

# Fit Kids... Cool Kids... Smart Kids...



## Get Fit Kids!

- Kids should get **at least 60 minutes** of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day (physical activity that raises both heart rate and breathing rate).
- No matter what activity kids choose, they can do it all at once, or divide it into two or three bouts during the day.
- If kids divide up activity into bouts, each bout should be at least 10 to 15 minutes long.
- Kids should avoid periods of inactivity lasting 2 hours or more, especially during daylight hours.

## Fit Kids are Smart Kids

- Kids who get daily physical activity perform better in school, have better attendance rates, have a more positive attitude about school, are less disruptive behavior, and have higher self-esteem.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Academic achievement improves when kids spend more time in PE, even when students spend less time in class! Consistently higher math scores were seen after 240 minutes per week of class time was exchanged for physical activity time.<sup>3</sup>
- A 2002 study showed an association between physical fitness and SAT-9 test results. Students with the highest fitness scores also had the highest test scores.<sup>4</sup>

## Fit Kids are Cool Kids

### 5 Cool Ways to Get Physical

Who says kids have to play sports to have fun and be fit? Here are a few fun ways for kids to get fit.

#### Use your feet

Your feet were made for walking, so use them every chance you get. Walk to a friend's house, to the store, around the mall or wherever it's safe to walk. While you're at it, walk your dog. Or offer to walk your neighbor's dog.

#### Move to the Beat

Turn up the music and dance! Dance with your friends or on your own. And who says you can't do two things at once? Dance while you talk on the phone. Dance while you watch TV. You can even dance while you clean your room!

#### Roll Around Town

Make your muscles do the work on your bike, skates or scooter as you enjoy the cool breeze. Don't forget to wear the gear: a helmet, and knee, wrist and elbow pads for skating.

## Healthy Kids Run Series

Sign kids (ages 5 to 12) up for 8 FREE local fun runs. Kids will earn prizes for participating!

Contact Healthy Kids Club at 970-495-7511 or [lhz@pvhs.org](mailto:lhz@pvhs.org)

#### Get Your Friends Moving

Gather a few friends to shoot hoops, kick around a soccer ball, play street hockey or throw around a football or baseball. You don't need to be on a team to enjoy sports. Check out the rec center in your neighborhood for open gym times and other fun activities like tennis, swimming, or dance classes.

#### Be a Buddy

Stuck babysitting or playing with younger brothers or sisters? Make it play time. Young kids love games like hopscotch, tag, hide-and-seek, Hula-Hoops, jump rope, squirt guns, T-ball, kickball or flying a kite - especially when they're doing it with a "cool" older friend like you.

Source: [www.Kidnetics.com](http://www.Kidnetics.com)

## What Parents Can Do

- Be a physically active role model and have fun with your kids. Adults need at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Walk or bike with your kids at every available opportunity. Take a family walk after dinner instead of watching TV or playing computer games. Encourage your kids to walk and bike to school.
- Plan active weekends. Include biking, hiking, skating, walking, or playing ball. Take a trip to the park, skating rink, zoo, or swimming pool.
- Limit inactive behavior such as TV watching and video game playing. Offer active alternatives to screen time such as jumping rope, playing hide-and-seek, kicking a ball.
- Give your kids gifts that encourage physical activity.
- Take the President's Challenge as a family. You can track your individual physical activities as a family and earn awards for active lifestyles at [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org).



## The Importance of Regular Physical Activity for Kids

- Physical activity is one of the most potent weapons against the increasing rates of childhood obesity and related diseases, particularly when combined with good nutrition.
- Researchers suggest that the childhood obesity epidemic is largely the result of a decline in regular physical activity.
- Kids in the US today are less fit than they were a generation ago.
- Inactive kids, when compared to active kids, weigh more, have higher blood pressure, and have lower levels of good cholesterol (HDLs).
- Because of our sedentary lifestyles (TV, video games, computers, driving instead of walking, reduced PE and recess time in schools, etc.), fewer than 25% of US kids get at least 30 minutes of any type of physical activity each day.<sup>5</sup>

## Benefits of Being Active!

- Improves academic performance and classroom behavior
- Improves fitness levels and builds muscular strength
- Helps control weight, build lean muscle, and reduce fat
- Builds and maintains healthy bones and joints
- Improves energy levels
- Fosters healthy social and emotional development
- Improves mood, self-esteem, and feelings of well being
- Reduces the risk of depression and anxiety

## Walk and Bike to School!

- Encourage kids to walk and bike to school!
- Find safe routes to your school – visit the Fort Collins Safe Routes to School website for maps that show the safest walking and biking routes to your school. [www.fcgov.com/saferoutes](http://www.fcgov.com/saferoutes).
- Encourage kids to participate in International Walk a Child to School Day. Schools and communities join together every October to celebrate walking to and from school. [www.walktoschool-usa.org](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org).
- Organize a walking bus or riding bus – rather than carpooling, an adult walks or bikes to school with kids. [www.fcgov.com/saferoutes](http://www.fcgov.com/saferoutes). [www.walktoschool-usa.org](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org).

## References

- 1 Sallis JF, et al. Effects of health-related physical education on academic achievement: Project SPARK. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 1999; 70:127-134
- 2 National Association for Sports and Physical Education, Executive Summary, Shape of the Nation 2001.
- 3 Shepard RJ, et al. Required physical activity and academic grades: a controlled longitudinal study. *Children and Sport*. Limarinen and Valimaki, editors. Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1984. 58-63.
- 4 National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE). New study supports physically fit kids perform better academically. 2002.
- 5 Shepard RJ. Curricular physical activity and academic performance. *Pediatric Exercise Science*. 1997; 9:113-126.

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