

September 22, 2005

Children's Health Campaign messages launched

Toronto Public Health has launched an early child development public education campaign with positive parenting messages for raising children who are healthy, active and safe from injury.

A series of 15 second television ads is airing on City TV for one month with messages about healthy weights for children and positive discipline strategies. "Join the game" and "Join the conversation" promote physical activity and eating with children as healthy habits; "Spanking hurts more than you think" emphasizes that hitting is not an okay way to solve problems. These ads can be viewed at www.toronto.ca/health.

The TV spots are supported with print advertising on TTC bus shelters and in subway cars. The print ads for healthy weights carry the message "Your kids are listening" and highlight the importance of parent behaviour in shaping children's attitudes towards healthy eating, physical activity and self esteem. The healthy weights campaign was developed with Peel Region Health Department and is running through September.

In October, the "Spanking hurts more than you think" campaign promotes positive parenting skills and features a series of messages using everyday images juxtaposed on flash cards to illustrate the negative impacts of hitting children – a blooming flower and a pair of scissors, a balloon and pin, and a bright sun and a cloud.

In November the message shifts to injury prevention. The "How hot is your tap water?" campaign provides information that most hot tap water scalds can be prevented with simple, one-time only changes to residential hot water supply systems. Hot tap water is a more common cause of serious burns to children than fire.

"Children depend on their parents and caregivers for love and protection. They also learn healthy habits that can last a lifetime," says Jan Fordham, Healthy Families and Communities manager at Toronto Public Health. "This health promotion campaign is intended to supplement our advocacy for improved public policies to help parents achieve the best possible outcomes for their children."

The advertising expenditure for the campaign is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services. For more information, call Toronto Health Connection, 416-338-7600 or visit our web site at www.toronto.ca/health.

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