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Physical Activity for Children: New Recommendations

Edwards, Jane

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Physical Activity for Children: New Recommendations

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has recently released a document entitled *Physical Activity for Children: A Statement of Guidelines for Children Ages 5-12*, authored by Drs. Charles B. Corbin and Robert P. Pangrazi of Arizona State University. The purpose is to provide guidance to those promoting physically active lifestyles for children: parents, physicians, physical education teachers, classroom teachers, school administrators, and others. (<http://www.aahperd.org>)

Why is there so much interest in this topic? Inactivity seems to play a major role, along with poor food habits, for the increasing prevalence of obesity in our children. National Data indicates that 30 percent of children, ages 6-19, are either overweight or at-risk of overweight. The number of overweight children has tripled in the past thirty years from about 5 percent in early 1970s to 15% currently. Obesity increases risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Ages 5-12

- Accumulate at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) on all, or most days of the week.
- Participate in several bouts of physical activity per day, each lasting 15 minutes or longer.
- Participate in age-appropriate physical activity to achieve health, wellness, fitness and performance benefits.
- Avoid extended periods of inactivity (periods of two hours or more), especially during the daytime hours.

Guidelines for Physical Education

Jane U. Edwards, Ph.D.,LRD
NDSU Extension Specialist Nutrition and Health
Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences
jedwards@ndsuxext.nodak.edu

NDSU
Extension Service

North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota 58105
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Teachers

- Expose children to a wide variety of physical activities.
- Teach physical activity skills to promote a lifetime of good health and fitness.
- Encourage self-monitoring to determine how active they are and to set their own goals.
- Individualize intensity of activities.
- Focus feedback on process of a student doing his/her best rather than on product.

After-school Time Slot from 3-6 p.m.

- Encourage children to be active during this time period.
- Reduce sedentary-type activities such as watching television and computer time.
 - Research has documented that children who watch more television, weigh more compared to those who view less.
 - Educational programming on television has some benefits.
 - Entertainment television programming has not been shown to have any benefits for children.
- Locate safe, supervised opportunities for children to participate in active games and physical activity.
 - Look for after-school programs with multiple types of activities and sports.
 - Include non-competitive type physical activities such as walking, biking, skating, active play.
 - Require all members of the family to help with age-appropriate household chores.

Links to physical activity resources

These sites provide practical ideas for getting kids active in the home, school, and community.
<http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/materials/activity.htm>

For more information on this and other topics, see:
www.ag.ndsu.edu

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