Be an Active Family

The best way to raise an active child is to be an active family. Be a physically active role model!
Physical activity can make a big difference

Children need more physical activity than adults!

Active play…

Helps children stay at a healthy weight.

Lowers risks for diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure.

Grows stronger bones, muscles, and joints.

Lowers stress, depression, and anxiety.

Raises self-esteem and confidence.

Offers fun alternatives to risky behavior like drug and alcohol use.

Get your child moving

Limit TV and screen time to less than 2 hours a day.

Make sure your child plays actively inside or outside for at least 1 hour a day.

Give your child household chores like vacuuming, dusting, raking, sweeping, shoveling snow, and walking the dog.

Find lessons, teams, or clubs for sports and activities your kids like.

Find resources near you at: health.ri.gov/movemore
Play with your child

Play active games with your child, like tennis, hide-and-seek, Simon Says, or tag. Challenge “bored” kids to invent a game.

Turn on music and dance with your child – or fly a kite or ride bikes together.

Find 30 minutes twice a week for the whole family to do a physical activity together. Visit the rec center, invent a game together, and add physical activities to parties, family outings, and vacations.

Team up with other parents to take turns walking kids to the bus stop or school.

Adults should be active too

Do moderate or vigorous activities – or some of each – 3 or 4 times a week for your health!

For the greatest health benefits, do a mix of moderate and vigorous activity and bone- and muscle-strengthening activity.

**Moderate**

*2½ hours (150 minutes) each week*

Moderate activity feels somewhat hard. You can carry on a conversation, but you can’t sing.

It includes things like ballroom dancing, fast walking, and catch-and-throw sports, like softball.

**Vigorous**

*1¼ hours (75 minutes) each week*

Vigorous activity feels very hard. Your heart beats fast and you can’t carry on a conversation.

It includes things like running, soccer, and swimming laps.

Physical activity lowers your risk for heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, stroke, obesity, and being overweight.
Physical activity helps you:

- Lower your risk for diseases.
- Improve your endurance, balance, and flexibility.
- Have more energy and muscle strength.
- Control your weight and blood pressure.
- Reduce symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety.
- Sleep better.

Tips to get you started – and keep you going

Start with light or moderate activities for short time periods.

Spread physical activity through the week.

Add more vigorous activities once you have been moderately active for a while.

Do physical activity with someone else.

Add more physical activity to your day:

- Take a walk for 10 or 15 minutes on your lunch break.
- Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
- Park farther from the store and walk through the parking lot.
Sample activities

For the best health benefits, children and teens should do a mix of moderate and vigorous activity plus muscle- and bone-strengthening activity for at least 1 hour each day.

**Moderate**
- Hiking
- Biking
- Walking
- Yard work
- Vacuuming and mopping

**For strong muscles**
- Tug-of-war
- Tree climbing
- Sit-ups, push-ups, or pull-ups

**Vigorous**
- Tag
- Jumping rope
- Soccer
- Dancing

**For strong bones**
- Tennis
- Gymnastics
- Volleyball
- Basketball
Give gifts that use physical activity, like jump ropes, hula hoops, and basketballs.

Resources

American Heart Association
www.heart.org

MyPlate – United States Department of Agriculture
www.choosemyplate.gov

Rhode Island Department of Health
www.health.ri.gov/movemore

VERB™ Campaign – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign

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