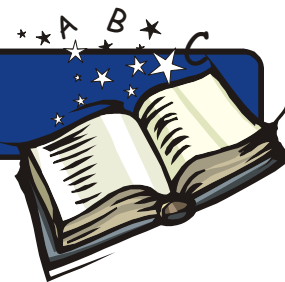




Active Minds Active Bodies



Active Children

Today many things discourage children from being physically active, such as T.V., computers, video games, cars, and safety issues. In the last 10 years children have become less active and as a result an epidemic of overweight and obesity is threatening children's health.

Encouraging children to be physically active every day at an early age helps to create a pattern that may stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Did You Know?

- Children today are 40% less active than they were 30 years ago.
- In 2002, Ontarians aged two and up spent almost 21 hours a week watching T.V.
- Over half of Canadian children are not active enough for healthy growth and development.

Daily physical activity:

- Makes the heart, lungs, muscles, and bones stronger.
- Helps children to stay flexible.
- Helps develop physical coordination.
- Promotes good posture and balance.
- Helps improve sleeping and eating habits.
- Helps children reach and maintain a healthy weight.
- Improves self-esteem.

How much physical activity do toddlers and preschoolers need?

- Toddlers and preschoolers should be active every day indoors or out.
- Toddlers should get at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity daily; preschoolers need at least 60 minutes. Structured physical activity includes games and activities that you direct or do with your toddler/preschooler.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should get at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of unstructured physical activity daily. Unstructured physical activity is supervised free time for children to play actively on their own or with other children.
- Physical activity can be done in short intervals. The daily recommended amounts of physical activity can be acquired by adding up many periods throughout the day.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should avoid being inactive for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.

Tips:

- Make physical activity part of the daily routine just like lunch and naptime.
- Praise children for participating in an activity
- Emphasize fun rather than competition.
- Encourage parents to dress their child in comfortable clothing that does not restrict play.

- Be an active role model by participating in games, dancing, action songs and outdoor play yourself

Resources:

Moving and Growing Series

This popular physical activity series, promotes healthy living and regular physical activity for children from birth to age eight. *Canadian Institute of Child Health and the Canadian Child Care Federation revised and expanded 2004.*

www.cccf-fcccsge.ca Toll free: 1-800-858-1412

Healthy Start for Life

This online resource provides reliable healthy eating and physical activity information about toddlers and preschool-age children (2-5 years). *Dietitians of Canada, 2003.*

www.dietitians.ca/healthystart

Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children

This guide promotes increasing time spent on physical activity and reducing "non-active" time spent on T.V., video, and computers. *Public Health Agency of Canada, 2002.*

www.paguide.com Toll free: 1-888-334-9769.

Looking for more "active" books?

The books in this storytelling kit are taken from the Active Minds Active Bodies 2006 Booklist.

To find the names of more books with positive physical activity messages or to download the entire 2006 Booklist, visit the Choices 4 Health website at www.choices4health.org/activemindsandactivebodies