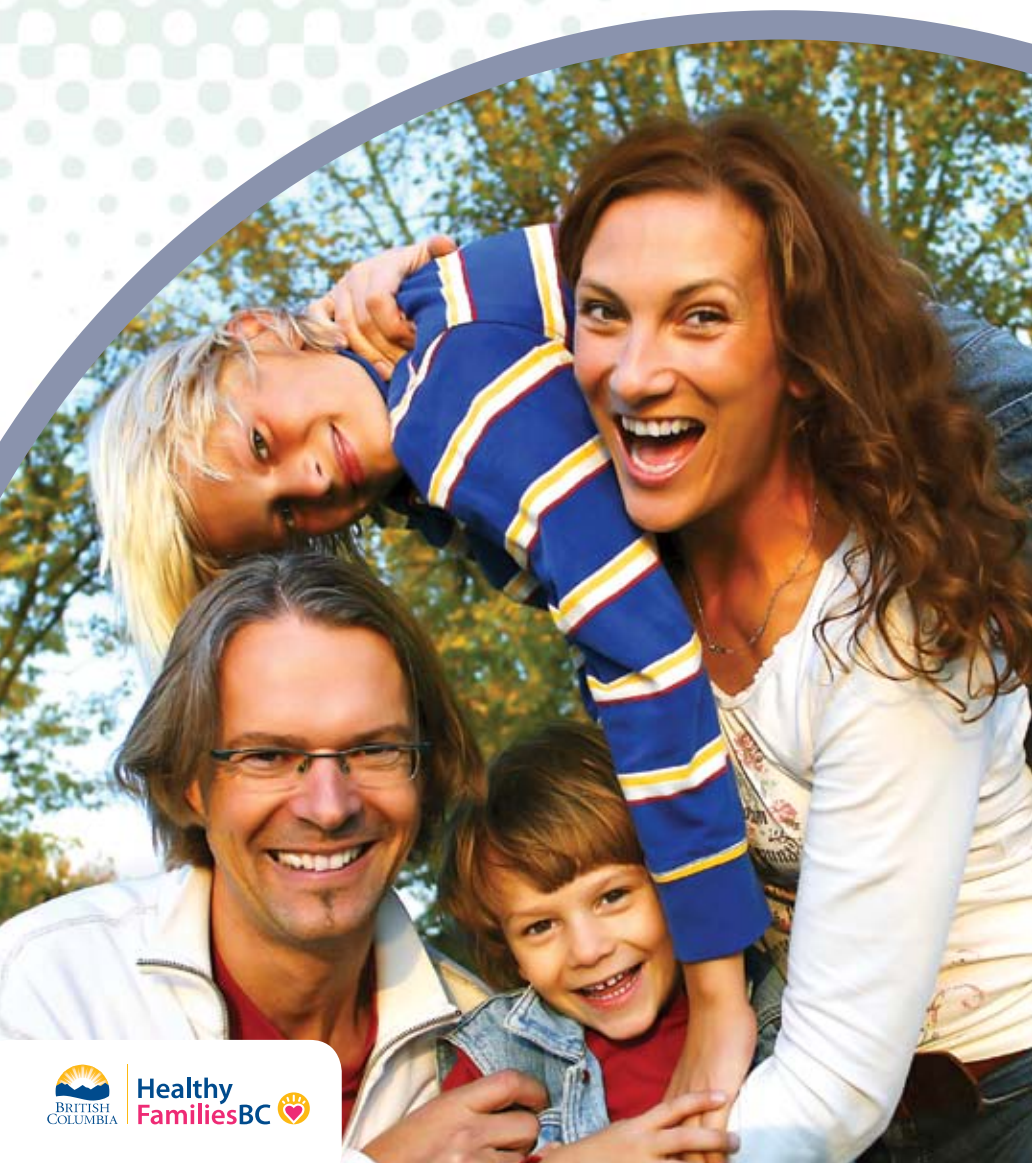


Healthy Living

FOR FAMILIES



Healthy
FamiliesBC



Healthy Schools, Better Learning

Schools play an important role in preparing students to achieve their goals, contribute to their communities and continue learning throughout their lives. Making sure that students feel safe, cared-for and supported intellectually, socially, mentally and physically is part of this work. This is why healthy schools matter: to contribute to the health and well-being of our children, but also to create the conditions for meaningful learning.

Many BC schools have developed innovative ways to support the health of their students, staff and community, including “walking school buses”, school-community food gardens, safe and caring school policies and practices, and healthy fundraising events. Over the past decade, BC Government’s broad healthy school efforts have included:

- mandated daily physical activity for all BC students;
- guidelines to ensure healthy foods and beverages are available for sale in all school settings;
- bans on tobacco use to keep school grounds tobacco free;
- the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program, to deliver healthy fruit and vegetable snacks to students; and
- Action Schools! BC, to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

About Healthy Schools BC

Students don’t just learn about health in a classroom or an assembly, but also through the way health is valued and promoted through the whole school.

In 2011, the Government of BC introduced Healthy Schools BC, part of its Healthy Families BC strategy. Healthy Schools BC aims to build on the great work that is already happening in BC schools by:

- supporting regional planning meetings between health authorities, school districts and community partners;
- inviting BC youth to form a Healthy Living Youth Council, participate in student-led inquiry projects and co-create a provincial student engagement strategy for healthy schools;
- coordinating provincial healthy living programs in schools and creating “one-stop” access for all healthy schools related information at www.healthyschoolsbc.ca; and
- providing learning sessions, tools and a stories map to support and showcase strong practice in BC.

Parents are important partners in this work.

For more information about how to get involved visit: www.healthyschoolsbc.ca.



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NOTHING is more important than our health and the health of our families. We want our children to grow and develop to their potential, to feel good about themselves and to have the energy they need to get the most out of life.

As a parent or caregiver, you may already teach your kids about healthy lifestyles. This booklet is designed to help you take it one step further, with tips on everything from healthy eating on the run, to supporting your child to have a positive outlook, to being active together as a family.

Being healthy means being active, making healthy food choices, and having positive mental well-being. Mental well-being is at the heart of overall wellness and is essential for learning, physical health, emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem.

Mental well-being is our ability to:

- **enjoy life;**
- **be optimistic and self-confident;**
- **deal with life's challenges;**
- **feel connected to other people; and**
- **feel a sense of belonging.**

Being physically active and eating right improves our mental well-being. Good mental well-being helps us stay active, make healthy eating choices and succeed in making positive changes in our lives. Healthy behaviours are strongly interconnected. By working on all three areas, we can help our children develop, be healthy and thrive.

You will learn how family life contributes to your child's mental well-being. You will also find guidelines for choosing healthy foods and balancing different kinds of physical activity. Along the way, you will find many websites and resources to help you learn more about whatever interests you the most.

Habits and skills formed in childhood influence our decisions and behaviours throughout our lives.

It is important to note that, in this booklet, the term parent means the person or people responsible for caring for and raising a child. While caregivers may be the child's biological parents, they could also be adoptive or step-parents, grandparents, foster parents, an extended family member or other caring, responsible adults.

Whatever your role in raising your child, you don't need to do it alone. Reach out to your family, your friends and your community. They care about your child too and have an important role to play in their development.



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MENTAL WELL-BEING

MENTAL WELL-BEING is our ability to enjoy life and deal with life's challenges. It's about feeling optimistic, self-confident, connected to other people, a sense of belonging and that our life has a purpose.

Understanding Mental Well-being

When my mental well-being needs are met, I feel that:

I can make a difference. I can:

- ✓ set goals and work towards them;
- ✓ find ways to solve problems;
- ✓ manage my thoughts, feelings and actions;
- ✓ find someone to help me when I need it; and
- ✓ make healthy choices and decisions.

I am a remarkable person. I am:

- ✓ loveable and capable of loving myself and others;
- ✓ unique, with my own special strengths and gifts;
- ✓ happy to do nice things for others and show that I care about them;
- ✓ respectful of others and myself; and
- ✓ willing to be responsible for what I do.

*I have people around who I trust,
and who love and support me. They:*

- ✓ encourage me to be the best person I can be;
- ✓ help me learn to do things on my own;
- ✓ set appropriate boundaries and rules;
- ✓ help and care for me when I am sick, in trouble, or need comforting; and
- ✓ encourage me to contribute to my community.

Your Child's Mental Well-Being

So what can you do to support your child's mental well-being?

You can:

- have a warm and loving relationship;
- use positive communication;
- use a "firm but friendly" parenting style;
- teach basic social skills;
- help them understand their feelings;
- be involved in their education; and
- involve your friends, family and community.

By helping our children develop skills that contribute to their mental well-being, we are helping to set them up for success in school and in life.

Warm and Loving Family Relationships

Having a warm, caring relationship with your child is one of the most important ways to help nurture their mental well-being. Telling your child that you love them is part of a caring relationship, but it's not the only part. As well as words of love and appreciation, they need to know that

you accept them as they are. This helps them feel good about themselves and develops their sense of belonging.

Your relationship with your child also helps them learn how relationships work. Your relationship will be the model for the relationships they form with others. Even the routine parts of family life, such as talking to one another, having dinner together and knowing their friends contribute to your child's sense of well-being.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING WARM AND LOVING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- Regularly and openly express your love and affection for all your family members. Don't just tell them that you love them—tell them the things that you love and respect about them such as their sense of humour, concern for others, ability to speak their mind, etc.
- One of the greatest gifts parents can give their children is time together. Take some time each day to talk, laugh, cry, play, dream and explore with them. This can be difficult with our busy schedules. Even setting aside 15 or 20 minutes each day to provide children with our full attention, with no outside distractions, can make a huge difference in our relationships.
- Practise shared problem-solving. Working together to solve problems helps make children feel confident that they are heard and can depend on you.



- As children get older and busier, make an agreement with your family members to get together at certain times during the week to catch up with each other. Family meals are a great way to do this. If that doesn't work, decide together on another time to meet or pick a family activity that you can all do. Activities could include a weekly games night or going for family walks or hikes. Whatever you choose, make it a routine and stick to it.
- Accept that everyone is different. Teach your child to value these differences in your family and in the community. Celebrate your child's strengths, even if it means moving out of your own 'comfort zone' to notice and encourage their individual interests and talents.
- Be a good role model. Model a positive outlook, show confidence in your own abilities and foster healthy, caring relationships. The best way to accomplish this is by taking care of yourself. Make sure you get enough sleep, eat healthy meals, participate in enjoyable physical activity and check in with your own feelings on a regular basis.

Effective Communication

As parents, we talk to our kids countless times throughout the day. Many of the conversations, however, may simply be telling them what we want them to do or not to do. This can be unrewarding for everyone. Increasing the frequency of positive, two-way communication with your child strengthens your bond and builds their self-esteem.



Positive Communication Means:

- **paying attention;**
- **respecting others' feelings; and**
- **using a gentle or neutral tone of voice.**

A good time to start working on positive communication with your kids is when they are young. Good communication helps to build an open relationship so your child is comfortable talking about what they've been doing and with whom. This makes it more likely that they will tell you about the details of their life when they're teenagers, when choices and actions can be more complicated.

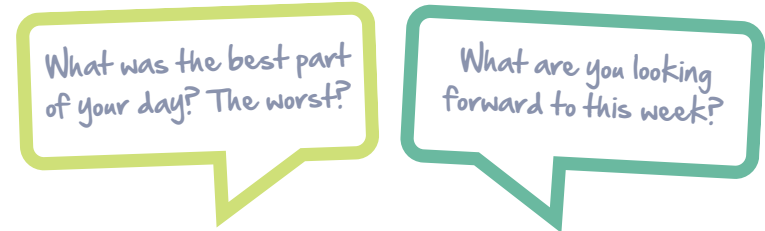
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Teach your child listening skills by listening to them. Really listen. Stop what you are doing, show your child they have your attention and provide verbal feedback. For younger children, getting down to their level, making eye contact and even lightly touching them on the shoulder or arm can help everyone slow down and hear what each other has to say.
- Pay attention to your own thoughts. Are you open to hearing what your child is saying, or are you busy thinking about a response before they've even finished speaking?

- Help your child or teen feel safe coming to you if they have a problem or have made a mistake. When appropriate, allow for a healthy expression of emotions such as happiness, anger, embarrassment, sadness and fear. Be willing to talk about anything and everything—not just fun stories or good news, but also relationships, sex, love, friendship problems, sexual orientation, substance use, family problems, career choices, bullying, school, etc. Talking about these things can be hard. Know that it's okay if you don't have all the answers right then and there.
- Don't do all the talking. Try not to offer solutions to every problem (even if you think you have a good one). Instead, repeat back what you are hearing and ask questions about how your child or teen is feeling when challenging or exciting things are happening in their lives. For example:



- Use time together, such as mealtimes, to talk, catch up and laugh with family members. Try making a routine of having each family member talk about their day. Help start the conversation with questions. For example:



- Encourage your kids to talk about themselves. For example:



- Talk about emotions and feelings, including your own, with your kids. It helps them learn how to communicate their own feelings in a positive, respectful way.
- Apologize when you make a mistake or lose your temper. This will remind your child that you respect the feelings of others (including theirs), that nobody is perfect, and that it's important to take responsibility for our own actions so we can try harder the next time.

Setting Limits in a Warm and Caring Way

For a child, the world can seem confusing and overwhelming. Setting boundaries reminds your child that you will protect them, which can make them feel secure. Seeing things from your child's point of view while maintaining limits helps to strengthen communication and trust in your relationship. A healthy relationship based on loving guidance is the foundation for building a child's self-esteem and self-discipline.

TIPS ON SETTING LIMITS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Provide clearly defined rules and expectations, along with simple explanations for the rules, while showing a caring attitude. Most of what we ask of our children is motivated by our concern for their well-being, so try to emphasize the good intentions. For example:
 - ▶ *In setting a specific bedtime for your younger child, tell them that the rules help make sure they get enough sleep so they're not tired at school. Be understanding; say that you can see they're upset and wish they could stay up longer, but repeat that it's bedtime and they need to rest.*
 - ▶ *If your older child insists that a friend sleep over during the week and the rule is no sleepovers on school nights, explain how this rule is set to ensure that they have enough time for homework and that they get enough sleep so they're not tired at school. Be understanding of their request, but remind them that the rule still applies.*

Authoritative parents are warm and nurturing. They set clear limits and expectations and enforce them. They explain consequences and apply discipline fairly.

- Consistency is important; however, be flexible enough to bend a rule occasionally to allow your child to participate in an important family celebration or other special occasion. As your child gets older, exceptions and compromise can be valuable opportunities for teaching them how to present their side in a thoughtful and respectful manner, while remaining open to other viewpoints. For example:
 - ▶ *Perhaps weeknight sleepovers are not allowed, but your child is requesting one to complete a homework project or is trying to plan around a school field trip the next day. Rather than seeing this as 'giving in', consider that you are providing your child with a chance to feel heard and learn how to constructively argue and speak up for themselves.*
- If they know they can rely on you to hear their side of the story, they may be more willing to accept those occasions where an exception or compromise is not an option. Of course, some rules are non-negotiable, and it helps to determine those ahead of time and communicate that to your child.



- Use discipline with fair consequences to help your child learn and understand the impacts of their behaviour, actions and choices. Try to link the consequences to the behaviour. For example:

► *If your child has been careless and lost something important to them, such as their favourite hoodie, a consequence could be that they have to use their own money to replace the item. Since they're likely already upset with themselves, this logical consequence allows you to remain neutral or even sympathetic to their situation without 'fixing' it for them. This will make it easier to work together to figure out a way to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future.*

- Provide your child with the opportunity to make reasonable, but meaningful choices and decisions within boundaries that you set. For example:

► *Perhaps they can be in charge of deciding how to spend their own money or what to wear on a day-to-day basis, as long as it is within limits already set, such as being weather-appropriate.*

- When addressing unwanted behaviours, focus on the specific behaviour you would like to see rather than just the one you want to stop. For example:

Now, I don't think I've seen you reach that level before! But I would like you to take a break from video games today so please put the console away and we can go for a bike ride together.

- Involve your child in a variety of household tasks such as gardening, preparing meals or doing the dishes. Even if your younger child starts out by making more mess rather than really helping, this can be a fun way to bond and learn about responsibility. When your child is older, decide together what he or she can take on to help contribute to the household on a regular basis. This could include feeding the family pet, clearing the dining room table or putting away the clean laundry.
- Notice your child's efforts and accomplishments, not just with a quick "Good job!", but by spending time talking about them. For example:

Your sister sure seems happy since you shared your toy with her!

Thank you for putting away the groceries, that really helped me out.

I noticed you called your grandmother on her birthday; I know that she really appreciates that you keep in touch.

Positive Attitudes

You helped your child learn how to walk, talk and get ready to start school. Now you're the person who teaches them how to look at things in a positive way, how to manage strong emotions, be flexible, and persist despite challenges. These life skills contribute to mental well-being as well as success in school.

Seeing things in a positive way—being optimistic—is an important part of mental well-being. Some people are naturally more optimistic than others, so you cannot completely control how optimistic your child is; you can, however, teach your child to think more positively.

Being Optimistic Means:

- **being willing to try;**
- **practising;**
- **planning for a positive result;**
- **accepting both successes and failures; and**
- **having the confidence to try again.**

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING POSITIVE ATTITUDES

- Teach your kids optimistic thinking by gently challenging their negative thoughts and showing them more positive ways to see situations. For example:
 - ▶ *If your child is disappointed in how they did on a math test and declares that they're stupid or bad at math, help them to remember what they're really good at. Perhaps they like following the stats of their favourite sports team and you can remind them that that's math too.*

- Encourage your child to set realistic goals, and to work towards them, such as learning how to ride a bicycle or how to skateboard over the summer. Every time your child achieves something they set out to do, it helps them believe that their persistence can lead to more successes. Helping them track their progress and providing encouragement along the way will help them stick with it.
- Laugh with your child. It can be a fun and effective way to release the same tensions and negative feelings that sometimes make us want to cry. Laughing reduces the effects of stress, and boosts the chemicals in our brain that relieve pain and sadness.
- Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to play. Free play in a safe environment should make up the bulk of your child's playtime. This type of play is essential for physical and emotional health. It gives kids the chance to explore the world, make decisions and experience success.
- Organized activities also offer important physical and social benefits, especially when kids are free to develop their own interests without the competitive pressure to 'be the best' at everything. If your child is not interested in hockey, why not encourage them to try skateboarding, dancing, running, cartooning, singing or drama?



Connections to School and Community

Your child's school is a partner in supporting their mental well-being. At school, kids develop and master new skills, and feel the sense of accomplishment that goes along with success. They have a chance to make friends, practise social skills and connect with the caring teachers and other adults at the school.

A child's sense of connection to school is very important. Children who feel a sense of belonging at school are more likely to do well, stay in school and make healthy choices. Taking an active interest in your child's studies and school events contributes to their connection to school.

It is also important to a child's mental well-being to feel that they have caring adults in their life that they can talk to and depend on. Spending time with a grandparent, relative, family friend, teacher or other responsible adult can help build those close relationships and connections. It can also provide the opportunity for your child to explore different interests and outlooks on life, and master new skills.

*It takes a whole
village to raise a child.*

Nigerian proverb

TIPS FOR INCREASING CONNECTIONS TO SCHOOL AND YOUR COMMUNITY

- Make sure that your child knows that you think education is important. Talk about what is happening at school. Keep up-to-date with what they are learning and ask questions. For example:

What did you like about school today? What didn't you like?

Did your teacher read some more chapters from that story you were enjoying?

How did the science class field trip go? What did you find when you tested the stream water?

- Keep in regular contact with your child's school. At the start of each year, work with your child's teacher to figure out the best way for everyone to keep in touch. Some parents and teachers prefer regular email updates, while others like scheduled, in-person visits or classroom volunteer work. Of course, there is no need to limit yourself to only one of these options. Be involved in your child's learning; don't wait until there's a problem.

- Help your child with homework and time management. Decide together on a schedule, or routine, that allows them to have enough 'free time' after school for rest and play. Find a work space that is tidy and free from distractions, but close enough to you that they can ask questions.
- Involve your child in activities and events in your community. Sign up for activities at the community centre, visit the local farmers' market, or volunteer for an event or organization that is important to your family. This builds your child's connection to their community and their sense of belonging.

Ages and Stages

AGES 6 TO 10

- Kids in this age group are spending more and more time with their peers. This means they are more sensitive than ever to the ups and downs that come with friendships and socialization. Helping your child develop their sense of self-worth and belonging is particularly important now. For more on self-esteem in this age group, visit the HealthLink BC website at www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/te6265.html.
- For more general information on your child's growth and development at this stage, visit the HealthLink BC website at www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/te6244.html.

AGES 11 TO 14

- These years are full of transition and change for your child – physical, emotional and situational – as they move from elementary school to middle or secondary school. Continuing to support your child as they begin the difficult work of slowly developing their independence and identity is key. For more information on emotional and social development at this age, visit the HealthLink BC website at <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/te7262.html>.
- For more information on your child's growth and development at this stage, visit the HealthLink BC website at www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/te7233.html.

AGES 15 TO 18

- During the teenage years, a warm and communicative parent-child relationship plays a more important role than ever. Although they may seem to be pulling away, teenagers need support from you to help develop their decision-making skills. Do your best to offer guidance when it's needed, and learn how to let go when it's not.
- Check out Healthy Living for Teens www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/healthy_eating/healthy_living_for_families_youth.pdf for more information – it's written for teens, but it offers important information that parents can use too.
- For more information on your teen's growth and development, visit the HealthLink BC website at www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/te7221.html.

2

HEALTHY EATING

HEALTHY EATING

FOOD is a big part of everyday life. You eat to nourish your body, you eat to celebrate, and you also eat to connect with friends and family. In full and busy lives, it can be challenging to make healthy eating a priority. It is known, however, that kids perform better at school and have better concentration when they eat well. The following pages provide practical nutrition information and useful tips for healthy eating.

What Is Healthy Eating?

The term “healthy eating” is used all the time, but what does it really mean? In general, healthy eating means that you and your family:

- ✓ follow Canada's Food Guide (especially eating enough vegetables and fruit);
- ✓ eat breakfast;
- ✓ drink healthy beverages;
- ✓ limit sodium intake; and
- ✓ enjoy eating together.



FOLLOW CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE

To view Canada's Food Guide, and to see if you and your family are meeting the recommendations, visit the Health Canada website at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>. Canada's Food Guide is available in 11 different languages.

When following the Food Guide, aim for balanced meals. A balanced meal or snack includes food from more than one food group. This helps to make sure you and your family are meeting your nutrition needs throughout the day.

Balancing meals doesn't have to be a lot of work. A tuna sandwich with milk and a piece of fruit is a good balanced lunch. A wrap with chicken, veggies and cheese can make a quick, healthy dinner. See the chart below for an easy way to remember how to balance meals and snacks.

Meals	Snacks	Food Groups
Try to include foods from 3 to 4 of Canada's Food Guide food groups	Try to include foods from 1 to 2 of Canada's Food Guide food groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vegetables and fruit • grain products • milk and alternatives • meat and alternatives



Unfortunately, most of us are not meeting the daily recommendations for vegetables and fruit in Canada's Food Guide. Vegetables and fruit are generally low in fat, sugar and sodium, but high in nutrients.

TIPS TO HELP YOU EAT MORE VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

- When it comes to vegetables and fruit, variety really is the spice of life! Eating a variety of colourful vegetables and fruit helps ensure that you and your family are getting the nutrients that you need.
- Foods that are in season are fresh, nutritious and often have the best flavour. Buying what's in season is also a good way to vary your meals throughout the year.
- Canned or frozen vegetables and fruit are a good way to eat a variety of vegetables and fruit during the winter season, when there are fewer fresh options.

Nutrition needs for all food groups vary depending on your age, gender and activity level. In the section "division of responsibility" (see page 28), you can learn how to support your child to eat the amount that is right for them.

EAT BREAKFAST

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day for the whole family. Skipping breakfast makes it hard to get all of the nutrition you need, which can lead to feeling hungry at the end of the day and filling up on less healthy foods. Eating breakfast, on the other hand, gives your brain and body energy for the day, so you can concentrate and be active. As a result, kids who regularly eat breakfast do better in school and are more likely to graduate.



50%

of BC teens skip breakfast on school days and only about 40% eat breakfast regularly.

TIPS FOR THE MORNING

- If you're short on time before school, prepare and set out breakfast foods the night before.
- If your kids don't have time for a full breakfast, make sure they take healthy snacks with them to school. This will help keep them from getting too hungry by the end of the day.

DRINK HEALTHY BEVERAGES

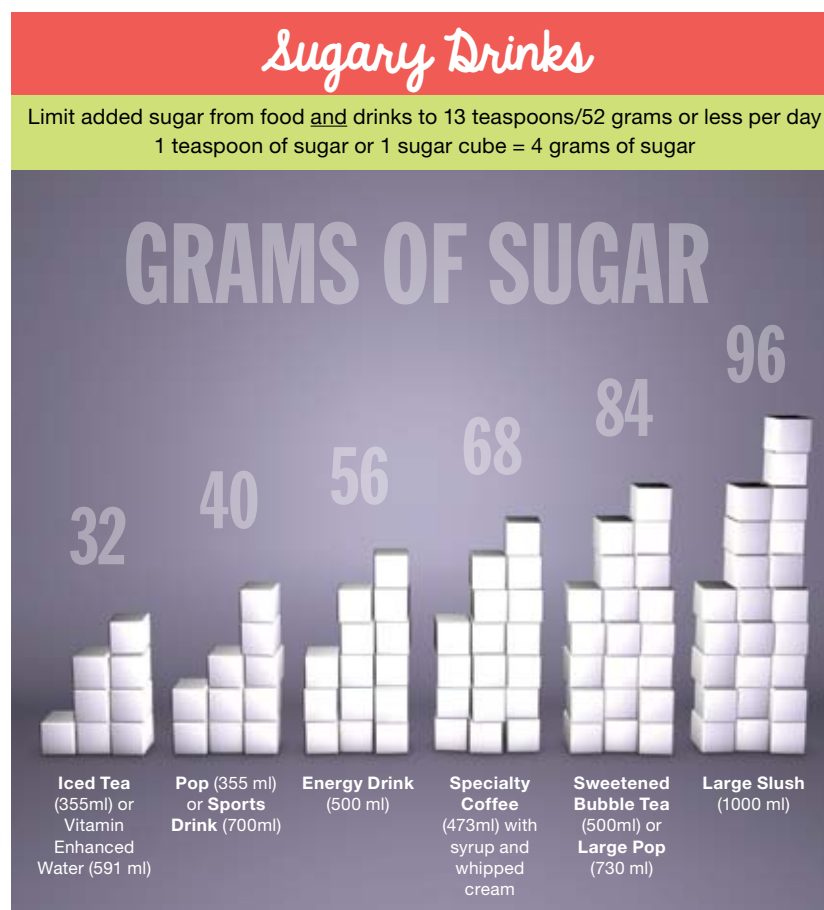
Staying hydrated, or drinking enough fluids, helps us feel energetic and alert. Water is the best choice to satisfy thirst. Milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverages are also good choices as they contain lots of nutrients that your body needs, including calcium and vitamin D. Calcium and vitamin D are important to ensure strong, healthy bones and teeth.

TIPS FOR HEALTHIER HYDRATION

- Drink water with meals and regularly throughout the day.
- You can boost the taste of water by adding fresh herbs, such as basil, mint, rosemary or ginger, or slices of vegetables or fruit, like cucumber or lemon
- If you serve juice, make sure it is 100% fruit juice. Limit drinks high in added sugar.
- Kids should limit their juice intake to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup daily. Teens and adults should have no more than 1 cup daily.

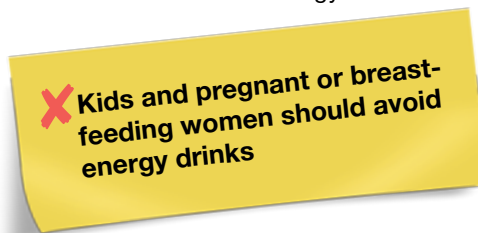
SUGARY DRINKS

There is nearly an entire aisle in the grocery store devoted to sugary drinks. Sugary drinks are beverages that have sugar or sugary syrups added to them. They provide little or no nutrition and take the place of healthier choices like water or milk. Sipping sugary drinks throughout the day can also harm your teeth leading to cavities or pain.



ENERGY DRINKS

Health Canada cautions that energy drinks are not recommended for kids and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Energy drinks are high in sugar and caffeine. The amount of caffeine in most energy drinks exceeds recommendations for kids. Caffeine can cause nervousness, anxiety, jitteriness, stomach upset, rapid heart rate and trouble sleeping – but doesn't increase kids' energy levels!



LIMIT YOUR SODIUM. LESS IS BEST!

Sodium is found in salt. We all need some sodium, but most of us eat more than double the amount that we need. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, a major risk factor for stroke, heart disease and kidney disease. Sodium intake has also been linked to an increased risk of osteoporosis, stomach cancer and severity of asthma.

Which foods are often high in sodium?

- deli meats, canned soups, and pre-prepared sauces;
- packaged, processed and ready-to-eat foods; and
- restaurant and fast food meals.

What can you do to decrease how much sodium you eat?

- use fresh, unprocessed ingredients whenever possible;
- limit how much salt you add to foods;

- check the % Daily Value (% DV) on food labels to see if the food has a little or a lot of sodium:
 - ▶ 5% DV or less is a little;
 - ▶ 15% DV or more is a lot; and
- add flavour with herbs, spices and lemon juice.

Eating less sodium can help you and your family stay healthy and feel your best.

For more information on sodium, www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/sodium.

How to Support Healthy Eating Behaviours in Your Family

Your relationship with food develops from an early age and can have a lasting effect on your health and eating behaviours. As a parent, you play a big role in influencing what your kids eat and drink as they grow, and in creating lifelong healthy behaviours. Below are some areas to work on to help you and your kids form healthy eating attitudes and behaviours. Don't try to do it all at once, just focus on one or two things at a time.

DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

To create healthy eating behaviours and enjoyable meal times, it's helpful to understand what you are responsible for and what your kids are responsible for. Trying to control how much your kids eat can lead to over-eating or under-eating. Trust that your kids will eat the amount of food they need. Sharing the responsibility for healthy eating can be challenging, but it helps kids develop a healthy relationship with food.

This may take some time for everyone to get used to. For more information on this division of responsibility, and to find out how to adapt it to kids of different ages, visit www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/dor/divisionsofresponsibility.php.

Whose Decision is it?

- **Parents and caregivers are responsible for what, when, and where to eat.**
- **Children are responsible for how much and whether to eat.**

OTHER TIPS

- Offer a variety of healthy foods in a pleasant setting at regular times. Then let your kids decide how much to eat, whether they want more, and when they are done, even if they leave food on their plate.
- Serve new foods more than one time and prepare them in different ways. Kids often need to be offered a new food 8 to 10 times before they are willing to taste it.

PLANNING AHEAD

“What’s for dinner?” At the end of a long day when you are stressed, hurried and your family is hungry, that’s not a question you want to hear – especially if you’re asking yourself the same thing! Getting organized, planning ahead and making a list can help put you in the driver’s seat so you have everything you need on hand to make a meal. Including kids in planning is a great way to spark their interest in healthy eating, cooking and even gardening. Giving kids a say will increase the likelihood of them eating what you serve.

Navigating the Grocery Store

- ✓ **Make a list and try to stick to it. Shopping when you’re hungry or tired can lead to impulse purchases. It can help to grab a healthy snack, like fruit, before heading out.**
- ✓ **The outside aisles of the grocery store are where you’re most likely to find fresh vegetables and fruit, bread and the milk and alternatives section, as well as fresh meat, fish and tofu.**
- ✓ **When buying pre-packaged foods make sure you check the label. For more information on label reading, visit www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/dailyvalue.**
- ✓ **Check out Shopping Sense, the informative virtual grocery store tour, at www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/grocery-shopping.**

MORE TIPS FOR PLANNING AHEAD

- Assign a spot in your kitchen or home office where you can file everything you need for planning healthy meals and snacks. Include a copy of Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide – which you can find at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/print_eatwell_bienmang-eng.pdf – as well as weekly flyers, grocery coupons and new recipes you’d like to try.

- Take time to plan out your meals for the week. This will help save time in the long run. Use the Weekly Meal Plan at www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/menu_planner_v3.pdf to help you get organized and make a shopping list.
- Keep your fridge, freezer, and pantry stocked with common staple items and basic ingredients for making healthy meals. Try out the Pantry Planner at www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/pantry_planner_v3.pdf to help you get organized.
- Make extra when you cook and freeze a portion for a fast meal another day, or take one day each week (or each month) to do batch cooking and stock your freezer with things like muffins, soups, stews, pasta sauces and casseroles.

If you're short on time, there are healthier convenience foods you can have on hand to make meal time faster. Try these time-savers:

- ▶ pre-washed salad mixes;
- ▶ pre-cut vegetables such as carrots, cauliflower and broccoli;
- ▶ hummus and whole wheat pita bread;
- ▶ rinsed canned beans;
- ▶ grains like quinoa that cook quickly;
- ▶ low sodium pasta sauce and whole grain pasta; or
- ▶ rotisserie chicken from the supermarket.



EATING TOGETHER

When parents and kids eat together, they feel more connected and are better able to communicate and support each other. Kids who eat meals with their families are also more likely to get all the nutrients their growing minds and bodies need. Here are some tips that can make eating together an enjoyable experience for everyone:

- Start with small steps. Soccer practices, piano lessons and varied work schedules can make sitting down to share a meal or snack challenging. Schedule time to have one meal or snack together and then build from there.
- Remember that food is for nourishment and is not to be used as a reward or punishment. For example, dessert should not be used as a reward if your child tries a new food or finishes their meal.
- Turn off the television and put away other electronic devices. This will help everyone to be part of the conversation.



DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION STARTERS

If you could go anywhere in the world for a week, where would you go?

What is one question you have about your grandparents or great-grandparents?

What is one job you would love to do for the rest of your life?

Did anyone receive or do a random act of kindness today?

One thing I learned today was....

The funniest thing happened today....

Eating together provides an excellent opportunity for the family to connect. For more information on eating together, and getting kids excited about the process, visit Better Together BC at www.bettertogetherbc.ca.

COOKING WITH YOUR KIDS

Cooking with your kids is one of the most important things you can do to make sure they will be able to cook for themselves one day. It's never too early or late to start! As a bonus, kids are more receptive to trying new foods if they are involved in preparing the meal. To improve your chances of success:

- Start on a weekend when you have extra time. Friday dinner and Sunday brunch are good meals for many families to cook together.
- Be ready to share the kitchen with your kids. Expect spills and some mess. That is part of the learning and experience. Kids need to practise and will get better at cooking with time.
- Set up some kitchen safety rules, but make sure the rules don't take away the fun from cooking. When kids know the basic kitchen rules, you can prevent accidents and make the experience enjoyable for all.
- Make sure young kids have adult supervision at all times.
- Encourage teens to learn to cook a dish or two that they can make for the whole family.



Clean-Up

Get everyone involved in cleaning up by dividing tasks and responsibilities. Younger kids can help bring their plates to the sink or put away condiments. Older kids and teens can help wash or scrape dishes, load the dishwasher and empty the dishwasher when the cycle is done.

PROMOTING POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

Kids' bodies develop at different ages and in different ways. It is also normal for kids to gain weight as they are growing. Teaching kids that health is more important than weight encourages healthy eating habits and relationships with food as they move into their teenage years. You are a powerful role model. The way you think, feel and talk about yourself and others will affect how your kids think, feel and talk about themselves and others.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

- Model the habits and attitudes that you want your kids to have. Feeling good about yourself and having a positive body image really matters. If you struggle with this, try to be positive around your kids.
- Compliment others more often for who they are as a person, not for how they look. Talk to your kids about how it can be hurtful and disrespectful to make comments about someone's weight or physical features.

- Talk about what your kids see and read in the media. Encourage them to look for realistic images, and point out photos that are touched up and edited. Break down commercials and ads together, discussing how ads are designed to persuade people to buy the product.



Healthy Eating at School

SCHOOL LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Healthy lunches and snacks give kids the energy they need to grow, learn and play. As a parent or caregiver, you can't always keep track of everything your kids eat, especially as they get older. You can, however, help them stay on the right track by following some of these tips:

- Let younger kids help you make their lunches and snacks. For lunches, start by offering a few healthy choices from three to four of the food groups and let them make the final decisions. Offer snacks with one to two food groups.

- Encourage older kids to plan and make their own lunches and snacks; they're more likely to eat foods they've chosen for themselves. Remind them that a balanced lunch includes three to four food groups and a balanced snack includes one to two food groups.
- Stock the house with healthy food choices.
- If you are providing your kids with money to buy lunches or snacks, find out about the options being provided and encourage them to make healthy choices.
- Many packaged snack products available in the grocery store are high in sodium and sugar. See Navigating the Grocery Store on page 30 to learn where to go for more information on label reading.



See the following table for ideas to inspire you and add variety to any lunch. Remember to include an ice pack to keep cold items cold.

<i>Lunch Ideas</i>	<i>Snack Ideas</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a small thermos of soup, pasta, or another hot item (especially on a cold day) with raw veggies and milk • chili, a whole wheat bun, and raw veggie sticks • green salad with a grain like quinoa, vegetables and cheese chunks • cold french toast with yogurt or applesauce and handful of almonds • curry or daal with chapatti, a piece of fruit and milk • hot or cold leftovers - use a microwaveable container or thermos when needed, and add other foods to make a balanced meal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cheese chunks and sliced apples or applesauce • hard-boiled egg and sliced avocado or cucumber • homemade whole-grain muffins with fruit • pita and hummus or tzatziki • plain yogurt with fruit and granola • roti dipped in daal • whole grain crackers with cheese and sliced cucumber • whole grain cereal and dried unsweetened fruit mix • kappa maki sushi (cucumber rolls) with low-sodium soy sauce

For more healthy lunch and snack ideas, check out Super Snacks from Action Schools! BC at www.actionschoolsbc.ca/key-resources-equipment/supplementary-resources/super-snacks-handout, and Lunches to Go from Healthy Eating at School at www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/401/lunches-to-go.

GETTING INVOLVED

If you have the time, help the school get involved in one of the programs below, or check out some of their great resources.

Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools

These are the Province of BC's nutrition standards that schools have to follow when they sell food and beverages to students. The guidelines apply to all foods and beverages sold at school fundraisers, school stores, vending machines and the school cafeteria. To review the guidelines and to find helpful resources, visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/foodguidelines.

BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program (BCSFVNP)

The BCSFVNP delivers free, fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables to all public and First Nations schools across the province. Students enjoy nutritious fresh fruit and vegetable snacks in their classroom while learning about healthy eating and BC agriculture. For more information, visit www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/240/bc-school-fruit-and-vegetable-nutritional-program.

Farm to School Program

Farm to School connects schools (K-12) and local farms to ensure kids have access to fresh, local, nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods while at school. For more information, go to www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/375/a-fresh-crunch-in-school-lunch-the-bc-farm-to-school-guide-2012.

Action Schools! BC

Action Schools! BC supports teachers and schools to integrate physical activity, physical education and healthy eating into the school community. You can check with your child's school to find out if they are registered or encourage them to become familiar with the resources and supports the program offers. For more information, go to www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/235/action-schools-bc.

Sip Smart! BC™

Sip Smart! BC™ teaches kids in Grades 4 to 6 about sugary drinks and about making healthy drink choices. For more information, go to www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/298/sip-smart-bc.

Information About Allergies

In 2007, the Ministry of Education signed the Anaphylaxis Protection Order. The Order requires that all BC school districts develop and implement anaphylaxis policies that meet the rigorous provincial standards outlined in the BC Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework.

For more information visit www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/297/bc-ministry-of-education-core-anaphylaxis-resources.

Food in Your Community

There are many ways you and your family can connect with food in your community. The following list provides some great family activities with a focus on healthy eating:

- Shop at farmers' markets, grow veggies or fruit at home, or get involved in community gardens; these provide fresh, nutritious choices. Kids involved in growing their own food are more likely to eat it. It's also an opportunity for kids to learn about where good food comes from.
- Consider registering your kids in a cooking club or food-related summer camp; these may be offered through schools, recreation centres or community organizations.

- Look into joining a community kitchen or getting together with friends to cook; it's a fun and affordable way to build community while preparing meals in advance.

Eating in Restaurants

Eating out can be a special treat and a time for a little indulgence; however, if eating out is a regular part of your week, consider these tips to stay healthy.

- Look for roasted, baked or steamed foods, rather than fried.
- Choose vegetable side dishes.
- Ask for sauces and dressing on the side and use small amounts; sauces and dressings are often very high in sodium and fat.
- Choose a healthy drink with your meal such as water, milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage instead of sugary drinks.
- Ask for whole grain products.
- Portions are often very large in restaurants; share a meal or take home leftovers for lunch or dinner the next day.
- Ask for nutrition information to help you make informed choices.

Ages and Stages

AGES 5 TO 10

- Kids are still growing quickly at this age and often need to eat every two to three hours. Their appetites can vary depending on whether or not they are going through a growth spurt.
- Try serving smaller meals and snacks for them to enjoy throughout the day, rather than having them eat everything in one sitting.

AGES 11 TO 14

- Kids are at a stage where their eating behaviours may be changing. They are becoming more independent and starting to make more choices for themselves. This is a good time to get them more involved in shopping and food preparation to keep them interested in making healthy choices.
- Kids at this age are still actively growing and their bodies are changing as they move into puberty. Parents and caregivers should model healthy living by providing lots of access to healthy food choices and opportunities for physical activity.

To learn more about restaurant programs available in your community, visit www.informed dining.ca and www.healthcheck.org.

AGES 15 TO 18

- Your teen's nutritional needs are based on their gender, height, weight, activity levels and rate of growth.
- Nearly half of BC teens skip breakfast on a regular basis. Keep healthy choices available that teens can grab as they head out the door.
- Some teenagers eat a lot, but still don't get the nutrition they need. Variety is important as teens continue to grow and develop.

If you are worried about your child's eating behaviours or overall health, call HealthLink BC at 811 to speak with a Registered Dietitian, or speak with your family doctor.



3

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

KIDS can be full of energy. Sometimes, it can feel like a challenge to get them to slow down. Other times, it can be a struggle to get them to be physically active. The good news is that children want to move. They just need the time, space, and opportunity to make it happen. As a parent or caregiver, you can help build on that natural energy and encourage healthy behaviours that will last a lifetime.

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

These guidelines, available at www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804, recommend that children and youth should do at least 60 minutes per day of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity.

- Moderate-intensity physical activities could include skating, biking, or hiking. During moderate-intensity physical activities, you will be able to talk but not to sing.
- Vigorous-intensity physical activities could include running, swimming or cross country skiing. During vigorous-intensity activities, you won't be able to say more than a few words without pausing for breath. Try to do these activities at least 3 days per week.
- Also try to include activities that strengthen muscles and bones at least 3 days a week, including activities such as climbing, gymnastics, tennis or basketball.

More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits!

Understanding Physical Activity

Physical activity is about moving our bodies. Sports and recreational activities are great ways to be physically active, but they aren't the only way. Kids can also be active by playing outdoors; walking, biking or wheeling to school; or going for nature walks.

WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?

Regular physical activity is important for everyone to:

- build strong bones and muscles;
- keep the heart healthy;
- improve posture, balance and flexibility;
- increase confidence, happiness, focus and concentration;
- enhance academic performance and decrease stress; and
- have fun, get together with others and meet new friends.



Did you know that only 7% of Canadian children and youth are meeting the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity per day?

Supporting Physically Active Kids

Whether your kids are just getting started or are already active, they need your support as they learn new skills and try new things. Kids grow and develop at different rates, and their interests change with time. When given the time, space and guidance to build up their confidence and have positive experiences, kids are more likely to be active throughout their lives.

GETTING STARTED

If your child is not currently getting the recommended daily amount of physical activity, you can help them to become more active.

- Start with what they like to do and make it fun. It's important for children to experience early success. If not, they may become overwhelmed and want to quit.
- Be a role model for your child. Active parents tend to have more active children. Introduce your child to some of the activities you enjoy and make time to do them together.
- Talk to your kids about what they think might be holding them back from being more active. For example, some children shy away from group activities because they worry about the way they look, or they might not like the idea of having to change their clothes or shower in group settings.
- Go slowly at first. Aim for 10 or 15 minutes of physical activity at a time in the beginning. Increase their daily active time by 10 to 15 minutes every month.

- Teach kids the fundamental movement skills. These are basic movements such as throwing, kicking, running, jumping, hopping and catching. Teaching kids these skills at an early age can help them to become physically literate and enjoy physical activity and sport throughout their life.
- To learn more about the assessment and development of fundamental movement skills in children and youth visit Canadian Sport for Life's PLAY tools at www.physicalliteracy.ca/play and Canadian Sport for Life's Developing Physical Literacy at www.canadiansportforlife.ca/sites/default/files/resources/Developing%20Physical%20Literacy.pdf.



Play

A great way to ensure kids are having fun while being physically active is to give them lots of free time for play. Encouraging children to choose and lead their own play activities can help build motor function, creativity, social skills, decision-making and problem-solving abilities and more. These are pretty impressive benefits to consider the next time you watch your kids try out a new trick on the monkey bars or strike up a neighbourhood game of “Capture the Flag” or “Freeze Tag”. Check out some tips on how to encourage active play:

- Provide access to playgrounds, playing fields, balls, skipping ropes and other equipment that facilitate active play. Most importantly, get kids outside and into nature.
- Teach your kids some of the games you remember playing as a child, like “What Time Is It, Mr. Wolf?”, “Kick the Can”, and “Duck, Duck, Goose”. Can’t remember all the rules, or looking for more inspiration? Check out ParticipACTION’s Bring Back Play app at www.bringbackplay.mobi.

STAYING ACTIVE AND SAFE

- When beginning an activity, encourage your child to start slow and ease into what they are doing. This will allow their muscles to warm up and help to prevent injuries.
- After an activity, cool down by slowing the pace of activity, then stretching all the muscles they used.
- Make sure they drink lots of water before, during and after physical activity.
- If equipment or protective gear is needed, make sure that it has been inspected and it is in good condition. It should fit correctly, be used as intended, and be sanitized properly.
- Help kids dress for the activity and the weather. This could include warm clothing, layers, hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
- Make sure they know the rules for the activity they are doing.
- For tips and resources on traffic safety, check out www.hastebc.org/tools/pedestrian-safety.



Flexibility

Flexibility activities put your muscles and joints through a full range of motions and help keep them healthy. One way to increase flexibility is by stretching.

- Only stretch muscles that are already warmed up.
- Focus on larger muscle groups first.
- Remember not to bounce when stretching.

For tips on stretching exercises, see the Physical Activity Line (PAL) handout at www.physicalactivityline.com/pdf_files/pal-doc-stretching-lowerbody.pdf.

KEEP IT FUN!

The best way to get kids excited about being active is to keep things fun. Kids are more likely to participate if they enjoy and get to choose what they are doing. To keep it fun:

- encourage your kids to get creative;
- remind them that being physically active doesn't have to mean being competitive;
- look for activities that are appropriate for their age, size and skill level;
- minimize rules and barriers;
- promote active participation; and
- be flexible and reflect with them on their experiences as they try different things.

Structured and Unstructured Play

Children's play can be structured, or unstructured. Structured play is often organized and may be guided by an adult. It may have rules, time limits, and specific equipment or props. Structured play can include a game of soccer, dodge ball, or capture the flag.

Unstructured play is less controlled, is often unplanned, and allows kids to try new things, test boundaries and use their imaginations. Unstructured play can include running around a playground or park, building with blocks, or creating a new game.

- Lead by example. Make outdoor activities part of your family time. Try geocaching, nature walks or heading to the beach, a lake or your local park together.
- Remember, while letting kids have the freedom to explore and take some risks can be scary, it can have big benefits. As long as they follow non-negotiable rules (like traffic safety and helmet laws), giving them the chance to succeed, fail, and test their physical limits can help them learn to navigate and manage risk throughout their lives.

DO IT TOGETHER

Being active together is about more than the physical benefits. As a parent or caregiver, you are modeling healthy behaviours and building healthy relationships that will contribute to your child's long-lasting well-being. The key is to plan for it and make it a priority.

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity per week in sessions of at least 10 minutes.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS

Kids are more likely to be physically active when they are outside. Spending time in the great outdoors can also improve mood and reduce stress. It's easy to see why kids should spend more time outside, but it's sometimes hard to figure out how to get them out there. Here are a few tips to help shape your kids' experiences with the outdoor world:

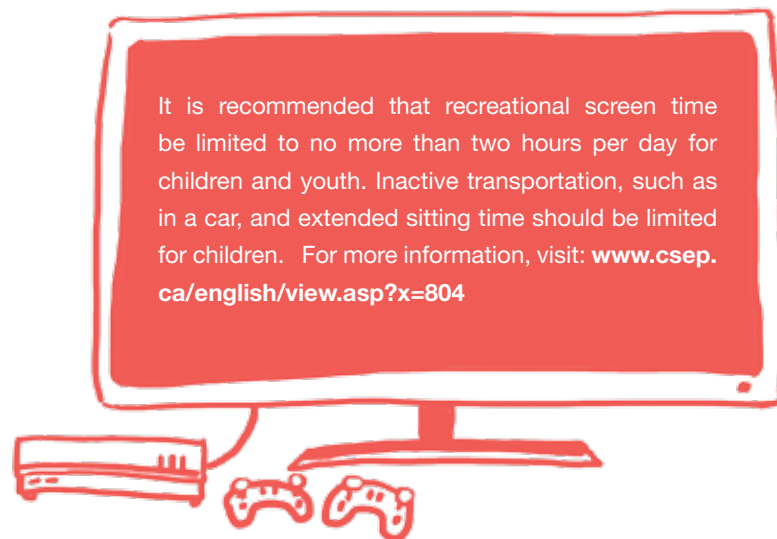
- Consider advocating for traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps and roundabouts in your neighbourhood.
- Let them get dirty! For younger kids especially, consider packing along an extra change of clothing and shoes on outings. This way, kids can explore puddles and mud without having to worry about a cold or wet trek home.



Here are some tips and ideas for being active as a family:

- Make contributing to the household fun. Race to see who can put the most toys away, build a fort after shoveling the driveway together, or ask your kids to help rake the leaves before jumping into the pile.
- Decide as a family on a favourite activity you can all do together on a regular basis. This could include swimming or skating at the local recreation centre, exploring the different hiking or nature trails around where you live, going for bike rides or even walking the dog. Being active doesn't have to cost anything!
- Move and groove to your family's favourite music. Try dressing up and making it an 'official' dance party.
- Put together a list of indoor, rainy day activities. Include things like "Twister", batting balloons (see how long you can keep them from touching the ground!), playing hide and seek, or making an obstacle course.
- Keep the activities informal and fun. Toss a Frisbee, kick or throw a ball around the park, or roll down a hill and run back up.
- When planning vacations, look for destinations where physical activity can be part of each day. Think of activities such as camping, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, or snorkeling.
- Stay after school and play at the playground or in a park. Take advantage of the school field and play equipment on the weekend. Remember, it's the school that's closed, not the playground.

Limit Screen Time



It is recommended that recreational screen time be limited to no more than two hours per day for children and youth. Inactive transportation, such as in a car, and extended sitting time should be limited for children. For more information, visit: www.csep.ca/english/view.asp?x=804

Computers, phones and personal electronic devices are more innovative and popular than ever. According to recent Canadian research, kids in Grades 6 to 12 are spending more than seven hours per day in front of screens! At the same time, research also shows that 92% of Canadian children would choose playing with friends over watching TV, and 74% of Canadian children in Grades 4 to 6 would prefer to do something active after school.

Consider these tips for limiting your kids' screen time:

- Work together with your kids to agree upon clear limits around the use of electronic devices and games.
- Remove TVs and computers from bedrooms.
- Set an example and limit your own screen time.

- After school is a key time for kids. Get them involved in school sports teams, active out-of-school care, play dates with friends or neighbours, and community programs.
- Establish family rules around turning off electronic devices during meals and before going to bed. Research has shown that light emitted from TVs, computers and even phones can trick our bodies into thinking it's still daytime and not releasing melatonin, the hormone that helps us sleep.
- Avoid using screen time as a reward or punishment for being active. This may lead kids to see physical activity as a chore rather than an easy, fun choice.

Active Video Games Are Not a Replacement for Physical Activity

Active Healthy Kids Canada does not recommend active video games as a way to help kids be more physically active. While they are fun, active video games don't offer the fresh air, vitamin D, connection with nature and social interactions that come with outdoor active play.

For more information, visit Active Healthy Kids Canada at www.activehealthykids.ca/active-video-games-position.aspx.

Active Schools

Since 2007, all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in BC have been required to participate in Daily Physical Activity (DPA). DPA may consist of either instructional or non-instructional activities, and is intended to enhance existing physical education programs. For more information, visit the Ministry of Education website at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/dpa.

School is a great setting for kids to be physically active. Physical activity improves kids' ability to focus and concentrate, so active kids and teens tend to be better learners. Physical activity at school can also help kids learn new skills and make friends, while starting them on a lifelong path of healthy living and achievement. Check out the following tips for more ideas on how to support your child's physical activity in a school setting.

- Encourage kids to walk, in-line skate, scooter or cycle to school. Help them plan so they have enough time in the morning, and get into the habit of setting safety gear and other equipment near the door the night before.
- Encourage your kids' school to take part in International Walk to School Week (iWalk). Read more at www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/334/international-walk-to-school-week-iwalk.
- Consider organizing a Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train in your neighbourhood for younger kids. Visit the HASTe BC website at www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/296/walking-school-bus-and-bicycle-train-program.

Active Transportation: Any form of human-powered transportation is called active transportation. Examples include walking or skateboarding to school, cycling to work, or walking to and from the bus stop.

- Talk to your kids about what they are doing at school to be active. Do they play outside before school, at recess and lunch? What activities do they enjoy?
- Ask whether your kids' teachers take classes outside so kids can share outdoor learning experiences. Visit http://www.back2nature.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/B2N_Into-Nature_English.pdf for more information.
- Find out if their school has a play first lunch policy. Visit www.healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/385/play-first-lunch-toolkit.
- Get to know more about community partner programs that are available to support and promote physical activity at your child's school. For more information, visit www.healthyschoolsbc.ca.
- Volunteer at your child's school as a way to show them you value physical activity. It will also give you a chance to bond with your child and meet their friends. Involvement can range from school events like sports days, outdoor field trips or fun runs, to longer-term commitments like assisting with or coaching sports teams. There are many options, so choose whatever works with your family's interests and schedules.

Inclusive Activities

Children and youth with disabilities may face extra challenges getting physically active, but there are lots of resources that can help. The Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability has information on things like adaptive snowboarding and curling for the visually impaired. For fact sheets on a range of physical activities, visit the Active Living Alliance website at www.ala.ca/content/home.asp.

Active Communities

Physical activity can also be a great way for kids and families to connect to their communities. Here are some ideas for getting physically active in your area:

- Visit your local community or recreation centre regularly. Sign up for classes or just drop in for a family skate or swim.
- Explore municipal, regional and provincial parks. Many post information about community and nature programs on their websites.
- Organize a block party or activities such as a street hockey challenge or scavenger hunt with your neighbours and community.



- Challenge family and friends to get involved in local charity runs or events. Make up a fun team name or choose a dress-up theme. To find a run or event in your area, visit ParticipACTION at www.participaction.com/programs-events/events.
- For older kids, support them to get an active job, like mowing lawns, delivering papers, or leading activities at a summer camp.

Ages and Stages

AGES 6 TO 10

This is a key period for kids to develop basic skills such as balancing, climbing, throwing, catching, kicking, skipping, and running. Activities that help your child practise fundamental movement skills, and focus on fun rather than winning, provide the basis for your child's lifelong enjoyment and engagement in physical activity.

- Kids in this age range need to master the basics before moving on to develop more sport-specific skills when they are older.
- Children at this age should not focus on a single sport. They will benefit more from trying a wide range of activities, and engaging in lots of physically active, unstructured play in safe environments with friends.

AGES 11 TO 14

- Kids in the early teenage years are going through a lot of changes and are becoming more aware of their physical capabilities. Some are naturally drawn to physical activity and may start to focus seriously on one type of activity, such as hockey, dance or swimming.
- At this age, some kids may find their interest or participation in physical activity waning. They may feel a closer connection to things like reading, writing or making art or music. It is important to continue to support regular access to a variety of opportunities for fun, physical activity in safe, casual settings to help develop lifelong healthy behaviours.

AGES 15 TO 18

- Physical activity levels may decline as kids move into their teen years and become busier with school, work and hanging out with friends. Getting enough sleep can also be a struggle for some teens. Encourage and help your teen to find balance, and to participate in physical activities that they enjoy. It is important that they continue to meet or exceed the recommended amount of physical activity each day, even if the activities are less traditional or less familiar to you.
- As teens refine their skills and knowledge around physical activity, supporting and encouraging them to organize and lead their own sports and recreation activities can help them develop other important skills such as decision making, goal setting and relationship building.

4

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

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WEBSITES AND
RESOURCES

Mental Well-Being

BC FRIENDS FOR LIFE PARENT PROGRAM: for information on how to better cope with anxiety and build resiliency in children.

<http://friendsparentprogram.com>

ERASE BULLYING: CREATING SAFE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES: WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

www.erasebullying.ca/safe-schools/safe-schools-what-increase.php

HERE TO HELP GUIDES FOR PARENTS AND YOUTH: cover a variety of topics including resiliency, media literacy, and body-image and self-esteem.

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/search/site/guides%2520youth%2520parent>

KELTY MENTAL HEALTH – HEALTHY LIVING TOOLKIT FOR FAMILIES: STRESS MANAGEMENT

http://keltymentalhealth.ca/sites/default/files/Kelty_FamilyToolkit_Mod3StressMgmt.pdf

THE PSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION OF CANADA: PARENTING FOR LIFE

for information on positive parenting skills and promoting the well-being of families.

www.psychologyfoundation.org/index.php/programs/parenting-for-life

Healthy Eating

BETTERTOGETHERBC: for a hands-on approach to family, food and fun
www.bettertogetherbc.ca

HEALTHLINK BC: call 8-1-1 to speak for free with a registered dietitian or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/

HEALTHY EATING AT SCHOOL: for all school-related nutrition information and nutrition programs
www.healthyeatingatschool.ca

SPORTS NUTRITION

www.bcdairy.ca/uploads/bcdairy/Resources/SportNutrition.pdf

VEGETARIAN EATING

www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/special/zx3391.html

Physical Activity

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: ACTIVE GIRLS: for information on promoting physical activity and sport for girls
www.caaws.ca/publications/active-girls

KIDSPORT: for information on grants for children 18 and under to participate in a sport season of their choice
www.kidsportcanada.ca/index.php?page=british_columbia_welcome

PARTICIPACTION: BRING BACK PLAY

www.participaction.com/get-moving/bring-back-play

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LINE (PAL): for physical activity counselling service and practical, trusted physical activity and healthy living information
www.physicalactivityline.com



**Healthy
FamiliesBC**



www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/healthy_eating/healthy_living_for_families_parent.pdf