

# Importance of Physical Activity



What can I do to get – and keep – my child active?

As a parent, you can help shape your child's attitudes and behaviors toward physical activity, and knowing the guidelines is a great place to start. Throughout their lives, encourage young people to be physically active for one hour or more each day, with activities ranging from informal, active play to organized sports. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself.
- Make physical activity part of your family's daily routine by taking family walks or playing active games together.
- Give your children equipment that encourages physical activity.
- Take young people to places where they can be active, such as public parks, community baseball fields or basketball courts.
- Be positive about the physical activities in which your child participates and encourage them to be interested in new activities.
- Make physical activity fun. Fun activities can be anything your child enjoys, either structured or non-structured. Activities can range from team sports or individual sports to recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, swimming, playground activities or free-time play.
- Instead of watching television after dinner, encourage your child to find fun activities to do on their own or with friends and family, such as walking, playing chase or riding bikes.
- Be safe! Always provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads or knee pads and ensure that activity is age-appropriate.
- Activity helps prevent children from becoming overweight. Follow the 5, 2, 1, 0 Rule. That is, a daily regimen that includes 5 or more fruits and vegetables, no more than 2 hours of screen time, at least 1 hour of physical activity and 0 sugar sweetened beverages per day. Following this plan will help assure fitness overall.

**\*For more information regarding healthy activities, and to help prevent unwanted weight gain by using prevention tools like the "5, 2, 1, 0 Rule", go to: [www.childhoodobesityfoundation.com](http://www.childhoodobesityfoundation.com).**

## **What if my child has a disability?**

Physical activity is important for all children. It's best to talk with a health care provider before your child begins a physical activity routine. Try to get advice from a professional with experience in physical activity and disability. They can tell you more about the amounts and types of physical activity that are appropriate for your child's abilities.