

School Health Newsletter Inserts 2024 (Ophea)

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September

Our bodies need to move!

Physical activity is important for children. It can help with their development and set a strong foundation for healthy habits.

How can your child benefit from physical activity? There are many ways.

Emotional development:

- Provides enjoyment.
- Reduces anxiety and relieves stress.
- Helps build confidence.

Social development:

- Encourages interactions with others.
- Helps develop friendships.
- Promotes leadership skills.

Cognitive development:

- Increases focus and concentration.
- Improves problem-solving abilities.
- Increases readiness to learn.

Physical development:

- Builds a healthy heart, lungs, bones, and muscles.
- Improves coordination and balance.
- Improves fitness levels.

How does your family benefit from physical activity?



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October

The importance of active role modelling

Role modelling is setting a good example for the children in your life, and this includes physical activity. Your child looks up to you, and your choices can impact their behaviour.

The following tips can help you become an active role model.

- Be active as a family.
- Talk with your child about the different ways in which you are physically active each day.
- Walk or wheel to your destination instead of driving.
- Replace negative thoughts and comments about physical activity. Instead of “I don’t have time to exercise.” try, “Exercise makes me feel good so I make it a priority.”
- Create accountability by scheduling time to be active each day.

How else can you be an active role model?

November

Movement across the day

Here are The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (0-4) and Children and Youth (5-17). The highlights are below.

Sweat: children should accumulate at least 60 minutes/day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. These activities should increase the heart rate and breathing and may cause a child to sweat. Examples include running, climbing on playground equipment, and dancing.

Step: children should accumulate several hours of light physical activity throughout the day. Examples include walking, wheeling, and active chores.

Sleep: children should receive uninterrupted sleep each night with consistent to-bed and wake-up times. 3–4-year-olds need 10-13 hours, 5–13-year-olds need 9-11 hours, and 14–17-year-olds need 8-10 hours.

Sit: children should limit the amount of time they spend sitting for extended periods. Recreational screen time should be limited to no more than one hour/day for 3–4-year-olds, and no more than two hours/day for 5- 17-year-olds.

How does physical activity fit into your family’s day?

December

Be active over the winter break!

Just because the weather is cold and snowy doesn’t mean we need to hibernate this winter! Outside play can be a lot of fun and exposes children to new challenges.

Remember to stay safe in the cold! Wear layers to stay warm, keep feet dry with waterproof boots, and change out of wet clothes as soon as you get inside.

The following suggestions are ways your family can be active while enjoying the season. How many can you complete over the winter break?

- Shovel snow for a neighbour.
- Build a snowman.
- Make snow castles using containers and buckets.



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- Throw snowballs at targets.
- Go tobogganing.
- Visit a local skating rink.
- Walk or wheel around the neighbourhood and look at the festive lights and decorations.
- Make designs in the snow using water tinted with food colouring.
- Try something new like sledge hockey, snowshoeing, or cross-country skiing.

What are some other ways you can get active outside this winter break?

January

Healthy habits for the new year!

Happy New Year! The new calendar year is a fresh start and a great time to set new goals and incorporate healthy habits.

The following ideas promote physical activity and decrease sedentary behaviour. Try them out with your family!

- Schedule “Family Fit Nights” and try out a new activity every week.
- Do daily chores together as a family, such as walking the dog, getting the mail, or gardening.
- Implement a rule about no screens during meals.
- Take advantage of the amenities in your community, such as parks, playgrounds, trails, skating rinks, tennis courts, and pools.
- Walk or wheel instead of driving whenever possible.
- Create a “boredom buster” jar with active ideas.
- Volunteer as a family at an active community event, such as a winter carnival, park clean-up, or packing food at a food bank.
- Get enough sleep so family members have the energy to be active.

What goals do you have for the new year?

February

Screen time at home

The Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines recommend recreational screen time should be limited to no more than one hour/day – less is better for 3–4-year-olds, and no more than two hours/day for 5-17-year-olds.

According to the 2022 ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, on average only 18% of children and youth meet the screen time recommendations of watching less than two hours of recreational screen time/day.

Below are some suggestions for reducing screen time:

- Co-create family rules around screen time.
- Try a family screen time challenge, such as screen-free hours each day, or one screen-free evening/week.
- Remove screens (including cell phones, computers, and TVs) from bedrooms.
- Change your language. Instead of “You can’t watch TV...” say “Let’s turn off the TV so we can...”



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- Set limits around your own use of screens.

How else can you reduce your screen time as a family?

March

Have you heard of the term “physical literacy”?

Physical literacy means that a child:

- Has the physical skills to participate in different activities, such as skipping, throwing, running, and kicking.
- Has the motivation and confidence to want to participate in physical activity.
- Has the knowledge and understanding to recognize the benefits of being active, and how to be active safely in different ways.
- Engages in physical activity regularly.

Physical skills are developed through practice. Give your child opportunities to try out different movements through structured and unstructured play, games, and sports.

Motivation is developed when children have fun with their movement. If your child enjoys the time they spend being active, they will be more likely to continue to have an interest in movement. As a role model, help build your child’s self-confidence by being positive and providing encouragement.

Below are some things a child can do if they have physical literacy.

- Throw a ball.
- Strike an object, such as a puck with a hockey stick or a ball with a racquet.
- Stand on one foot without losing their balance.
- Land on their feet after jumping from a low height.
- Have the confidence to try new activities.

How can you help develop the physical literacy of your child?

April

Physical activity for everyone!

Physical activity is important for children of all skill levels and abilities. To support your child’s participation, skill development, and success, small changes to an activity may be necessary.

- Use a beach ball for throwing and catching (because it is larger and lighter).
- Use a partially deflated soccer ball when kicking (so it doesn’t roll too far away).
- Use larger racquets (for easier hand-eye coordination).
- Use larger nets (so there is a larger target area to score on).
- Reduce the size of the playing area (so children don’t need to travel as far).

Remember that learning a new skill takes time, so go slowly and provide opportunities for practice. Don’t forget to be encouraging and offer praise throughout the learning process. How else can you support your child’s success with movement?

May

Active outdoor play for healthy living



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April showers bring May flowers! While the weather may be wet this time of year, you can still be active outside. In fact, active outdoor play is beneficial for children. It can increase their physical activity levels, enhance their creativity, and improve their critical thinking skills. Active outdoor play is sometimes called “risky play” but “adventurous play” may be more fitting. This type of play is thrilling, exciting, and allows children to physically challenge themselves and learn about risk awareness and assessment.

The following activities incorporate risk while building resilience.

- Climbing trees.
- Balancing on logs.
- Jumping on rocks.
- Hanging upside down on playground equipment.
- Jumping from a swing.
- Climbing and swinging from ropes.
- Playing hide-and-seek in a wooded area.

How can you participate in active outdoor play as a family?

June

Summer holiday activity challenge

Just because the weather is hot doesn't mean we need to stay indoors! Outside play can be a lot of fun and exposes children to new challenges.

Remember to stay safe in the warm weather. Drink water to stay hydrated, use sunscreen (and reapply often!) to protect from UV rays, wear a hat and sunglasses for added protection, and pay attention to the UV index and extreme heat alerts.

Below are some suggestions for getting active as a family. See how many you can complete over the summer break!

- Visit a provincial park.
- Try swimming at a community pool.
- Visit a pick-your-own farm.
- Have a picnic at the beach followed by swimming and building a sandcastle.
- Check out some local green space to kick around a soccer ball, throw a flying disc, or play a game of tag.
- Go for a bike ride.
- Explore a local trail or hiking spot.
- Try gardening.

What are some other ways you can get active this summer?

