

# Healthy Children

February 2018 Parent Newsletter



## Being Active Indoors – It is Possible!

It's not uncommon for Albertans to be faced with unruly weather conditions. Whether it is ice covered sidewalks, extreme low temperatures, or even a winter storm – children are often required to stay indoors during the winter months. According to the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, children aged 5–11 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity physical activity, daily. Children naturally tend to be more active when they are outdoors. When you are up against Mother Nature, try some of these indoor activities:

- Build a fort using chairs,

couch cushions and blankets. The fort can be used later when your child is ready for some down time.

- Have a scavenger hunt. Be creative and use the entire house (upstairs and downstairs) so your child is getting lots of extra steps in.
- Have a living room dance party. Turn up your child's favourite songs and get your groove on.
- Create an indoor hopscotch. Using tape and pieces of paper create different patterns for your child to try.

It can be challenging to find ways to keep your child active indoors. With a little creativity, your indoor day can turn out to be a lot of fun.



**For information on the Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Guidelines visit**

<http://www.csep.ca/view.asp?ccid=508>

## Articles

Being Active Indoors – It is Possible!

Healthy Sleep – Is it time for a wake-up call?

### Health Advice is as easy as 8-1-1

Did you know you can get trusted health advice around the clock from a registered nurse by dialing Health Link at 8-1-1?

Health Link is Alberta's free 24/7 health information and advice line. They can help assess symptoms and help you decide if you need to seek medical attention.



## Healthy Sleep

### Is it time for a wake-up call?

Getting a good night's sleep is not always easy for kids, but it is essential for physical and mental health. Regular quality sleep contributes to our well-being by:

- Enhancing thinking, learning and memory
- Improving emotional regulation and resilience
- Improving immune system function

Lack of sleep can leave kids so tired that it's hard to concentrate, make decisions or get things done. Students struggle with verbal creativity, problem solving and generally score lower on IQ tests with reduced sleep; they might also feel sad, anxious, stressed or grumpy.

Everyone is different and some people need more sleep than others. Canadian sleep recommendations are that 5–13-year-olds need 9–11 hours of sleep per night and 14–17-year-olds need 8–10 hours of sleep per night. You know your kids are not getting enough sleep when they don't feel tired or drowsy during the day.



Physical activity and sleep are closely related. Small changes to your child's daily physical activity routine can make a big impact on sleep quality. Regular physical activity helps kids fall asleep faster, spend more time in deep sleep and awaken less often during the night.

Here are a few tips to support your child in getting quality sleep:

- Maintain a regular sleep-and-wake schedule
- Use the bedroom only for sleeping
- Keep the bedroom dark and free of distractions (e.g. TV or devices)
- Avoid large meals and stimulants before bed (e.g.

caffeine, screen time)

- Take time to relax before bed (e.g. read, take a bath, listen to relaxing music)
- Meditation, guided imagery, deep breathing exercises and progressive muscle relaxation (alternately tensing and releasing muscles) can help to counter anxiety and racing thoughts for those who have trouble falling asleep.

Good sleep sets the stage for a good day at school. A refreshed brain helps improve our mood, decision-making and social interactions – all 'must haves' for a healthy student.