



## **Tips to get children sweating, stepping, sleeping and sitting the right amounts for optimal health**

If you think kids can get a little physical activity and then play video games into the wee hours, yet remain healthy – you're in for a rude awakening. The 2016 ParticipACTION Report Card reveals an important relationship among sleep, physical activity and sedentary behavior. Many kids are too tired to get enough physical activity during the day, and not active enough to be tired at night – it's a vicious cycle. According to the new *24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*, a healthy 24-hour period includes a combination of high levels of physical activity, low levels of sedentary behavior and sufficient amounts of sleep.

Children need to sweat, step and sleep and sit the right amounts for optimal health – here's how:

### **Limit sedentary behavior including screen time, and take screens out of the bedroom!**

- Turn screen time into active time by encouraging outdoor play, rather than turning on the TV or computer.
- Remove TVs and computers from kids' bedrooms.
- Make sure kids know decreased screen time is not a punishment.
- Ensure children receive no more than two hours per day of recreational screen time by developing household rules.
- Limit sitting for extended periods.

### **Make physical activity a key part of your child's day**

- Ensure your kids get an accumulation of at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity involving a variety of aerobic activities.
- During this 60 minutes, try and ensure that your kids get some vigorous physical activities—and, muscle and bone strengthening activities should each be incorporated at least three days per week.

- Keep a log of the time your child spends being active at school and outside of school to make sure they are getting enough exercise.
- Encourage kids to get outside and engage in unstructured or structured play during their free time. Rain or shine, so long as your child is properly dressed, there's no reason to keep them indoors.

### **Ensure your kids have consistent routines, including bed times**

- It's important for kids to have a schedule and do things at around the same time each day. Whether it's waking up or going to sleep, eating meals, or participating in extra-curricular activities, having a structured routine will help them sleep better and in turn, be more active during the day.
- Kids should get 9 to 11 hours of sleep per night for those ages 5 to 13 years, and 8 to 10 hours per night for those aged 14 to 17 years. Establish consistent bedtime and wake-up times so they become habit.
- Don't let weekends be the exception! Encourage your kids to go to bed and wake up at the same time on the weekends to keep schedules consistent.

### **Be a good role model**

- Keep a consistent schedule. Making a point of keeping a routine will set an example for your kids!
- Promote an active lifestyle and practice what you preach! It's important for kids to see adults being active and spending time outdoors, doing things such as running, walking, gardening or lawn work.
- Display a positive attitude about being active.