

Introduction

There is no question that physical activity is good for children.

Just consider the evidence: physical activity strengthens muscles, bones and joints. It gives children the opportunity to gain self-esteem, confidence and a sense of well-being.

In addition to making children healthier, positive activities also offer children fun alternatives to risky behavior such as drug and alcohol use.

Visit

www.VERBparents.com
to get new ideas about increasing the physical activity levels of your children.

www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign
for information about the campaign.

www.VERBnow.com
to see how children will experience VERB online.

www.americanheart.org
to get tips for raising heart-healthy, active children.

www.shapeup.org
for information about healthy weight management through better nutrition and increased physical activity.

ACTIVE CHILDREN,
ACTIVE FAMILIES.
A Helpful Guide for Parents

VERB™ is brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



Plus:
Tips to Decrease
Children's TV Time!

VERB™
It's what you do.



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CHALLENGE:

A LACK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical inactivity is a serious problem for many children.

SOLUTION:

MAKE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FUN, COOL AND PART OF A DAILY ROUTINE

Be a physically active role model.

Children should be encouraged to participate in 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day.

Find fun, physically active ways to celebrate special occasions, such as swimming or roller-skating birthday parties.

Add physical activity to weekend or vacation plans, such as hiking, biking or long walks.

Make sure you and your child walk at every available opportunity.

Take time to have physically active fun with your children, such as dancing to your favorite music.



CHALLENGE:

CHILDREN ARE GLUED TO THE TV

The average child spends up to six hours watching television, playing video games and surfing the net each day.¹

SOLUTION:

OFFER INTERESTING, EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Start by allowing your children to watch only one to two hours of quality TV programming per day.²

Remove TV sets from children's bedrooms and encourage them to spend time with different types of media, such as reading books or dancing to music.

Try making TV commercials a time to do physical activity — whether it's marching in place or doing stretches on the family room floor.



CHALLENGE:

THE NEIGHBORHOOD OR SCHOOL LACKS RESOURCES

Some neighborhoods lack playgrounds, courts, parks, bike paths and after-school programs. Other neighborhoods may be unsafe for children.

SOLUTION:

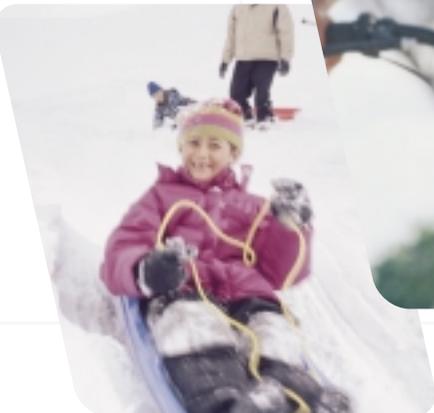
BECOME AN ADVOCATE

Write letters to school administrators and board members to support daily physical education.

Make sure that your children are provided with at least 20 minutes of recess during each school day.

Contact park district officials and ask for more opportunities for children to get active.

Encourage local officials to install park equipment, bike paths or other resources for physical activity.



CHALLENGE:

NEED FOR INCREASED FAMILY AND GROUP ACTIVITY

Prosocial activity can result in a wealth of positive behaviors for children, such as social connections, positive family relationships and school achievement.

SOLUTION:

FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN WITHIN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

It's good for children to be actively involved with formal organizations, such as schools, faith-based organizations and community youth groups where they can experience positive interaction with other children and adults.

As a start, children should consider committing to at least one civic engagement — whether it's volunteering to plant trees in the park, or helping out at the local pet shelter.

¹ Woodward, Emory H., Media in the Home 2000: The Fifth Annual Survey of Parents and Children, 2000.

² The American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Public Education, Children, Adolescents and Television, Pediatrics, Vol. 107, No. 2, February 2001.