



CENTRE COUNTY PREVENTION COALITION
A SAMHSA Funded Drug-Free Community Coalition
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January 6, 2010 – Children Need Fun Physical Activities

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Our children need physical activity. For a child to become physically able to exercise in adulthood, he or she must do different types of physical activity in childhood. The muscles need to be “activated” for them to be able to work later. The experts tell us that we all need sixty minutes of vigorous physical activity everyday. Why not make those sixty minutes fun for yourself and your children?

We should provide a smorgasbord of activities for our kids. There are plenty of ways to do this. Play a game of tag with your young kids. Children like to run very fast for very short periods, then rest and go again. Put some dance music in the boom box and just dance. This goes for the boys also. Dancing teaches your children how to move their feet. Being able to move your feet is essential for every future sport that your child might want to try. Teach your kids the dances that you did as a kid or the dances that you did at your wedding.

Make it a daily ritual to get outside. Plan to go sled riding, or hiking in the snow; or build a snowman or a fort. Sign your child up for ski lessons or ice skating lessons. A brisk walk also qualifies for activity. If the weather is warmer, get the bike out. Riding a bike is another great activity; it also develops into a mode of transportation, as your children get older.

Now, there will be days when you cannot get outside. In the State College Area School District, we try to get our students outside everyday, but when the temperature gets below the real feel temp of 20 degrees, then we try to get our activities done inside. There are lots of DVD’s that get the kids moving. Get the jump ropes and hula-hoops out as well as the game of Twister. Oh and bye-the-way, sitting for a computer game or watching TV is not considered physical activity.

We are fortunate to live in an area with loads of resources. Centre County YMCA has fabulous facilities where kids can work off some steam. Our local Parks and Recreation programs are probably the best in the country. We have many organized programs such as Phoenix Tennis, Little League Baseball, Centre Soccer, football programs, dance studios, horse back riding venues, and golf. We have organized running programs, swim clubs, Martial Arts, bowling, skiing, hunting, fishing, and miles of walking trails. (My apologies if I missed your favorite activity.) My point is simple - we have lots of things to do here in Happy Valley. We need to take advantage of what we have. It will make us all healthier and maybe even happier.

Here’s to an active New Year.

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