

Getting Kids Physically Active

Saying 'Get up and do something!' to a child often ends up achieving the opposite. But if you take a less direct approach the results can be amazing. Lead by example and set up the conditions in which to be active, so your child can find their own way.

Being a role model

Kids will usually follow what you do more than what you say. If they see you enjoying physical activity and having fun, it will motivate them to be more active. Playing together is important too.

Providing the right conditions

With a bit of planning you can set up the conditions for getting active:

- Have a range of active ideas for when your child says 'I'm bored' – hide and seek, skipping, throwing and catching, etc.
- Buy gifts that encourage physical activity, such as balls, bats or skipping ropes.
- Encourage active play with your child's friends – bike-riding, kicking a ball.
- Provide some soft balls and equipment for active indoor games.
- Create fun and exciting opportunities for activity, e.g. after school or on weekends. It's easy to think that your child is sufficiently active at school, but they need to be encouraged to be active at home as well.
- Encourage your child to be more active outside during daylight hours, to balance being less active when it's not possible for them to be outside.
- Try and plan activities during school holidays, such as trying a new sport or going to a holiday camp.

If your child is inactive, gradually build up the amount of activity they do. Start with a moderate amount and set goals so you can chart progress over time.

Keeping it going!

Long-term motivation is not so easy to achieve. Once your child is up and active, take some sensible steps to keep it going:

- Build up the amount of activity over time and chart their progress.
- Let your child try a variety of activities so they find ones they enjoy and want to continue with.
- Keep it interesting. Encourage them to try something different if they lose interest in one activity. Variety also ensures they develop a range of skills.

- Be flexible with the weather and different seasons. Have a list of activities for rainy days.
- Support your child's choice of activity, whether it's active play or organized sport.
- Recognize their achievements.
- Offer active rewards if your child attends an activity regularly and achieves their goals, e.g. take them to the pool or the beach.
- Attend practice sessions or matches whenever possible.
- Cheer on your child!!!!

Resource site for sports in Nova Scotia

www.sportnovascotia.ca

"Keep Fit, and Have Fun" with Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod

www.bodybreak.com/index.php

Public Health Agency of Canada – Physical Fitness Guides

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/downloads.html

Programs that can help with the costs of getting children into sports:

www.sportnovascotia.ca/kidsport

KidSport™ is a national children's charitable program that helps disadvantaged kids overcome the financial barriers preventing or limiting their participation in organized sport

www.canadiantire.ca/jumpstart

Canadian Tire JumpStart is a community-based charitable program that helps kids in financial need participate in organized sport and recreation such as hockey, soccer and swimming