



The Healthy Kids Community Challenge

Our community is one of 45 across Ontario taking part in The Healthy Kids Community Challenge. The Healthy Kids Community Challenge unites communities with a common goal: promoting children's health through physical activity and healthy eating.

Facts for our partners

The key to the success of The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is committed local partners, like you. We need your help to promote it. And we need you to think creatively with us about what you can do. Depending on the sector you are in, you could have a huge influence on the policies, programs and environments we create for our children to live, learn, eat and play in.

What children and families will gain from The Healthy Kids Community Challenge

- Better knowledge and skills for staying active and eating well
- Better access and fewer barriers to healthy choices
- Safe and supportive environments that make it easier to be active and choose healthy food
- Closer links with the community and more chances to be involved and included

Ontario.ca/healthykids

How you'll benefit as a partner

- You may be able to expand programs you've already started or start new ones to benefit the community
- Being involved means exposure for your business, program or service – for instance through local media coverage or community events
- This may be a chance to introduce or enhance programs and policies in your workplace that support employees in making healthy living choices with their families
- You will be mobilizing and joining forces with other community partners. That will make all of our efforts stronger and form bonds that will last beyond The Healthy Kids Community Challenge itself

How The Healthy Kids Community Challenge works

About every nine months, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will launch a new theme related to two of the key factors associated with healthy weights in children: physical activity and healthy eating. Our community will rally around the theme and take on projects that help to make it real, in ways that work best for us and where we live.

Theme 1

Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.

This theme encourages physical activity through a mix of active play, active transportation, sports and structured physical activity.

Active play

Active play comes in many forms and varies with age. Active play is any unstructured, child-directed movement that children do for fun – playground games like tag, skipping or ball games for instance. The energy spent in play varies – it may be more or less vigorous than organized sports, but a child tends to do it longer, choosing for themselves when to rest. And it's not just great for a child's growing body – it has social and mental health benefits too.

Active transportation

Active transportation is any way that children move from A to B using their own power. Besides walking and running, it includes things like biking, in-line skating and skateboarding.

Sports and other structured physical activity

Children who take part in some form of organized physical activity are more likely to meet Canada's physical activity guidelines. Ontario children in grades 1 to 8 are required to get at least 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous daily physical activity each school day. Elementary and middle school students have physical education classes. Structured physical activities might also occur out of school, including participation in sports teams, martial arts and dance.

Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines

Physical activity is any form of regular movement. For kids of all ages, it should include bouts of moderate to vigorous activity that raises their heart rate. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines set out levels of activity for children as they grow:

- **Infants (less than 1 year)** should be physically active several times daily – particularly through interactive, floor-based play
- **Toddlers (1-2 years) and preschoolers (3-4 years)** should get at least 180 minutes of physical activity at any intensity spread throughout the day. This should increase towards at least 60 minutes of energetic play each day by 5 years of age. Encourage different activities that develop movement skills
- **Children and youth (5-17 years)** should enjoy moderate to vigorous physical activity adding up to 60 minutes daily. At least 3 days a week, kids should:

- Do vigorous activity that makes them breathe hard and start to sweat, like playing tag, soccer, swimming, or cycling
- Do things that strengthen muscle and bone, like hopping, skipping, running, gymnastics, playing and swinging on playground equipment or volleyball

Reducing the time that children spend sitting

'Sedentary behaviour' means doing things that require very little movement, while in a sitting or reclining position like watching TV, playing passive video or computer games, travelling by car, or spending time in strollers or high chairs. Research suggests that children with high levels of sedentary behaviour have greater health risks, no matter how active they are at other times

The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines recommend these limits for sedentary behaviours in children:

- **Infants and toddlers under 2 years:** Limit time in strollers or high chairs to no more than one hour at a time. No screen time is recommended
- **Children 2-4 years:** Limit screen time to one hour per day
- **Children and youth 5-17 years:** Limit recreational screen time to no more than 2 hours per day
- **Children of all ages:** Limit motorized transport, extended sitting, and time spent indoors throughout the day

Why 'Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.'

Regular physical activity is so important for children's development, not just physically, but also socially and mentally. Being active can help children:

- Improve cardiovascular fitness (heart and blood flow)
- Build strong muscles and bones
- Learn coordination, movement control and confidence
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Have less risk of chronic disease in later life
- Improve self-esteem and have less depression, anxiety and emotional distress
- Improve learning and attention span, and achieve more at school
- Have more chances to express themselves, learn new skills and have fun
- Build social skills such as cooperation, respect for others, problem solving, athleticism, fair play and teamwork

How do you get involved

Stay in touch with your Healthy Kids Community Challenge project manager.

Learn more about healthy behaviours for our kids at
Ontario.ca/healthykids

