

Children need more physical activity

Between the ages of six and 11, children experience many physical changes. Children's arm and leg coordination increases, their ability to use their fingers and hands for crafts and writing improves, and their interest in games with rules and organized sports grows.

Unfortunately, many of today's youth do not get enough exercise. Did you know that:

- 9 out of 10 parents believe their children are physically fit, but in reality only 1 in 3 children are?
- 63% of children are physically inactive by the time they are in high school?
- 20% of the average child's waking hours are spent watching television?
- Children who are physically active experience fewer chronic health problems than sedentary children?
- Physically active children have higher self-confidence and better self-image?

Parents, teachers, and fitness professionals all have a role to play in promoting physical fitness among children. However, the parents' role is the most important. Children model their parents' behavior, so parents must be physically active too. So, what can parents do to promote physical activity among their children?

- Plan family exercise activities so that parents and children can exercise together and have fun! For example: take walks (in the mall, at the zoo, with the family pet), go on bike rides and nature hikes, run races, jump rope, play games, go swimming in the summer and sledding in the winter, create an obstacle course.
- Make sure family activities are fun, not overly competitive. Give children lots of praise and reinforcement.
- Let children help plan family activities. They will feel more invested in the activities and will be likely enjoy it more.

When physical activity is fun, children are more likely to become active and stay active.

- Because children's bones and muscles are still developing during the elementary school years, be sure that fitness activities include time for stretching.
- Always remember to take safety precautions such as wearing a helmet when biking and putting on sunscreen when swimming in the summer sun.
- If television viewing is a concern, try this simple equation, where children earn their television time: 1 hour of reading/studying = 1/2 hour TV, or 1 hour of active play = 1/2 hour TV.

Have fun, and get fit as a family!

Sources: Amy Halliburton, Graduate Research Assistant and Sara Gable, Ph.D., University of Missouri-Columbia

Two child safety seat events set for Columbia County this month

Columbia County Safe Kids will be holding two child safety seat check-up events: one on Thursday, September 8, in St. Helens from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the St. Helens Fire Station, 105 S. 12th Street, St. Helens; and another one on Saturday, September 24, from 10 a.m. to Noon at the Columbia County Rider Transit Center, 280 E. Columbia River Hwy. in Clatskanie. The clinics are free.

The clinics provide an opportunity to have a child safety seat checked by a certified technician, who can correct misuse, help with installation and teach you how to correctly install the seat. Technicians

can also check for seat recalls. There is no cost to have a technician check your child safety seats. Please plan to spend 30-60 minutes at the event.

Through a grant funded by ACTS Oregon, Columbia County Safe Kids can provide low-cost child safety seats to families in need. Families who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) should contact their worker about payment for a seat. For more information about the clinic or the Columbia County child safety seat program, please contact Natalie at 503-410-3169.

Clatskanie Health Fair on Sept. 24

Clatskanie Health & Safety Fair will be held on September 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Clatskanie PUD, 495 E.

Columbia River Hwy. Clatskanie.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

This is National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has joined with more than 6,000 federal, tribal, state and local coalition members from across the country to encourage Americans to prepare their homes, businesses, schools and communities for disasters of all kinds. According to FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy, this year marks the eighth annual observance of National Preparedness Month, and the ten year


anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"This year's National Preparedness Month theme is: A Time to Remember. A Time to Prepare," said Murphy. "We focus on taking simple, but potentially life-saving steps to enhance preparedness, including: Get an Emergency Supply Kit; Make a Family Emergency Plan; Be Informed about the different types of emergencies; and Get Involved in your community's preparedness efforts."

"Preparing for disasters means that we must plan for the Whole Community, including people of different ages and those with various access and functional needs," continued Murphy. "It means planning for

children – and not just thinking of them as small adults. It means planning for the elderly, and planning for families without access to personal transportation. Whole Community preparedness means more than just planning for what's easy – we have to plan for what's real."

National Preparedness Month is sponsored by the Ready Campaign in partnership with Citizen Corps and the Advertising Council. For more information on National Preparedness Month activities, and how to become a coalition member, visit Ready.gov, www.fema.gov, or CitizenCorps.gov.



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