

Health experts recommend you set your toddlers free

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In response to an urgent call from public health, health care, child care, and fitness practitioners, the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP), with assistance from multiple partners, has developed two important sets of guidelines directed at improving the health and activity levels of infants and toddlers. The Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years (aged 0-4 years) and the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years (aged 0-4 years) are presented in the April 2012 issue of the journal *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism* (APNM).

"The development and publication of the first evidence-informed guidelines for the early years represents an important public health advancement in Canada," says Mark Tremblay, Director of Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research (HALO) at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Research Institute, Chair of the CSEP Guidelines Steering Committee and lead author of the published papers. "The guidelines are based on the best available evidence, input from researchers, clinicians and care-providers and harmonized with international initiatives."

"As leaders in [physical activity](#), we aim to increase the Canadian public's awareness, adoption and implementation of the new Guidelines for the Early Years," says Earl Noble, President of CSEP. "We've worked with numerous partners, including the HALO Research Group, to develop these Guidelines. CSEP is proud to provide this scientific-based guidance to assist promoting physical activity and discouraging sedentary

behaviours in young Canadians."

Caregivers are advised to minimize the time infants, toddlers and preschoolers spend during [waking hours](#) sitting or being restrained (e.g., stroller, high chair). For those under 2 years, [screen time](#) (e.g., TV, computer, electronic games) is to be avoided. For children 2-4 years, screen time should be limited to less than one hour per day, and less is better. The guidelines for physical activity recommend that infants should be active several times daily through interactive floorbased play. Toddlers and preschoolers should accumulate at least 180 minutes of physical activity throughout the day.

More activity, they advise, provides greater benefits.

"Research on Canadian school-aged children has shown that obesity is rampant, physical fitness is declining, and activity levels are at an all time low. The time for early intervention has arrived," says Terry Graham, Editor, APNM. "These new Guidelines are an essential foundation for the health and ongoing development of our children."

The [Guidelines](#) for the Early Years (aged 0-4 years) are presented in French and English in the journal APNM at <http://www.nrcresearchpress.com/apnm>

More information: Full references:

Tremblay et al. 2012. Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years (aged 0-4 years). Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism. 37(2). [DOI: 10.1139/h2012-018](#)

Tremblay et al. 2012. Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for the Early Years (aged 0-4 years). Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism. 37(2). [DOI: 10.1139/h2012-019](#)

The new Guidelines for the early years accompany the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and the Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth published in APNM in 2011.

Also read:

New Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines, Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism, 2011, 36(1):36-46, [DOI: 10.1139/h11-009](https://doi.org/10.1139/h11-009)

Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Youth, Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism, 2011, 36(1): 59-64, [DOI: 10.1139/h11-012](https://doi.org/10.1139/h11-012)

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