



DANNON INSTITUTE®

Nutrition for Health



CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

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The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends that children need at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day. Caretakers of children should try to incorporate physical activity throughout children's daily schedules. Schools play a critical role in physical activity promotion, but should not be expected to provide all of a child's daily activity.

Because children spend approximately half of their waking hours at school, schools might consider providing youth with at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. This is half of the daily physical activity goal for a child.

Physical education and recess can provide children with some activity, but physical activity can also be encouraged by principals and teachers throughout the day. Schools can consider adding activity breaks at lunch, or letting kids get up and stretch or do jumping jacks during class time. Students can take a walk outside during science classes for some hands-on learning. The goal is to reduce inactive time and keep kids moving.

Many administrators worry that time spent in activity will reduce learning time and undermine academic performance. In fact, studies suggest that periods of activity during the day may improve concentration and promote learning. By providing youth with opportunities to be active, schools can help to establish a positive lifestyle habit that can be maintained into adulthood.

Dr. Gregory Welk's research focuses on various aspects of physical activity and especially physical activity in youth. In addition to his position at Iowa State University, Dr. Welk also serves as the Scientific Director of the FITNESSGRAM youth fitness program. Developed by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research, FITNESSGRAM is a fitness assessment and promotion program used in physical education programs across the United States.

Children's Physical Activity Guidelines

- Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of age appropriate physical activity on all, or most days of the week.
- Children should participate in several bouts of physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more each day.
- Children should participate each day in a variety of age-appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness and performance benefits.
- Extended periods (periods of two hours or more) of inactivity are discouraged for children, especially during the daytime hours.



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