



Preschooler

focus

BE A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ROLE MODEL

Young boys and girls depend on their parents. Being a positive influence on the development of healthy living behaviours will help contribute to your child's optimal growth and development.

When parents see physical activity as enjoyable and provide support for physical activity, their child will be more active

Children's physical activity and healthy living behaviours can be influenced during the early years. It is important for parents and caregivers to encourage these behaviours from a young age. Parents are the most important role models to young children and modeling healthy living habits has the potential to influence your child's lifestyle.

Research indicates that active parents are more likely to have children who are also active. Role modeling positive and consistent physical activity behaviours is an excellent way to encourage your child to be active.

Parents can influence physical activity in a number of other ways. Parents can provide social support, encouragement and motivation. Parents can provide opportunities for outdoor active play. They can facilitate their child's participation in organized sports and other activities. In addition to signing up their child for activities, they can volunteer as a coach or team manager and provide transportation.

Finally, by encouraging and participating in leisure physical activity with your family, you may reduce sedentary activities and screen time.



Family Physical Activity

In most households, finding time to be active together can be a challenge. While you cannot create more time, you can shift things around to incorporate family physical activity. Schedule family activity time into your calendar just like any other commitment. Being a parent can be tiring, and feeling like you have enough energy to be active may be hard. Start slow, by adding a little bit of physical activity into your family's daily routine, such as walking the dog together. Before long, it will become family habit!



Did You Know?



Children who receive parental support to be active are 6 times more likely to be active than inactive.



The Child Health & Exercise Medicine Program at McMaster University is working to advance child health through excellence in research.

To learn about our current studies, visit us online at fhs.mcmaster.ca/chemp

The Health Outcomes and Physical activity in Preschoolers (HOPP) Study

at McMaster University asked parents of 3- to 5-yr-olds to report how often they play active games or sports with their child. Only 21% of parents reported playing with their child daily, whereas 36% reported 3-5 times a week and 30% reported 1-2 times a week. We also found that more active parents also had children who engaged in more daily light intensity physical activity.

Family-Friendly Physical Activities

- ★ Walk, bike or use another form of active transportation for the commute to and from school
- ★ Hikes or walks on local trails
- ★ Dancing
- ★ Skating, skiing, snowboarding or tobogganing in the winter months
- ★ Family swims at a local pool (indoor or outdoor)

How to be a Positive Physical Activity Role Model

- ★ Show your children that being active is enjoyable and fun and not a chore
- ★ Be a healthy role model by participating in active pursuits, such as walking to work or riding a bike
- ★ Limit TV watching and screen time after school and work. Use leisure time for active pursuits instead
- ★ Support your child's physical activity or sport choices
- ★ Be involved with your child's sports team as a coach, manager, or volunteer

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines suggest adults accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more.

Find ways to be active with your child to help meet these guidelines for YOUR health benefits!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Active for Life www.activeforlife.ca

Active Healthy Kids Canada www.activehealthykids.ca

Best Start Resource Centre www.beststart.org/

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute www.cflri.ca

McMaster University Child Health & Exercise Medicine Program www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/chemp

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology www.csep.ca/guidelines

Canadian Sport for Life Physical Literacy www.physicalliteracy.ca

Caring for Kids www.caringforkids.cps.ca

ParticipACTION www.participation.com

References:

Biddle SJH, Atkin AJ, Cavill N, Foster C (2011). Correlates of physical activity in youth: a review of quantitative systematic reviews. *Int Rev Sport Exerc Psychol* 4 (1): 25-49.

Canadian Society of Exercise Physiology http://www.csep.ca/CMFiles/Guidelines/CSEP_PAGuidelines_adults_en.pdf

Government of Canada. http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/csli_barriers.pdf

ParticipACTION https://www.participation.com/pdf/November_Lifestyle%20Tips_Eng.pdf

Sleddens EF, Kremers SP, Hughes SO, Cross MB, Thijs C, De Vries NK, O'Connor TM (2012). Physical activity parenting: a systematic review of questionnaires and their associations with child activity levels. *Obes Rev* 13 (11): 1015-1033.

Zecevic CA, Tremblay L, Lovsin T, Michel L. (2010) Parental influence on young children's physical activity. *Int J Ped* 2010:468526.