if you roughhouse with your children often—as we do—you should expect that someone will eventually get hurt.

Here's the thing: We believe that occasional bruises and scrapes are a normal part of childhood. It's how we learn to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and stay in the game. It's how we grow our confidence and discover the laws of physics.

We're counting on you—the responsible adult—to monitor your child and keep these bruises and scrapes to a minimum. We want you to have fun. We want you to get rowdy. But we need you to use common sense. If your child seems too young to ride a mattress down a staircase (page 153), give her some time to grow. If you have trouble lifting a suitcase into an airplane overhead compartment, please don't attempt anything like the Balloonist (page 57).

**The publisher and authors do not claim that the information contained herein is complete or accurate for your specific situation. The publisher and authors do not endorse or encourage any irresponsible behavior, and specifically disclaim responsibility for any liability, loss, damage, or injury allegedly arising from any suggestion, information, or instruction in this book. We urge you to obey the law and the dictates of common sense at all times.**

End of cautionary note. Now get ready to rumble!

## Let's get ready to #UnplugAndPlay!

Cut out this sign, and hang it up when you're ready to roughhouse. Remember to ask a parent or guardian for help when using scissors!

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## Unplug and Play Activity Prompts – Difficulty: Easy

Not sure where to start? Cut out the prompts below and put them in a jar. When you're ready to play, pick a random prompt and have fun! Remember to ask a parent or guardian for help when using scissors.

### Balboa

- Page 47
- Ages: 1 to 3
- Difficulty: Easy

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### Rogue Dumbo

- Page 49
- Ages: 2 to 5
- Difficulty: Easy

#UnplugAndPlay

### Appel

- Page 77
- Ages: 5 and up
- Difficulty: Easy

#UnplugAndPlay

### Raucous Pillow Fight

- Page 79
- Ages: 4 and up
- Difficulty: Easy

#UnplugAndPlay

### Just Plain Wrestling

- Page 105
- Ages: 2 and up
- Difficulty: Easy

#UnplugAndPlay

### Crane

- Page 107
- Ages: 2 to 5
- Difficulty: Easy

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# Unplug and Play Activity Prompts

## Difficulty: Easy

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### Steamroller

- Page 109
- Ages: 6 months and up
- Difficulty: Easy

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### Playing (Rough) House

- Page 139
- Ages: 3 to 6
- Difficulty: Easy

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### The Stick

- Page 141
- Ages: 4 to 10
- Difficulty: Easy

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### Spanish Steps

- Page 165
- Ages: 3 and up
- Difficulty: Easy

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## Unplug and Play Activity Prompts – Difficulty: Medium

Not sure where to start? Cut out the prompts below and put them in a jar. When you're ready to play, pick a random prompt and have fun! Remember to ask a parent or guardian for help when using scissors.

### Sleeping Bat

- Page 51
- Ages: 2 to 8
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### Flying Fox

- Page 53
- Ages: 2 to 7
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### The Balloonist

- Page 57
- Ages: 3 to 6
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### X-15

- Page 59
- Ages: 3 to 8
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### Chariot Race

- Page 81
- Ages: 4 and up
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### Cliffhanger

- Page 83
- Ages: 3 and up
- Difficulty: Medium

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## Unplug and Play Activity Prompts

### Difficulty: Medium

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### Jousting

- Page 89
- Ages: 4 and up
- Difficulty: Medium

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### Houdini

- Page 111
- Ages: 2 to 4
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### Ninja Warrior

- Page 115
- Ages: Infancy to 2
- Difficulty: Medium

#UnplugAndPlay

### Big Bad Monster

- Page 145
- Ages: 3 to 8
- Difficulty: Medium

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## Unplug and Play Activity Prompts – Difficulty: Hard

Not sure where to start? Cut out the prompts below and put them in a jar. When you're ready to play, pick a random prompt and have fun! Remember to ask a parent or guardian for help when using scissors.

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### Acroyoga

- Page 61
- Ages: 5 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

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### Human Cannonball

- Page 63
- Ages: 5 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

#UnplugAndPlay

### Wacky Whirling Dervish

- Page 65
- Ages: 3 to 7
- Difficulty: Hard

#UnplugAndPlay

### Vacquero

- Page 91
- Ages: 7 to 12
- Difficulty: Hard

#UnplugAndPlay

### Empire Bluff

- Page 121
- Ages: 2 to 7
- Difficulty: Hard

#UnplugAndPlay

### Hummingbird

- Page 123
- Ages: 12 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

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## Unplug and Play Activity Prompts

### Difficulty: Hard

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#### **Futaleufú Mattress Rafting**

- Page 153
- Ages: 3 to 10
- Difficulty: Hard

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#### **SEAL**

- Page 169
- Ages: 10 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

**#UnplugAndPlay**

#### **Cat Leap**

- Page 171
- Ages: 10 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

**#UnplugAndPlay**

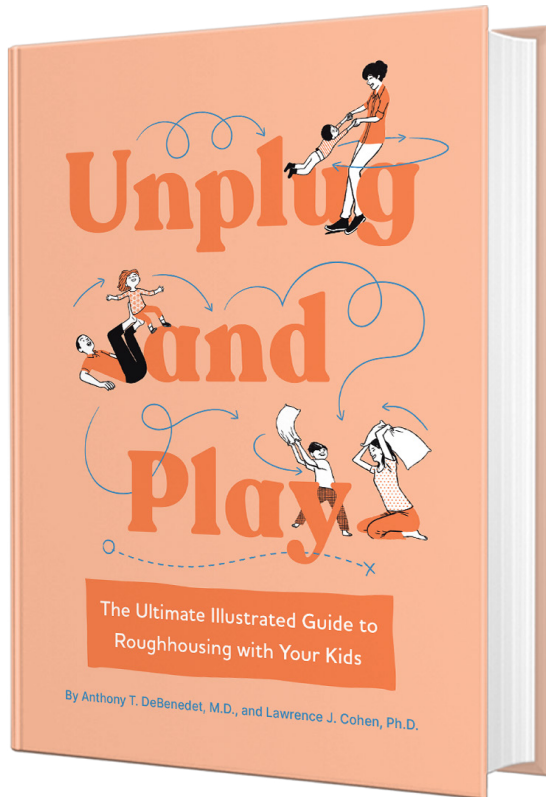
#### **Anji Yard**

- Page 177
- Ages: 3 and up
- Difficulty: Hard

**#UnplugAndPlay**

## About the Book

Learn how rough-and-tumble play can nurture close connections, encourage resilience, and boost confidence—with 45 illustrated activities to get you started.



Every kid needs horseplay! Roughhousing is an essential part of childhood development—but it is increasingly overshadowed by screens and structured activities. In *Unplug and Play*, a doctor and a child psychologist, both dads, introduce parents to the benefits of physical play for young children.

Drawing from gymnastics, martial arts, ballet, team sports, and even animal behavior, the authors present fun full-contact activities for parents and children to enjoy together, including:

- Human Cannonball
- Magic Carpet Ride
- Steamroller
- Jousting
- Raucous Pillow Fight
- And more!

With activities for everyone from toddlers to kids ages 12 and up, you'll build a foundation for a lifetime of enriching physical play.

Previously published as *The Art of Roughhousing*, this updated edition incorporates new child development research and addresses the changing role of screen time.

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## About the Authors



**Anthony T. DeBenedet, M.D.** is a practicing physician, behavioral-science enthusiast, and energetic dad. His interviews and writings on play, health, wellness, and behavior have appeared in multiple major media outlets. He is the author of *Playful Intelligence: The Power of Living Lightly in a Serious World*. He lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.



**Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D.** is a licensed psychologist, author, and consultant living in Portland, Oregon. He is a regular contributor to *Psychology Today* and the author of *The Opposite of Worry*, a book for parents about childhood anxiety and fears, and *Playful Parenting*, an award-winning book about nurturing close connections, solving behavior problems, and encouraging children's confidence. He specializes in children's play and play therapy.