

HAVE YOUR KIDS PLAYED TODAY?

Promoting active play for children ages 5 to 12

CHILDREN NEED MORE ACTIVE, OUTDOOR PLAY!

Active play contributes to overall physical activity in children. It's unstructured, child-led, often spontaneous and can happen alone, with friends, or with family. Active play tends to be unsupervised, or minimally supervised, as appropriate to each child's age and developmental stage.

Active play can take place indoors or outdoors; however, when children are outside they move more, sit less and play longer. What else do they love about being outdoors?



Freedom to shout and make noise



Being messy



Learning about nature, the weather and the seasons



Fresh air and sunlight



Space to move around



Places to hide or explore

ACTIVE PLAY CAN INCLUDE:



Heights and use of tools
- Climbing a tree, building a fort



Exploring
- Exploring the backyard



Rough and tumble play
- Wrestling, playing tag



Speed
- Going for a bike ride, sledding



Elements of nature
- playing in the dirt or jumping in puddles



Unstructured physical activities or sports
- Dancing to music, playing basketball in the driveway

ACTIVE PLAY IS NOT:

- Organized sports, scheduled activities or activities guided by rules, time limits or requiring equipment
- Play that is known to be harmful or dangerous such as skating on thin ice, a preschooler going to the park alone
- School-based physical education
- Playing active video games

For more information on physical activity for children, visit

york.ca/activeplay

WHY IS ACTIVE PLAY SO IMPORTANT?

Active play is important for children's health, growth and development. Regular activity and play has many benefits for children:

- 1 Increased overall physical activity and reduction of sedentary time
- 2 Stronger hearts, muscles and bones
- 3 Providing an opportunity to have fun with friends and family
- 4 Motor skill development and physical literacy – climbing, kicking, throwing, jumping
- 5 Increased independence such as learning to test physical limits and boundaries, decision making
- 6 Improving thinking skills, promoting creativity and encouraging self-esteem
- 7 Better academic performance
- 8 Improved self-esteem and social skills including conflict resolution, problem solving, sharing



HOW MUCH ACTIVITY?

It is recommended that children engage in active play for several hours a day. At a minimum, children should get 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE PLAY?

- Encourage children to play in natural outdoor spaces and in a variety of weather conditions
- Limit children's screen time
- Balance scheduled activities with free play time
- Allow children to be adventurous so they can develop skills in identifying and managing risks

