



WHAT CAN FAMILIES DO

to support students' health from head to heart?

Encouraging physical activity and being active together as a family is greatly important in the life of a child. Participating in exercise, getting outdoors, and being physically active as a family not only promotes a healthy lifestyle but also strengthens the family bond. By being active together, parents and caregivers set a positive example for their children, emphasizing the importance of physical well-being and instilling healthy habits from an early age. Use this resource as a guide to inspire healthy habits in your family.



Lifelong Habits Start Early.

Through active engagement, parents and caregivers can encourage their children to explore the outdoors, appreciate nature, and develop a lifelong love for being physically active.



Good for Overall Health.

Regular physical activity aids in weight management, reduces and manages the risk of chronic diseases, and enhances mental well-being by reducing stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression.



Less Screens. More Fun.

Children spend up to 44 hours per week on screens and less than 10 minutes a day playing outdoors. Too much screen time is linked to poor physical fitness, obesity, and other health issues. Less screen time can lead to better social, emotional, and physical health.



The Great Outdoors.

One of the strongest predictors of children's physical activity is time spent outdoors. More outdoor time is linked with improved motor development and lower obesity rates.



Consistency is Key.

Daily physical activity, at least 30 minutes a day for adults/60 minutes a day for children, offers numerous health benefits and can improve overall health for a lifetime. It is important to prioritize healthy habits.



Better Together.

Being physically active as a family creates opportunities for quality time spent together, allowing for open communication, laughter, and the opportunity to make memories and strengthen the family bond.

For Parents and Caregivers

- ✓ **Encourage children to participate in physical activity programs** that are age appropriate and enjoyable, including sports, dance classes, swimming, hiking, or martial arts. Check out your local parks and recreation for opportunities.
- ✓ **Ensure children play** every day with activities like bike riding, yoga, going on a walk, having a dance party, taking a nature hike, and swimming to balance activities that don't involve much movement.
- ✓ **Incorporate physical activities into daily routines.** Walk or bike to school, schedule regular outdoor playtime, or involve children in household chores that require movement and physical exertion.

- ✓ **Be active with your child.** Children who see their family members enjoying sports, exercise, and physical activity are more likely to enjoy being physically active.
- ✓ **Limit your children's screen time** (computers, tablets, video games, TV, phones) to two hours a day. Encourage alternative activities such as creative play to help reduce reliance on screens.
- ✓ **Seek professional guidance.** If a child has specific physical or health needs, consult with a healthcare provider for tailored guidance and recommendations. For more physical activity ideas, reach out your child's physical education (PE) teacher.



DID YOU KNOW?

Adults need at least 30 minutes and children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Work with schools to...

- ✓ **Create a culture of wellness.** Consider school improvement plans and events that are health-conscious (i.e., serve healthy foods, have healthy and active fundraisers).
- ✓ **Understand your child's fitness.** Talk to your PE teacher about the FitnessGram Parent Report if your child is in fifth or eighth grade or high school.
- ✓ **Promote open community use.** Many schools allow outdoor spaces to be open for community use after hours. If your school does, promote that. If they don't, advocate for it!

Where to go for resources:

South Carolina offers hundreds of scenic trails and walking paths. Visit sctrails.net to find your favorite trail or path with all the necessary information at your fingertips.

There are 56 branches of the YMCA in South Carolina that include gyms, sports programs, and pools. Visit ymca.org/find-your-y to find one close to you.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation, in partnership with Kohl's Healthy at Home, healthiergeneration.org/campaigns/kohls-healthy-at-home, has tips, activities, and resources (English and Spanish) to help families make healthy choices.



Join the movement to support students' health from head to heart: dph.sc.gov/fitnessgram