**Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools**

**Physical Activity**

**Walk or Wheel**

Walking or cycling to school is a great way for your child to get the 60 minutes of daily physical activity that’s needed for good mental and physical health. It also builds responsibility and independence, and helps them feel more connected to the community. More walkers means less traffic around our school, which helps keep students safe and improve outdoor air quality. Even one day a week of walking or cycling to school can make a big difference!

To find out more about how to support active and safe routes to school through School Travel Planning, visit <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/>.

**Outdoor Play**

Active play does more than help kids to achieve the 60 minutes of physical activity they need every day, it supports their development in many ways – especially when the play is outdoors, self-directed and fun. This allows kids to test boundaries and problem-solve, develop social skills and resolve conflict, and learn to control their emotions and behaviour.

Active play outdoors in the fresh air and nature also helps to improve mood and lower stress. Support your child to play outside with friends in the neighbourhood and at your local park as much as possible.

**October is International Walk to School Month**

Get in on the fun and be part of this worldwide event!

* Encourage your child to walk or cycle to and from school if you live close by and team up with others to make the trip more fun.
* If you usually drive your child to school, try getting them to walk part of the way.
* If your child takes the bus, walking to and from the bus stop is a great way to add physical activity minutes into the day.

Walking or cycling allows kids to enjoy the outdoors and get their recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Learn more from <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/international-walk-to-school-month/>.

**Turn Off the Screens**

Recreational screen time (TV, online or video gaming) should be limited to no more than 2 hours per day. Turning off the screens encourages kids to get up and move, which can help keep them healthy physically and mentally.

Be active as a family; kids learn from watching you! Be a role model by building physical activity into your daily routine.

For tips to help you get active as a family, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a publichealth nurse.

**Take it Outside**

Being active is an important way to take care of ourselves and our families during this challenging time.

Kids thrive on being physically active every day-their bodies and brains depend on it. In addition to growing a healthy body, physical activity boosts memory, learning, creativity and self-esteem.

Outdoor play is a natural way for kids to learn and be physically active so look for opportunities to take play and learning outside. Playing outside and in nature supports activity for longer periods of time, and can lower feelings of stress and anxiety. We can still do this while physical distancing from others as required.

Check out:

* Fun & safe games to play with your kids while out walking <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/blog/fun-and-safe-games-to-play-with-your-kids-while-walking>
* “Learning Inside Out” At home educational resources for parents and teachers

<http://lsf-lst.ca/en/projects/youth-taking-action/learning-inside-out>

* How to safely enjoy outdoor public spaces <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19#41e5779b-a1e6-4957-91f8-26260c03b585>

Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools

Physical Activity

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**Always On?**

Ever consider how all those minutes spent sitting using electronic devices, watching TV, or even playing video games add up every day?

Encouraging your teen to replace some of their screen time with physical activity will help them be healthier, reduce their stress, and likely help them feel happier and more confident. Suggest they:

* Organize a pick-up game of baseball, ball hockey or basketball
* Check out the local trails with friends
* Try something new like disc golf. Disc golf locations can usually be found on local municipal websites.

**Try to limit screen time to less than two hours each day. Remember, you are their role model.**

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**Active Transportation**

**Choose to walk, bike, roller blade or skateboard as much as possible to places like school, work, shopping and visiting friends and encourage your teens to do the same.**

* Organize a walking or cycling group.
* Talk with your school principal or employer about installing secure bike racks in a visible location.
* If you’re concerned about safety, speak with your mayor or municipal councilor about what is needed to be able to walk and bike in your community.

Interested in getting more teens to actively travel to school, check out <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/school-travel-planning-toolkit/>

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**Lead the Way!**

Habits can last a lifetime and have a real impact over time. Find fun and easy ways to fit physical activity into your day; you don’t have to run a marathon. Do it for yourself and positively influence your teens.

**Work toward at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day!**

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