Get Up & Move!

Parent Newsletter Series 1: January

Setting Physical Fitness Goals!

This month your children learned about setting physical fitness goals for the New Year. Setting goals is an important life skill learned in 4-H. Goals can also be used when trying to improve physical fitness. There are three parts to creating measurable goals: action, result, and timetable. An example of action is “increase minutes of physical activity.” The result of the action is “by five minutes per day each month,” and the timetable is “for the next three months.” You and your children will learn more about goals in this month’s family activity when you create a poster to make healthy food substitutions this year.

Take time this month to sit down with your children and brainstorm ways for increasing physical activity in the New Year. Below is a chart, with an example, for you and your children to fill in measurable fitness goals. There is space for you to write down the action, result, and timetable for each goal. Keep these goals in mind this month and chart your progress toward achieving them!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Fitness Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To log more physical activity</td>
<td>Increase the amount</td>
<td>By 1,000 steps each month</td>
<td>For the next six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of walking</td>
<td></td>
<td>months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are trying to get your children to be more physically active this year, you might want to consider how you motivate them. As your children get older, they may have increasing demands from school, feel they are not good at sports, or lack active role models. These things can discourage children from being physically active. Even if your children do want to be active, they may not have a safe environment in which to do so. You can help motivate your children to be active by taking them to a playground or by allowing your children to be active with their friends.
In order to motivate your children,

- Make sure you offer age appropriate activities. Children may seem bored or frustrated if they are not doing the appropriate activity or for an appropriate length of time.
- Provide your children with the opportunity to be active by taking them to playgrounds or parks where they can get some exercise.
- Allow your children to be active with their friends. Children will enjoy combining activity and social time. Ask your children if they would like to be enrolled in an organized physical activity with their friends.
- Stress the idea that activity is not about competition, but that it is about being healthy and having fun!
- Give your children praise for being active. When children receive praise for an action, they are likely to want to repeat it. If your children develop good feelings about being active, they are likely to want to try other activities as well!

It is also important to understand your children’s fitness personalities. Some children lack athletic ability or the interest in being active. These children will require more help and support from either a parent or older role model to become active. Others have athletic ability, but do not prefer a competitive environment. These children enjoy casually playing sports, such as shooting baskets or playing catch. Finally, some children have athletic ability and are committed to a sport or activity. These children are likely to want to be on a competitive team.

No matter what kind of attitude your children have towards being active, your positive attitude and modeling of physical activity can have quite an influence on their willingness to be more active this year!

(Source: [http://www.kidshealth.com](http://www.kidshealth.com); [www.nhlbi.gov](http://www.nhlbi.gov))