

## Support Healthy Movement Behaviours in Kids

Source: [ParticipACTION](#)

How we move as a family directly impacts our kids. Family life can be busy. Now, more than ever, it's tough to navigate the boundaries of work and school while still finding the opportunities to come together as a family without simply sitting in front of the TV. It's time to make physical activity a family priority.

It's important to be active as a family and make it a priority – the latest **ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth** shows a bad combination of low physical activity levels and high screen use among Canadian children and youth. That's the bad news. The good news is that the solution doesn't have to be complicated or expensive! It all starts with the family, no matter its shape or size.

Recent studies show that parents' physical activity behaviours are directly associated with that of their children's.<sup>324</sup> Parents who measure as "active" are more likely to have children who also measure as "active".

The connection is clear - each additional 20 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity by a parent is associated with an additional 5 minutes in their child's daily physical activity.

### What can families do to support healthy movement behaviours in kids?

Finding family time for physical activity is achievable, but it starts with a **commitment to make family active time a priority.**

Start with any of these simple suggestions, and see what works for your family:

- **Be a good role model** by being physically active, limiting your own sedentary behaviour and screen time, and practising healthy sleep habits.
- **Carve out time** at the beginning of each week to ensure physical activity is a priority.
- Choose **activities that are fun and enjoyable for the whole family** like swimming, badminton, hiking, cycling or walking the dog. Take turns choosing activities.
- **Encourage more outdoor time.** Spending some time outdoors each week as a family is an easy and effective way to limit screen time and naturally boost moods, and it can also decrease sedentary behaviour and improve sleep quality.
- Whether you walk, wheel, cycle, rollerblade, skateboard or jog, **there's a form of active transportation for everyone.** Not only will you save money on gas and reduce harmful emissions, but you will also be spending more quality time as a family getting active.

- **Create a family media plan that includes:**
  - Setting limits around screen viewing
  - Prioritizing screen-free family time
  - Using “device baskets” (bins for personal mobile devices) to help prioritize device-free time
  - Designate screen-free zones in the house – like removing screens from the dinner table or children’s bedrooms