



Healthy Habits Start Early!

How to raise an active child



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Physical activity is essential for healthy child development during the first six years of life. Physical activity enhances brain development, builds confidence and self esteem and helps lay a foundation for life long healthy habits.

The 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada (AHKC) Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth summarizes current research on the activity levels of children in Canada. This year's report card focuses on the importance of the early years. Evidence shows that from birth to age 6 is a critical time for the development of motor skills that are required to be physically active throughout life.

One of the key findings in this year's report card is that Canadian children and youth are not engaging in active play. The Active Play category was added to the report card in 2008 but until now a grade was never awarded due to a lack of research in the area. However, this year the Grade of "F" was awarded underscoring the importance that free play is not a 'time-waster' but key to healthy development of both the body and mind. Active play is a core component of physical activity and all kids should be encouraged to play more. When children engage in free, unstructured play, they are not only more active, they also develop their imagination, learn how to cooperate with others, tolerate small failures, send and receive subtle social cues and develop leadership skills while practising the lifelong skills of sharing, negotiation and conflict resolution.

The report card makes recommendations for parents, healthcare professionals, early childhood educators and policy makers. Each has an unique role in promoting physical activity, creating opportunities and removing barriers for kids and families to be physically active.

Recommendations for increasing physical activity in the early years

Parents – Keep TVs out of bedrooms, institute screen time limits and create opportunities for active outdoor play for kids and as a family.

Early Childhood Educators and Schools – Train and resource staff to offer a minimum of 90 minutes of daily active play time, indoors and outdoors, structured and unstructured.

Public Health and Healthcare Professionals – Promote physical activity, active play and reduced screen time, as part of early years support programs for families.

Policy Makers – Invest in active living programs for children under 5, ensure childcare policies mandate daily physical activity and adequately resource staff; target caregivers with incentives and messaging to get kids active and be active with them.

For more information on the Active Healthy Kids Canada 2010 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth – visit www.activehealthykids.ca





In Canada, we do not currently have physical activity guidelines for children under 5. While these guidelines are being developed, the report comes to the consensus that "all children ages 1 to 5 years should participate in at least 2 hours of physical activity every day, accumulated over many sessions as part of play, games, active transportation, and recreation."

So find creative ways to make physical activity a part of your family's day – through recreation and sport programs, active transportation, games and active play.



ParticipACTION suggests the following 5 tips on how to get your young children to move more.

1. Make physical activity a fun, regular part of every day.
2. Make physical activity one of the selection criteria for choosing your child's preschool or day care.
3. Be a good role model.
4. Set limits on screen time.
5. Encourage your child to join a sports team or club.

Active Play develops imagination, social and leadership skills.



**Looking for active Programs for your infant or preschooler?
Check out the Preschool section for the following activity-based programs:**

- Stay n' play drop in
- Parent & Tot fun times
- Fun with Music
- Tumblers 2's n' 3's
- Move, Groove & Mingle (NEW!)
- Kinder Ballet
- Hop to it
- Kinder Gym
- Gymnastics
- Running Amok
- Little Tykes Sport Camp
- Mini Soccer
- Yoga Kids
- Learn to Swim
- Learn to Skate

Physical Activity. It's Good for Your Health. Do it for Life!

For more ideas on how you and your family can get "in motion" visit www.winnipeginmotion.ca or call 940.3648

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