

Healthy Habits = Happy Healthy Families



#1 Active Living Role Model

Your children look up to you – you can see it in their eyes. They watch what you do and how you do it, what you say and how you say it, what you eat or don't eat, and the decisions you make in your life. Each day, you have the opportunity to influence how your children view active living and develop healthy lifestyle habits.

Habits are typically (and most easily) formed when your children are young. But don't worry – whatever the age we can all develop and benefit from new healthy habits!

Research shows that physical activity levels tend to decline with age – children are more active than youth and youth are more active than adults. Research also shows that children who grow up with physically active parents are more likely to be physically active themselves as adults. This is why it's just as important for your children to see **you** being active as it is for them to be involved in physical activities of some kind. To develop lifelong habits that will keep your kids physically and mentally healthy, help your children see how important physical activity is in life. The best way to show them is to be involved in healthy activities together!

Deanna Betteridge, in motion Coordinator



Active play allows children to conquer their fears, practice adult roles and develop the confidence and resilience needed to deal with life's challenges.

The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, 2009

It's fun and easy to be active with your children:

Crawl, climb, hop, skip and dance with your children. Active play is a fun way to increase physical activity opportunities and is essential for your child's mental, emotional and physical development and well being. Let your children take the lead and you follow along!

Weekly Family Fun Time

Set a weekly "family date" to head outdoors – nature is an easy, interactive playground for all seasons. Take turns planning these fun family outings so everyone has a chance to choose something that they enjoy doing! Or put lots of great ideas into an "activity jar" and take turns pulling out an activity to try together.

Active Transportation

Active transportation can be a great way for the whole family to add activity to their day – take active trips (walk or cycle) to school or work, the store, the park or just around the neighbourhood.

"Containerized" Time

Encourage your babies and toddlers to crawl and walk as much as possible.

Freeing them from time spent in "containers" such as highchairs and strollers will allow them to develop fundamental movement skills and healthy habits at an early age. Take a wagon instead of a stroller, allowing toddlers to walk as much as they can and then when they get tired they can hop in for a ride!

Outdoor Obstacle Course

Set up a fun, active, outdoor obstacle course for you and your children. Run, hopscotch, skip, go over and under a bench, jump a few jumping jacks and then start all over again!

"Screen" Time

Limit the amount of time your family spends in front of "screens" (TV, computer, video game consoles and handheld

electronics). More than 2 hours a day can have a negative impact on your health.

Be the #1 Fan

You support your children by watching them play sports or out with their friends in the park. But don't stop there! This is a great opportunity to role model how important physical activity is to you. Grab your walking shoes to walk around the park, field or hockey rink to increase activity in your day, while never missing your kids' play!

Active Books, Rhymes and Songs

Add actions and movements to your child's favourite books, rhymes and songs. Check out www.winnipeg.inmotion.ca/youth/ for some of our favourites.

Canadian Pediatric Society recommends less than 2 hours of "screen time" a day for children and youth. Current data shows that 90% of Canadian youth are NOT meeting the guidelines, many getting an average of 6 hours per day.



Role Modeling a Balanced Lifestyle

Between work, children, home and life it may seem like there isn't enough time in the day for you. Time for you to unwind from the day, relax and re-energize to get ready for the next day is very important to your health and wellbeing. Role modeling a balanced lifestyle is also very important for your children to see and learn.

Give yourself permission to take time, even just a few minutes, in your day to do something you enjoy to help you relax, recover and re-energize:

- Go for a walk outside. Listen to the calmness of the outdoors or wear your headphones and listen to your favourite tunes!
- Stretch each area of your body. Hold each stretch and breathe!
- Breathe. Deep breathing exercises help your internal organs function better and relaxes tense muscles.
- Read quietly. Grab a book and find a quiet spot to enjoy it.
- Tend to your garden or flowerbeds.

Role modeling a healthy, balanced and physically active lifestyle will help your children learn positive habits to live long, happy and healthy lives ... and will help you do the same!

Physical Activity. It's Good for Your Health. Do it for Life!

For more ideas on how you and your family can get "in motion" visit www.winnipeginmotion.ca or call 940.3648

