

# Teacher's Guide TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN (6-4 years of age)

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS FUN!

- At home • At school • At play • Inside or outside
- On the way to and from school • With family and friends

Making physical activity a part of the day is fun and healthy. Encouraging kids to build physical activity into their daily routine helps to create a pattern that may stay with them for the rest of their lives.



## Getting Started

Too many of Canada's children are not active enough for healthy growth and development. Health professionals are concerned and think it is important to educate children about physical activity and their health and to encourage them to do more.

This *Teacher's Guide* has been developed to help children up to the age of 9 understand the importance of physical activity and how it affects their bodies. Besides this *Teacher's Guide*, there is a *Gotta Move Magazine for Children*, *Canada's Physical Activity Guide For Children* (4 pages), a *Family Guide* and a *Physical Activity Chart* (with stickers). These have all been designed to help increase physical activity in Canada's children. There is a similar package of resources for youth ages 10 to 14.

The goal is to get the children moving more. As a teacher who is in daily contact with children you can do a lot to help. You can build physical activity thinking and behaviour into your classroom and help kids to become aware of the need for physical activity. Today, most children know about *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, understand that smoking is bad for them, and take an active interest in the environment. Teachers have facilitated that learning for many years. Now it's time to do the same thing for physical activity – the health of Canada's children depends on it.

The Public Health Agency of Canada and its partners are hoping that you will want to participate in this new initiative to improve the physical activity levels of Canada's children. We need to make this an urgent priority. Over half of Canada's children and youth are not active enough for healthy growth and development. Additional evidence suggests that a lack of physical activity is dangerous to their health and can be a major contributor to weight gain and obesity. From 1981 to 1996 the prevalence of obesity tripled in both girls and boys.

**Helping kids build physical activity into their daily routine, helps to create a pattern that may very well stay with them for the rest of their lives.**

### Research shows that physical activity:

- Builds strong bones and strengthens muscles
- Maintains flexibility
- Achieves a healthy weight
- Promotes good posture and balance
- Improves fitness
- Strengthens the heart
- Improves physical self-esteem
- Increases relaxation
- Enhances healthy growth and development
- Helps children to meet new friends



This *Teacher's Guide* will give you some ideas and you will probably

have many more of your own. The purpose is to stimulate a conversation about physical activity and to encourage children to try new things that will get them more active. We have presented the information in a way that will stimulate the child's natural curiosity. Our goal is to increase their exposure to the need for physical activity in an effort to get them to be more active every day.

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The *Gotta Move Magazine* and the *Physical Activity Chart* (with stickers), which have been developed for the children themselves, include a number of activities for them to try. We encourage you to let them try some of them in the classroom. Perhaps you could also initiate a class physical activity project for a week or even a month to build momentum.

Recognizing that learning takes many forms, we are suggesting that you build physical activity into a number of lessons so that the information is repeated and reinforced over a series of classes.

### Ways to change behaviour

Research shows that the following five steps work together to change behaviour and establish new lifestyles.

- 1. Develop Awareness:** Involve children in the process. They will be far more motivated if they play a part in the decision-making process. Help them become aware of how much activity they do now and how inactive they may be. This is essential to the next step.
- 2. Set Goals:** Goal-setting helps children check their own progress. In a classroom situation it might be helpful to set a goal to which all children can contribute. Encourage small steps.
- 3. Give Feedback and Praise:** Talk about what the child did to be active everyday and praise and reward small steps.
- 4. Get Children to Agree to the Plan:** Talk often about physical activity goals with the whole class to encourage the children to do what they said they would do.
- 5. Reward and Recognize Change:** Reinforce new behaviour and celebrate successes through rewards and recognition.



### The most important ideas:

✓	<b>Physical activity is fun!</b> Every child, no matter their age, height, weight, natural abilities or skills, needs to learn that physical activity is fun and it does not have to be competitive. While participation in sports is encouraged, children need to know that sports are not the only way to stay active. Not all children enjoy competition. For these children, physical activity alternatives such as walking to school, household chores, biking and other activities are essential.
✓	<b>Everyone needs physical activity to be healthy and strong!</b>
✓	<b>Take a first step! Try something new!</b>
✓	<b>Children also need vigorous activity for healthy growth and development. That is, activity that makes their hearts beat faster, makes them breathe deeper and their bodies sweat/perspire.</b>

## CALL TO ACTION

for families, educators, physicians and community leaders

### Canada's Guidelines for Increasing Physical Activity in Children

1. **Increase** the time **currently** spent on physical activity starting with 30 minutes **more** per day.
2. **Reduce** "non-active" time spent on TV, video, computer games and surfing the Internet, starting with 30 minutes **less** per day.

#### This increase in physical activity should include:

\* Moderate activities like brisk walking, skating, biking, swimming, or playing outdoors

\*\* Vigorous activities like running and soccer

This chart shows you how it works!

### Build up physical activity throughout the day in periods of at least 5 to 10 minutes

	Daily <b>increase</b> in moderate* physical activity (Minutes)		Daily <b>increase</b> in vigorous** physical activity (Minutes)		Total Daily <b>increase</b> in physical activity (Minutes)		Daily <b>decrease</b> in non-active time (Minutes)
<b>Month 1</b>	at least 20	+	10	=	30		30
<b>Month 2</b>	at least 30	+	15	=	45		45
<b>Month 3</b>	at least 40	+	20	=	60		60
<b>Month 4</b>	at least 50	+	25	=	75		75
<b>Month 5</b>	at least 60	+	30	=	90		90

**Congratulations! Daily active time is part of a healthy lifestyle.**

**Note:** Children who are already quite active should record all their moderate and vigorous activities for a few days. They can total up the minutes, then progress gradually from there until they reach at least 90 minutes of daily physical activity.

## Here Are Some Ideas Tried by Teachers

### To introduce physical activity Jennifer started a class project

First, Jennifer asked the children to help her make a list of all of the things they were currently doing to be physically active. After the list had been completed, she asked the children to put their names beside every activity that they had tried. She transferred all the information to a big chart that she brought back to class on the following day.

The next day, Jennifer asked the children to tell her all the things they liked about the activities they had listed. Then she asked them to tell her what they didn't like.

Next she asked them how much time they spent being active and how much time they spent watching TV, playing on the computer or playing various sedentary games. She marked this on the chart as well.

**Incorporating physical activity into your classroom activities and learning programs can be fun.**

On the third day, Jennifer talked to the children about the importance of physical activity to their health and introduced the idea that the Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a Call to Action because too many kids are not active enough. The challenge is for every child to start becoming more active by increasing their physical activity by at least 30 minutes a day and reducing TV/computer/sitting time by at least 30 minutes a day. Each month everyone should set new goals and increase their activity time by a few minutes every day.

She gave every child a copy of the *Physical Activity Chart* (and stickers) like the big one she had created for the classroom wall. She asked each one of them to mark down all their activities every day for five days. After five days, she collected all of the individual charts and transferred the information to the class chart.

She had now established a physical activity benchmark for her class.

Children need **vigorous activity** – that is, activity that makes their hearts beat faster, their lungs work harder, and their bodies sweat/perspire.

Next she introduced the concept of vigorous activity by having the children hop, jump and dance around for 10 minutes to raise their heart rates and make them warm. She put on some music to encourage them. When they had finished these physical activities she asked them to describe how all that activity made them feel. She went back to the class

chart and asked all the children to tell her which of the activities listed on it would make them feel the same way. She put a red star beside every vigorous activity and told the children that they needed to increase those types of activities by at least 10 minutes a day.



Now she was ready to issue a challenge to her class. She worked with the children to establish a class goal for physical activity. Every day, each child would put a sticker on the big wall chart she had created for the activity they had done for at least 10 minutes. The class would then total their activities to see how they were progressing. Jennifer would also take at least 10 minutes every day to let the children be active in the classroom. They used their stickers (or wrote) on the wall chart to record this activity. They also recorded their recess activity on the chart.

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Every day before the children went home, she reminded them to write the activities they did that evening in their notebooks so they could put them on the chart the next day.

After a week, Jennifer's class had raised its physical activity level by 50% and they had a great time doing it! Jennifer said the kids concentrated better after the in-class 10-minute workouts.

**Branford's class was learning about their bodies. He decided to incorporate the importance of physical activity in the learning program**

When they were learning about the heart and lungs, Branford borrowed a stethoscope from his friend who was a doctor and decided to let the children hear their own heartbeats before and after vigorous physical activity. He showed them how their hearts beat faster when they do activities that make them warm. He pointed out that this kind of activity also makes their lungs work harder as they breathe more deeply.

He asked the kids to help him make a large wall chart of activities that they do to work their heart and lungs.

He put up a poster of the human body. Each lesson became an opportunity to discuss how physical activity contributed to the healthy development of muscles, organs and bones. As part of this work, he asked the kids each day what they had done to work their hearts and muscles, and he ticked those off on the poster.

Throughout his lessons on the body was the message that physical activity makes the body work better. He used the *Gotta Move Magazine* and the section entitled "Physical Activity and Your Body" as a base for the link between activity and healthy growth and development.

Each day, the children were asked to try an activity that would work the part of the body that was being discussed. The next day they would report back on how the activity felt and Branford would tick off the activity on the wall chart.

**Juanita decided to incorporate physical activity into her class routine every day**

She used this *Teacher's Guide* and the "Physical Activity is Fun" section in the *Gotta Move Magazine* to plan the activities with the children. Each day, she incorporated games and activities into the schedule for at least 10 minutes and discussed the importance of physical activity to a healthy body. Here are some of the things she did with her class:

- 👉 **Simon says**
- 👉 **Dancing**
- 👉 **Hokey pokey**
- 👉 **A walk in the park**
- 👉 **Running on the spot**
- 👉 **Dodgeball**
- 👉 **Marching and counting**
- 👉 **Hands and shoulders, knees and toes**
- 👉 **Statues**
- 👉 **On the spot hip hop**

Some days, she had one of the children lead the activity.



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As well, she asked the children to help her make a list of all the possible physical activities they could do. Then she asked them which ones they had actually tried. The challenge for the children was to try one new activity each week. When they tried something new, they put a star beside the activity on the wall chart that Juanita created. Her goal was to get them to try new things and when they did she gave them a lot of praise.

Each day one or two children explained one of the things they tried to the class and told them how the activity felt and what they enjoyed about trying something new.

### **Ling incorporated the messages of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children* into his classroom**

First Ling distributed copies of *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children* and put a copy on his classroom wall. He wanted the children to become aware of and to understand the types of physical activity they need and he wanted them to understand how various different activities could contribute to the endurance, flexibility and strength needs of the body.

Each day, he would discuss one type of physical activity, and what type of activity it was and how it helped the body. Then he would ask all the students to do that activity for at least 10 minutes as part of their homework assignment.

For example, for endurance or aerobic activities he would discuss activities such as running, jumping, brisk walking, biking, swimming, dancing, skating and hopping. He would explain that these are cardiovascular activities that strengthen the heart and lungs. When the children had tried the activity, he asked them to describe how that activity made them feel.

For flexibility activities, he would talk about things like bending, stretching and reaching and he incorporated stretch breaks into the classroom routine. He encouraged the children to suggest a stretch for the day, let the child demonstrate the stretch and then he and the class would do it. Then they would talk about how that stretch felt.

For strength activities he would point out that these were needed to maintain posture and build their muscles and bones. He talked about pushing and pulling, carrying things like groceries, push-ups, climbing, raking leaves and shoveling snow. Some of the strength activities they tried included carrying school books and groceries, playing tug of war, pushing the wheelbarrow and climbing on the school apparatus in the gym.



## Endorsers

The following organizations have endorsed *Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children and the support resources*.

- Active & Safe Routes to School
- Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability
- Arthritis Society
- Assembly of First Nations
- Association of Local Public Health Agencies
- Block Parent Program of Canada
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada
- Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine
- Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women & Sport & Physical Activity
- Canadian Association for Young Children
- Canadian Association of Principals
- Canadian Child Care Federation
- Canadian Council on Social Development
- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute
- Canadian Home and School Federation
- Canadian Institute of Child Health
- Canadian Intramural Recreation Association
- Canadian Lung Association
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Paediatric Society
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Canadian Public Health Association
- Canadian School Boards Association
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology
- Canadian Special Olympics
- Canadian Teachers' Federation
- Children's Safety Association of Canada
- Child Welfare League of Canada
- Coalition for Active Living
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Dietitians of Canada
- Family Service Canada
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Girl Guides of Canada – Guides du Canada
- Go for Green
- Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
- Lifesaving Society
- National Crime Prevention Centre
- National Institute of Nutrition
- Osteoporosis Society of Canada
- Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada
- Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada
- Safe Kids Canada
- Scouts Canada
- United Way of Canada
- Victoria Order of Nurses for Canada
- Vanier Institute of the Family
- YMCA Canada
- YWCA Canada

### Provincial Children's Hospitals:

- Alberta Children's Hospital
- Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia
- Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario
- Hospital for Sick Children
- IWK Health Centre
- Janeway Children's Hospital
- Montreal Children's Hospital
- Stollery Children's Hospital
- Winnipeg Children's Hospital

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### Active bodies need energy

Follow *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* to make wise food choices.



### For more information:

Call **1-888-334-9769** or visit the website at **www.paguide.com**

Please use this *Teacher's Guide* with additional *Guide* support resources.

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