

Tips to Get Your Children Moving

Introduction:

Adding daily physical activity to children's daily routines is strongly recommended and can have a positive impact on their health and self-esteem. Listed below are a few tips to help you support and encourage children to become physically active every day.

As you begin, it's important to note children and adolescents need 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. This should include a combination of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, and vigorous-intensity activity, such as running. Activities that increase the heart rate and breathing, making conversations difficult while moving, are considered to be moderate to vigorous physical activities. Be sure to include vigorous-intensity aerobic activity at least three days per week.

Another way for you to determine if you are getting the U.S. Surgeon General's recommendation for daily physical activity is to strive for at least 10,000 steps a day.

For more information on physical activity recommendations please visit www.CDC.gov.

Get Your Child Moving Today!

- Provide a safe play environment and facilitate physical activity.
- Serve as a good role model by showing your children that you strive to be physically active too. They will learn how you adjust your schedule to include physical activity as well as other healthy habits. Your children will see how you value physical activity which will encourage them to also value it.
- Sign your children up for a local sports league and/or summer camp to meet new friends, participate in group activities and develop new skills. This is a great way for children to be exposed to new physical activities. Plus, children will begin to learn the skills and rules of the game. You never know when you'll introduce an activity that your children will love and want to participate in for a lifetime.
- Expose your children to physical activities by taking them to watch a sporting event such as basketball, baseball, soccer, football, track, or golf. Or, take them to watch a ballet, musical or production centered around physical activity. Discuss the event as you watch it by pointing out skills, rules and proper etiquette. If your child shows interest, enroll them in lessons, camp, or play it with them to see if they enjoy participating in the activity.
- Provide your child with a pedometer and help them log their steps daily and reward them for meeting specific goals. About 10,000 steps a day will help you determine if you're getting the recommended physical activity requirements. If you don't have a pedometer, you can have them log their total minutes of physical activity each day and reward them when they achieve their goal.
- Promote physical activity. Children will stay more interested in staying physically fit if the activities are engaging and fun.
- Develop a weekly routine that includes daily physical activity and schedule time to be active together.
- Limit screen time (i.e. television watching, computer and texting) by encouraging your child to play active games and sports.
- Participate in physical activities with your child and/or as a family.
- Work with your child to develop his/her physical skills so they can feel confident when trying new physical activities.
- Support your child in their sports by asking if they had fun and enjoyed participating so they aren't only focusing on the outcome of the game.

Tips to Get Your Children Moving

- Add a few extra steps a day by taking the stairs when available and/or parking a little bit further away from your entrance.
- Provide your children with books or videos with characters demonstrating healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- Plan weekend physical activities in which the whole family can participate and be active together.
- Give children chores at home. Housework is a good way to add some physical activity to your daily routine; have your child help you vacuum, sweep, or wash the dishes. Or have your children help rake the leaves, shovel the snow or water the lawn.
Note: 60 minutes of physical activity per day does not need to happen all at once; it can be broken down into 10 minute segments.
- Discover fun and educational activities where you are also moving your feet. Examples include visiting zoos, museums and amusement parks.
- Bike with your child or family regularly.
- Take a walk with your family after dinner rather than watching television.
- Take a dance class with your family.
- Advocate for health policies with key decision makers such as administration and school boards. Check out the following website to help you get started: www.aahperd.org/naspe/advocacy/governmentRelations/toolkit.cfm.
- Promote physical activity in the afterschool care program.