

## Children and Physical Activity

Participating in regular physical activity

- Reduces risk of chronic disease
- Increases muscle and bone strength.
- Increases lean muscle mass and helps decrease body fat.
- Helps achieve and maintain a healthy weight – energy expenditure
- Enhances psychological well-being. May reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood



## Guidelines for Young Children

- Currently no guidelines in Canada – under 6 years.
- NASPE (infants and toddlers) recommends
  - not be still for more than 60 minutes at a time.
  - 60 minutes daily structured
  - 60 minutes – several hours per day unstructured
  - Competence in movement skills



## PA Related Influences on Preschool age

- Biological (age, gender, body fatness, motor skills, genetics)
- Psychosocial Factors (ethnicity, parental influence, personality)
- Environmental (dietary intake, outdoors vs indoors, season, outside vs inside home, preschool)

## Population Environment and Physical Activity

- All children should have access to a variety of public open spaces
- Walking and cycling tracks within residential areas
- Age appropriate physical activity facilities
- Consider the need for young children to cross busy streets



## Statistics

- Majority of parents with children age 1-6 (88%) reported that at least one parent participated in some form of physical activity with their child two or more times per week, and over half (57%) participated four or more times per week.
- 1 in 4 Toronto children (27%) age 1 to 6 spend more than 2 hours per day on sedentary activities such as watching TV, or videos, using computers etc.



## What Can you Do?

- Role modeling
- Support/Encouragement and Praise
- Gross motor play / locomotor activities that are fun
- Spontaneous and intermittent play
- Outdoors

## Early Child Development Nutrition Project

- **Your Kids Are Listening**  
Social Marketing Campaign

**Target:** Parents of young children (3-6 years old)

### Messages

Phase 1: When it comes to healthy weights, what parents say and do can have a direct and long-term impact on their child.

Phase 2: Parents can make simple changes to their family lives to help children achieve healthy weights.

## Your Kids Are Listening



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### • Evaluation Results:

- 75% of parents recalled media messages on Healthy Weights with 45% recalling parents as important role models
- More than half of the parents surveyed changed their behaviours to promote healthy weights

## Early Child Development Partnership

- Partnership with Parks, Forestry & Recreation; Children's Services; Ontario Early Years Centres; YMCA of Greater Toronto
- Provide resources on healthy weights for children and child care workers in agency centres
- Training workshops on healthy weights messages for child care workers