PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN

Physical Activity Guidelines

TIPS FOR INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:
- Encourage your child to participate in moderate-intensity activities that increase their heart rates, such as playing tag, jumping rope, dancing, swimming, running, and riding bicycles.
- Consider having your child participate in a community sports program – try t-ball, soccer, tag football, and basketball. Participating on sports teams not only increases activity levels, but also gives your child the chance to make new friends.
- Involve your child in outdoor activities, such as raking the leaves, gardening, riding bikes, and going on nature hikes.
- Be a role model! Add activity to your daily routine whenever possible and encourage your child to be active with you – take the stairs, walk the dog, and dance around the house.
- Look for activities your child enjoys – the key to staying active for a lifetime is to have fun while participating in the activity!

REFERENCES:  

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS:
- Discourage screen time for children under age 2 – instead do interactive activities with your child that promote brain development such as reading books, playing games, and singing songs.
- Limit screen time to 1-2 hours of quality programming a day for children over age of 2.

TIPS FOR LIMITING SCREEN TIME
- Turn off the TV, computer, and cell phone during meals and before bedtime.
- Do not allow TV watching while your child is doing his/her homework.
- Take the television and computer out your child’s bedroom.
- Monitor the shows your children are watching. Most shows should be educational, and nonviolent.
- Prioritize and decide which programs to watch ahead of time, turn off the TV when the program is over.
- Keep track of how much time your child spends in front of a screen and aim to spend the same amount of time, or more, being active.
- Find other activities to do instead of watching TV – take the dog for a walk, play outside, color, read a book together, or do a puzzle.
- Do not leave the TV on for background noise when nobody is watching it.
- Be a good role model for your kids. Limit your own screen time to 2 hours a day and turn off your cell phones during meals.

Lack of physical activity and too much screen time can lead to weight gain and contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and other chronic diseases in adulthood.

REFERENCES:  
American Academy of Pediatrics – Children, Adolescents, and Television  
http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/107/2/423.full.pdf  
U.S. National Library of Medicine – Screen Time and Children  