



Tips to increase your kids' physical activity levels

This year's Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth reveals that kids need room to move. Canadian society has prioritized structured physical activities over spontaneous opportunities to be active, such as playing outside or getting places on foot. Organized activities are important, but they're not enough. To get kids more active, a mix of activities needs to be encouraged throughout a child's entire day. So, it's time to boost active play and active transportation and replace screen time with active time to help children live a happy, healthy life. And, remember to lead by example.

1 Active play

- Encourage school boards and municipalities to revisit play-based rules that may inhibit free play in the schoolyard or in the community, such as "no ball playing."
- Allow kids to play freely after school and on the weekends, whether it is at the playground with other children, or a game of hide and seek with neighbourhood friends.
- Speak with managers at local facilities, such as arenas or community centres, and encourage them to include more scheduled time for drop-in, spontaneous activities.
- Avoid overscheduling and create an environment at home that helps foster imagination and spontaneity, with access to items to build a fort, a costume trunk and music.

2 Active transportation

- For short trips of less than 1 km, think twice before jumping in the car.
- Teach your kids how to be safe pedestrians and cyclists. Knowing they have good judgment on where to walk, wheel or ride will put your safety concerns at bay.
- Join other parents to take turns walking children to school, and let older kids walk or bike.
- Encourage school boards and municipalities to work together to develop plans that promote active school travel and address local barriers, such as traffic congestion.

3 Reduce screen time

- Establish rules for television and other screen use, and set reasonable limits, to break up a child's sedentary time.
- Rather than turning on the TV or handing over your mobile or tablet, encourage outdoor play.
- Remove TVs and computers from your child's bedroom.

4 Be a good role model

- Live an active life. It's important for your kids to see you being active - walk to the local store or go for a run.
- Put away your mobile or tablet and enjoy the outdoors.
- Set aside designated family play time on the weekend.
- Display a positive attitude that being active is fun and feels good.