

## **Become an Active Family**

Engaging in physical activity as a family can be a fun way to get everyone moving. Studies show that kids who believe they are competent and have the skills to be physically active are more likely to be active. And those who feel supported by friends and families to become active, or are surrounded by others interested in physical activity, are more likely to participate.

Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day, but it doesn't have to occur at once. It all adds up! And remember, sleep is just as important and is an essential part of living an active life. A recent study found that with each extra hour of sleep, the risk of a child being overweight or obese dropped by nine percent.

Here are a few activities and steps that you and your family can consider to get started on a path to a healthier lifestyle:

- Give children toys that encourage physical activity like balls, Frisbees, kites, and jump ropes.
- Encourage children to join a sports team or try a new physical activity.
- Limit TV time and keep the TV out of a child's bedroom.
- Facilitate a safe walk to and from school a few times a week.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk around the block after a meal.
- Make a new house rule: No sitting still during television commercials.
- Find time to spend together doing a fun activity: family park day, swim day, or bike day.
- Issue a family challenge to see who can be the first to be physically active five days a week for six weeks. Adults and children can both receive the award!
- Volunteer to help with a sports team.
- And be sure that children get the sleep they need. Most children under age five need to sleep for 11 hours or more per day. Children age five to 10 need 10 hours of sleep or more per day, and children over age 10 need at least nine hours per day.

Most importantly, make sure your family is having fun during physical activity. We all have plenty of chores, don't make exercise feel like one too.