Get Up & Move!
Parent Newsletter Series 1: April

Turning off the TV
TV-Turnoff Week, which originated in the United States in 1995, is supported by more than 70 national organizations. It occurs during the last full week in April each year. The amount of TV that children in the U.S. watch has been steadily increasing. American children watch almost three hours of TV per day, on average, which results in almost two full months of TV per year! On average, children in the U.S. will spend more time watching TV (1023 hours) than they spend in school (900 hours). This increase in the amount of time spent watching TV has had a negative impact on the health of children in the U.S.

Watching TV is a sedentary activity, meaning that children are not getting physical activity. The lack of physical activity is one factor contributing to the increased number of overweight children in the U.S. Low physical activity can lead to an increased risk of developing type II diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure.

There are many alternative activities that children can participate in besides watching TV. Simply turning off the TV and offering your children choices of other activities is the first step in decreasing the amount of TV viewing. Other strategies for decreasing TV viewing and increasing physical activity include:

- keeping TVs out of children’s bedrooms
- hiding the remote
- turning off the TV during dinner
- taking a walk after school or dinner
- riding bikes
- playing a sport or learning a new sport
- working on crafts or other hobbies
- dancing to music
- jumping rope
- cooking healthy meals as a family

There are many more activities than the ones listed above that you and your children can do together! Just because TV-Turnoff Week is only recognized in April does not mean that you and your children cannot incorporate TV-Turnoff tips all year round. There are many more active alternatives to watching TV that can be both physically and mentally fulfilling. Ask your children what activities interest them and remember to be creative!

(Source: www.screentime.org; www.kidshealth.org)