



IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES!

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario/YMCA Healthy Active Schools
www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca www.heartandstroke.com



Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Setting Boundaries and Expectations

A key component to eating healthy and getting physical activity involves setting boundaries and expectations. Kids (and adults) need to know what's healthy, what's not—and what's okay to do occasionally. Consider trying these ideas:

- Be clear about boundaries. Set time limits for TV viewing, computer use, and other electronic devices. It's ideal to do something else after every 30 minutes to an hour.
- Buy more vegetables, fruits, low-fat cheeses, and crackers for snacks. Avoid buying junk food.
- Identify your three favourite family physical activities. Do them on a regular basis. Choosing what's good for you is as important as a boundary as knowing what's not good for you.
- Eat three meals a day. Try to eat meals together as a family as often as you can.
- Serve healthy snacks, such as low-fat popcorn and low-fat granola bars.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Prepare a meal from another country or culture. (Your local library will have recipe books.)
- Clean out a food cupboard, refrigerator, or freezer. Toss expired and unhealthy foods.
- Set out a fruit bowl on your table with apples, oranges, and bananas.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Race to the bus stop or car together. Skip. Hop. Make up a game as you wait for the bus.
- Go bowling.
- Make TV watching more active. Get up during every commercial and do jumping jacks or dance. Do leg lifts or curl ups while you watch a show.



QUICK TIP

Get to know your children's friends. Find out what they do to eat healthy and stay active.

Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. What gets in the way of us eating healthy? What about getting physical activity?
2. How can we ensure that we eat five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits every day?
3. Who is a positive role model for healthy eating and exercise?

Build Assets Together

The asset categories of support and empowerment are even more effective when kids also have assets that emphasize boundaries and expectations. Family members need to know what's in bounds for healthy choices (eating foods from the four groups and getting physical activity every day) and what's out of bounds (watching too much TV and eating a lot of junk food).

Six Developmental Assets are key boundaries and expectations assets. These include:

- #11 Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- #12 School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
- #13 Neighbourhood boundaries—Neighbours take responsibility for monitoring the child's behaviour.
- #14 Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behaviour.
- #15 Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behaviour.
- #16 High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do his or her best at school and in other activities.

Set clear boundaries and expectations to eat healthy and to stay active by building these six key assets.

GOOD NEWS

63% of kids say that they have asset #15: positive peer influence.

CHALLENGING NEWS

27% of kids say they have asset #14: adult role models.



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.