



Active Parent Role Modeling

Parental attitudes towards healthy lifestyle choices, including the physical activity choices that parents make, have a huge influence on children's physical activity behaviours. Here are some tips to help parents model positive physical activity attitudes and practices for their children.

Participate actively with your children.

Create active games with your children. Innovate with equipment and surroundings and encourage them to do as well. Invite children to create stories or characters to accompany their active play.

Incorporate physical activity into daily activities. For example, grocery shopping can be a more active task if you frame it as an adventure, where you might pretend to be animals on a safari or secret agents running from spies.



Enjoy the physical activities you are participating in with your children. If you are breathing heavily, explain the benefits of this (cardiovascular health; your heart is pumping blood around your body to your muscles. Your muscles work hard when you are active and by breathing heavy the blood is bringing oxygen around your body to your muscles and taking away waste).

If there is a physical activity you avoid or do not want to participate in, explain why.

Explain and propose physical activity as a way of playing, or as a way of recreation. While making clear the benefits of being active, don't make physical activity a negative requirement. Don't frame it as something you must do, frame it as an important, but enjoyable, activity.

Be active on your own time. Children need to see you making healthy physical activity choices. Busy parents can increase their physical activity by scheduling time to be active, taking a fitness class and doing a physical activity they enjoy such as cycling or hiking.

Fill family downtime with active games that require no equipment. Simon Says, Hide and Go Seek, or Red Light Green Light can fill boring moments while waiting for an appointment or stuck inside on a rainy day.



Expose your children to a wide variety of physical activity options. Discuss preferred activities, and let children plan how to be active as a family.

Vary the types of games and equipment used. Minimize overly competitive or games that require a great deal of skill, and instead go for high-tempo walks, play soccer or catch, or go for a bike ride.

Adapted from www.healthycanadians.gc.ca, www.webmd.com/parenting/raising-fit-kids/move/raising-active-kids?page=2 and decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/

Promoting Physical Activity at Home

Promoting physical activity in the home, and while with family, is extremely important in creating a positive physical activity environment for your preschooler. Many of the games outlined in this document can easily be adapted for home play, so be sure to ask your child about the games they have played at preschool. Asking your child's ELP for a copy of some of the games is also a great way to extend at-school play into the home.

A little flexibility with equipment and space is all it takes to adapt some school-based games for home. Try taking a game outside, involving siblings or neighbours, or creating stories to extend a game. If you do not have the equipment the game calls for, perhaps you can create some together, or invent a game with the equipment you do have.

