

# Physical Activity



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

Santé mentale  
en milieu scolaire  
Ontario



Well-being  
St. Clair Catholic District School Board



## Facts

- Children need to be active at least an hour and a half every day
- Physical Activity is an important part of Mental Health. Regular exercise builds strong muscles and bones and can also help to control weight. Some of the other benefits of physical activity can include:
  - Better sleep
  - Better focus for schoolwork
  - Feeling good and less stressed
  - Gives us energy
  - Decreases stress
  - Prolongs independence as we age
- It also helps prevent these chronic diseases:
  - Cancer
  - Obesity
  - Hypertension
  - Heart disease
  - Type 2 diabetes
- There are 3 main types of physical activity:
  - ENDURANCE activities (*walking, jogging, biking, dancing, swimming*) keep your heart, lungs and circulatory system healthy.
  - FLEXIBILITY activities (*dancing, gymnastics, yoga*) relax muscles and improve range of motion.
  - STRENGTH activities (*climbing playground equipment, raking leaves*) help build strong bones and muscles.

## Tips

- Some tips to help your child/teen to be active:
  - Find out what they enjoy or want to try.
  - Ask your child/teen if any of their friends are involved in fun activities that they want to join.
- Group sports are a great way to get exercise and give kids the chance to meet new friends and learn important skills like leadership and how to get along with others.
- Your child/teen might worry about being judged by others and may be more comfortable being active in private. Think about interactive video games and fitness videos to do at home.
- Cost doesn't have to be a barrier, many activities are free, such as walking, running, or kicking a ball.
- If your child/teen sees you being active they will be more likely to join. Schedule fun physical activity as part of your family's daily routine so that it becomes a way of life. As a family take a walk, stop by a playground after school, play ball, or bike.
- Winter: Sledding, skating, and skiing are great exercise in the winter, or find indoor activities to enjoy such as bowling, interactive video game systems or dance games.
- Start small: Set small, short term goals to increase motivation and success.
  - Start with 10-20 min per day of activity and work up to meet goals.
  - Begin with light exercise and build up to activities that require more skill and strength.
  - Let your child/teen work at their own pace. Without pressure, they will be more likely to have fun.
  - Encourage your child/teen along the way. When they meet a goal use praise and small rewards. Avoid rewards that are edible, do not give snacks or candy as rewards.
- Keep a journal or checklist of daily activity. A pedometer (step counter) can also be a fun way to monitor daily steps in the right direction.
- Enroll your child in community recreation and sport programs to increase to increase opportunities for your child to be physically literate and active.
  - When selecting programs, try to find those programs that cover a range of skills, rather than single sport programs.
  - Most importantly, select activities that your child enjoys and wants to participate in to ensure a positive experience and ongoing participation.
- Make an effort to integrate physical activity and sport activities into your family lifestyle. This makes for quality family time and studies show that active parents are more apt to have healthy, active kids.
- Encourage them to walk, bike, run, rollerblade or skateboard to school and other places in the neighbourhood
- Talk to your children's teachers to be sure they are participating in physical activities during gym class, recess, and lunch time
- Participate in physical activities with your children. Walk, bike, skate or play sports together.

## Resources

- <https://phecanada.ca/>
- <https://sportforlife.ca/physical-literacy/consensus-statement/>
- [https://rmao.ca/sites/rmao-ca/files/Healthy\\_Eating\\_and\\_Physical\\_Activity - Healthy habits that last a lifetime.pdf](https://rmao.ca/sites/rmao-ca/files/Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_-_Healthy_habits_that_last_a_lifetime.pdf)
- <https://csepguidelines.ca/>
- <https://teachingtools.ophea.net/>

## Sources

- Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada)
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology
- Government of Canada (Public Health)
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario