

MENTAL HEALTH MEMO: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

One of the most common New Year's resolutions is to become more physically active. Unfortunately, very few of us are able to maintain this good intention. Let's work towards making 2020 the year we keep ourselves and our kids physically fit!

According to the 2018-2019 RRDSB School Climate Survey, the majority of students from Grade 4-12 (70%) were NOT getting the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise per day. Physical activity is any activity that increases your heart rate and makes you get out of breath at times.

Here are some ideas to help increase the amount of time your child/teen spends engaging in physical activity:

- Physical activity should be fun! Encourage your child/youth to try various activities to discover the ones they like and will stick with.
- Think beyond the arena. Organized sports are not for everyone so explore other options such as swimming, biking, parks...
- Give them active toys and games like bikes, skateboards, jump ropes, balls and sports equipment.
- Join in the game and lead by example. Make physical activity a priority in your life as well.
- Limit screen time (recommended daily limit is 2 hours for children and teens aged 5-17).
- Invite their friends over. Kids are more likely to be active when engaged in activities with their friends.
- Establish an exercise routine. Exercise should be included as part of the regularly scheduled daily activities.

Being physically active for at least 60 minutes daily can help children and youth: improve their health and fitness; do better in school and learn new skills; grow stronger; have fun playing with friends; maintain healthy body weight; improve their self-confidence and feel happier.

For more information, please contact the RRDSB Mental Health Leader: tracey.idle@rrdsb.com