

Tips for children fact sheet

Children aged from 5-12 need to be doing at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day for general health and wellbeing and to develop healthy bones, muscles and joints. They also need to limit the time they spend doing things that keep them inactive for long periods of time, such as playing computer games and watching TV. So set limits of two hours a day maximum for screen time - unless it's homework!

As parents, it's easier to motivate your kids to be active if you:

- Are a positive role model - set a good example by being active (and limiting TV and non-work related computer time) yourself.
- Keep activity gear like bats, balls and Frisbees handy at home and in the car so whenever you hear 'I'm bored!' - you're ready!
- Find fun ways of being active as a family.
- Give presents that promote physical activity, like skates, balls or bikes.
- Encourage active outdoor play after school or get kids involved in organised sports or other group activities.
- Practice spelling, multiplication or other homework while you walk together.
- Arrange swimming lessons - everyone should be able to swim, it's important for kids water safety too.

Encourage your children to walk or cycle to and from school

If you're worried about their safety then you can go with them. If you need to drive, then park the car further away from the school and walk the extra distance. It will help you to be more active and will help your child to develop a pattern of physical activity that they can continue throughout their life. It will also be safer for you and your children with one less car in the school zone.

Help them learn new skills

Active play and informal games give children the chance to gain valuable experience and learn new skills such as running, throwing, jumping, catching and kicking. Learning these skills not only helps keep kids active, but also provides opportunity to build their confidence and give them more options to take part in activities and sports as they get older.

Inactive kids

Kids who haven't been active or are overweight may need special encouragement. If organised sport isn't their thing, talk to them and find out what is. If your child is just starting to get active, begin with moderate intensity activity for 30 minutes a day, then gradually work with them to increase their activity level over time.