

# Healthy Measures for Children (Ages 3 – 6 Years)

## Healthy Eating

There are guidelines for all children about healthy eating. But since every child is unique the specific amounts and types of food they eat will vary from other children, and also from day to day.



**Consider these measures for your child's eating habits.**

My child:

- Enjoys a variety of foods from *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* every day
  - ▶ Eats 5 – 12 servings of Grain Products per day. One serving is about the size of your child's two fists.
  - ▶ Eats 5 – 10 servings of Vegetables and Fruit per day. One serving is about the amount that your child can hold in both hands.
  - ▶ Eats 2 – 3 servings of Milk Products per day. One serving is about the size of your child's two fingers or one cup for milk.
  - ▶ Eats 2 – 3 servings of Meat and Alternatives per day. One serving is about the size of the palm of your child's hand.
- Eats when they are hungry. For most children this means three meals and two snacks per day
- Stops eating when they are satisfied
- Participates in planning and preparing meals
- Eats meals together with the family, as often as possible
- Begins each day with a healthy breakfast, which includes foods from at least three of the four food groups
- Drinks water and milk more often
- Drinks no more than 6 ounces (3/4 cup) of fruit juice every day
- Limits drinks with caffeine and/ or added sugars such as pop
- Eats food low in nutrients sometimes. I set limits on how often and how much.



## Physical Activity

Preschoolers are natural movers. Because of this you may think your child is getting all the physical activity he or she needs. But cars, television and computers keep children inactive for more time than you think.

**How much time should your child be active to stay healthy? Here's a checklist to measure your child's level of daily physical activity.**

My child:

- Participates daily in games and activities that involve direction, rules or skill building (structured play). For example, tag games, racquets, balls and hoops.



My child:

- Gets at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity daily. Young children do not do the same task for long periods of time, so this 60 minutes may be achieved by adding up your child's short periods of activity throughout the day.
  - Participates daily in play where they are left with the use of their own imagination and plenty of space to use large muscle movements (unstructured play). For example, use of playground equipment, forts and monkey bars, moving to music and using soft balls
  - Also gets at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day
  - Is not inactive for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping
  - Plays outdoors on a regular basis
- Has fun while being active
  - Includes *endurance* activities (running, jumping, swimming), *flexibility* activities (bending, stretching, reaching and climbing) and *strength* activities (carrying things, pushing, climbing) into every day
  - Develops *movement* skills such as running, jumping, skipping, balancing, hopping, leaping, kicking

## Help Develop Your Child's Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the confidence and satisfaction we have in ourselves. Self-esteem begins to develop from birth as parents meet the needs of their infant. It continues to be shaped by relationships with family members, friends and other important people in our lives.

You can help build your child's self-esteem by loving your child, responding to their needs and enjoying the person that they are. Focus on what you can to maintain and enhance what is developing naturally in your child.

**Below are some tips for you to help develop your child's self-esteem.**

I'm able to:

- Support my child's skills and interests
- Tell my child I have confidence in her and her abilities
- Encourage my child to try new things
- Acknowledge my child's successes and tell him I'm proud of him
- Show, teach and acknowledge feelings, such as caring, honesty and sadness
- Spend time with my child and read with her every day
- Value my child's uniqueness and accept that he is different from me
- Set a good example by having a positive attitude
- Express love openly by hugging my child, saying, "I love you" or "I like what you did"
- Promote that healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes

