



Essex
Wellbeing
Service

Child Healthy Lifestyles

Physical Activity
& Sedentary Behaviour



Initiative funded by  Essex County Council

Child Healthy Lifestyles

Session Objectives

In this session we will be covering the following:

1. The physical activity guidelines for children
2. The importance physical activity
3. Recognise and work on the barriers to leading a more active lifestyle
4. Sedentary behaviour and screen time
5. Energy Balance
6. The importance of sleep
7. Home tasks



Get going every day

The BHF have set physical activity guidelines for children and young people (5-18). The current guidelines (2011) are as follows:

- 1 All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.
- 2 Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen the muscles and bones, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
- 3 All children and young people should minimise the amount of time being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods



Activity 1

What are the benefits to our health if we increased our physical activity?

Use the table below to write down the health benefits of physical activity

What are the potential benefits for being physically active?
•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•

There are many positive benefits to being physically active. Some benefits are listed below:

- Physical activity increases lean body mass.
- Increases energy expenditure.
- Leads to favourable changes in blood cholesterol levels.
- Improves psychological wellbeing
- Strengthening bones and joints.
- Reduces future risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

What do we mean by 'physical activity'?

All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day

- **Moderate intensity** – you'll get warmer, breathe harder and your heart rate will increase. You should still be able to carry on a conversation.
- **Vigorous intensity** – you'll get warmer and breathe much harder and your heart will beat rapidly. You'll find it difficult to carry on a conversation.
- **Vigorous intensity activities**, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
- **Muscle strengthening activities** – those which require you to lift your own bodyweight or work against a resistance.
- **Bone strengthening activities** – produce an impact or tension force on the bones that promote bone growth and strength.



For children and young people who are currently inactive, doing some physical activity, even if it is less than the guidelines, will provide some health benefits. By gradually increasing the frequency, duration and intensity of activities they can work towards the recommended guidelines.

Barriers to being more active

There are many things that stop us from making desired behaviours. This can be referred to as a 'barrier'. What are your families' barriers for being active and taking part in physical activity?



Activity 2

Use the table below to highlight your barriers and come up with possible solutions to overcome these barriers.

Exercise Barriers	Solutions
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•



Family time

Kids love nothing more than getting their parents involved in their activities so try to find time to do things together after school or at the weekends. Maybe even make Saturday or Sunday an activity day where you take the kids to the park, pool or go for a walk.



Fat vs muscle

By taking part in regular physical activity and strength exercises it will help to alter individuals body shape. Muscle is denser than fat and therefore takes up less space leading to different body shapes. If people were the same height and weight but one person had a higher body fat percentage they would wear a larger clothing size.



Mental health, stress and physical activity

As we have discussed above, there are many health benefits from having an active lifestyle. Physical activity has a positive impact on our mental health caused by the brain releasing endorphins. Endorphins are sometimes referred to as 'happy hormones' as it gives us the feeling of euphoria and can give us an enhanced immune response. This can have an impact on reducing stress.

Fight or flight

The fight or flight response is the bodies primitive response that prepares the body to 'fight' or 'flee' from a perceived attack or threat. When the body goes through this response or a stressor it can lead to the following:



Fight or flight - Walter Bradford Cannon (1871-1945) Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage (1929)

Children who are under stress at school due to exams etc. can experience this response. When an individual is under high levels of stress for long periods this could lead to detrimental effects on their health.

Relationships, making friends, self esteem

Taking part in physical activity also has a strong influence on relationship building, making friends, boosting self-confidence and self-esteem. If possible always try to encourage your child to take part in new activities. Learning new skills and social interaction will be extremely beneficial when they grow older and move through their school years. Team sports are a fantastic way for children to build a strong good of friends and learn about being competitive.



Sedentary behaviour

The term 'sedentary' refers to a person who tends to spend much time seated and somewhat inactive. Due to the technical revolution only 1 in 20 people are actually doing the right kind of activity they need each week. Many new devices are now available for us and our children that make our lives easier and prevent us from being as active as we used to.



Activity 3

As a group, makes a list of things that can cause us to be less physically active than we used to. (e.g. use of a car)

•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•

Daily routines for our children often include sitting down for hours at school, watching television and playing computer games. Being unfit can limit the amount of activity we feel we can do. However the more we do, the fitter we get.

There are many simple things that can be done to increase the amount of general physical activity we do in a day (e.g. park further away, get off the bus one stop earlier, walk or cycle instead of driving, use the stairs instead of the lift).

Screen time

Due to the access that children have to technical gadgets, it can lead to hours of sedentary behaviour which is not good for their health. It is recommended that children have no more than **2 hours of screen time per day**.



Activity 1

As a group, how can we work to cut down our families screen time?

For a parent these changes can be very difficult to implement. Remember that role modelling can play a key role with your children. If you are more physically active your children are more likely to copy you.

The more active we are, the less likely we will store up excess fat in the body which can lead to physiological, psychological and social problems.

Physiological - The long term effects are often irrelevant to kids, but the more immediate effects of being active include: promotion of healthy weight, improved cardiovascular fitness, increased muscular strength and endurance, stronger bones and greater flexibility.

Psychological - Regular physical activity can influence behaviour, motivation and self-esteem.

Social - Being a member of a club or involved with group physical activity can be important for learning co-operation, leadership and communication skills.

Sedentary versus an active lifestyle

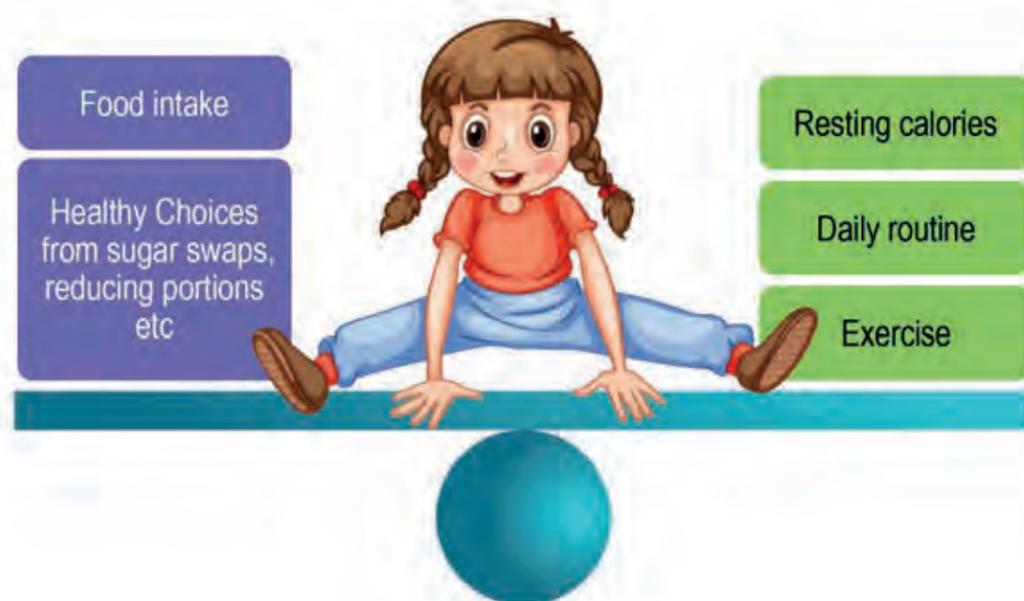
Very small lifestyle changes can make a huge difference when it comes to energy expenditure. Please see the table below:

Active		Sedentary	
Activity	Calories Burnt	Activity	Calories Burnt
Washing up by hand	46	Using a dish washer	18
Walking to school	107	Driving to school	18
Walking home from school	107	Driving home from school	18
Using the stairs	10	Using the lift	1
Kids cleaning their bedroom	45	Parents cleaning the bedroom	0
20 minutes of physical activity	50 (dependant on individual)	1 hour playing on the computer	5
Playing games in the garden	100	Playing games on mobile devices	5
Taking part in school sports	?	Not taking part in school sports	0
TOTAL	465	TOTAL	65



Energy balance

In order for our bodies to maintain its weight, our calories burnt at rest, during your daily routine and burnt by exercising have to balance out with our food intake. By spending less time being sedentary and taking part in more activities can help tip the balance and help reduce potential future health risks



The importance of sleep

There are no set guidelines to how much sleep our children should have, however this is what we should aim for:

Age	Night time hours
5	11
6	10 Hours 45 minutes
7	10 Hours 30 Minutes
8	10Hours 15 Minutes
9	10 Hours
10	9 Hours 45 Minutes
11	9 Hours 30 Minutes
12	9 Hours 15 Minutes
13	9 Hours 15 Minutes
14-16	9 Hours

(Recommended from Millpond Children's Sleep Clinic, NHS choices)

How lack of sleep can affect children

Getting a good night's sleep can be very beneficial to our health. Those who do not get enough sleep are more likely to be overweight or obese as you are more likely to eat sugars or starchy foods in order to stay awake.

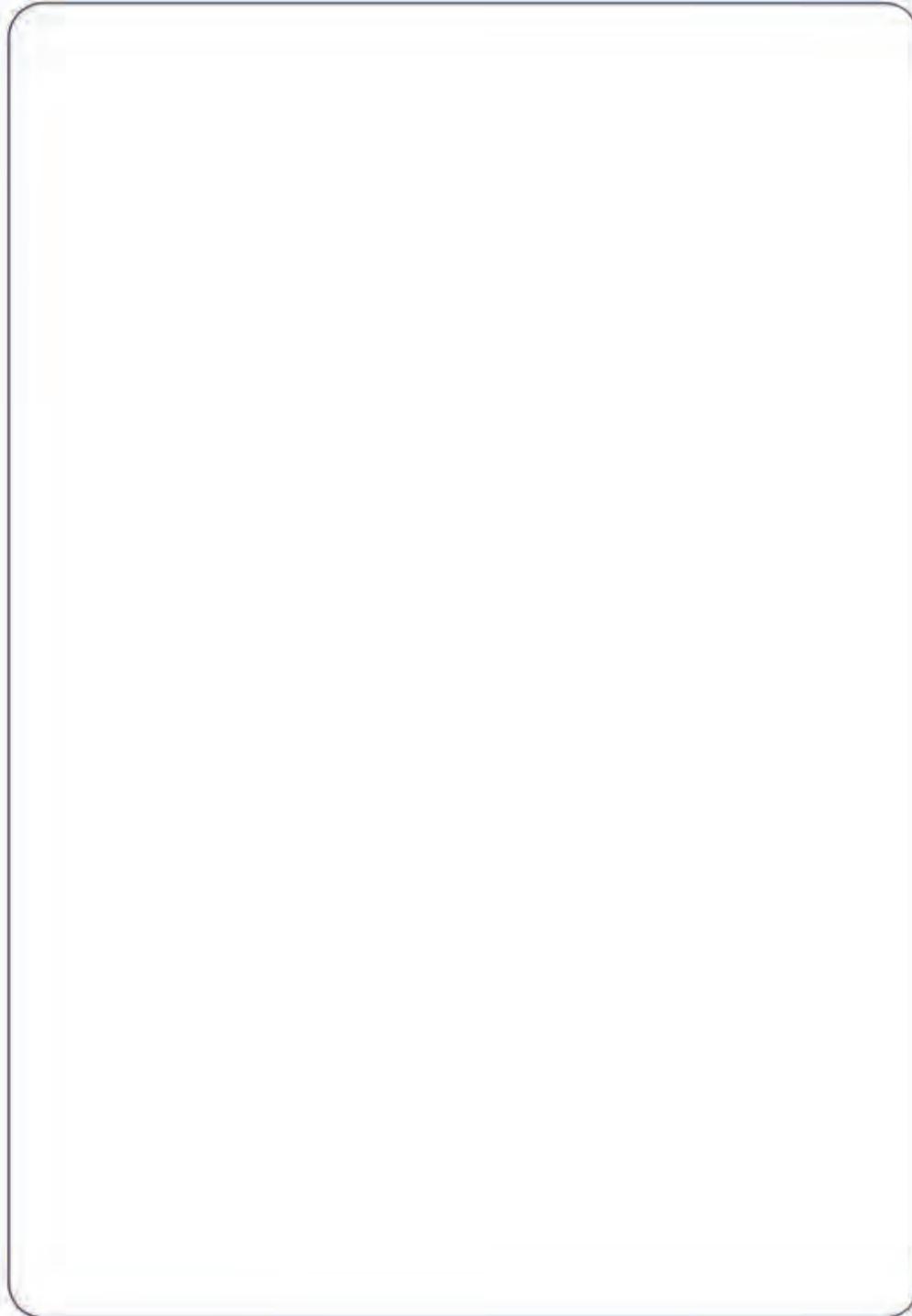
Younger children who are persistently sleep-deprived seem irritable and overactive, seek constant stimulation and don't concentrate well. Such symptoms can be mistaken for mild ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder).

(Live well NHS Choices)



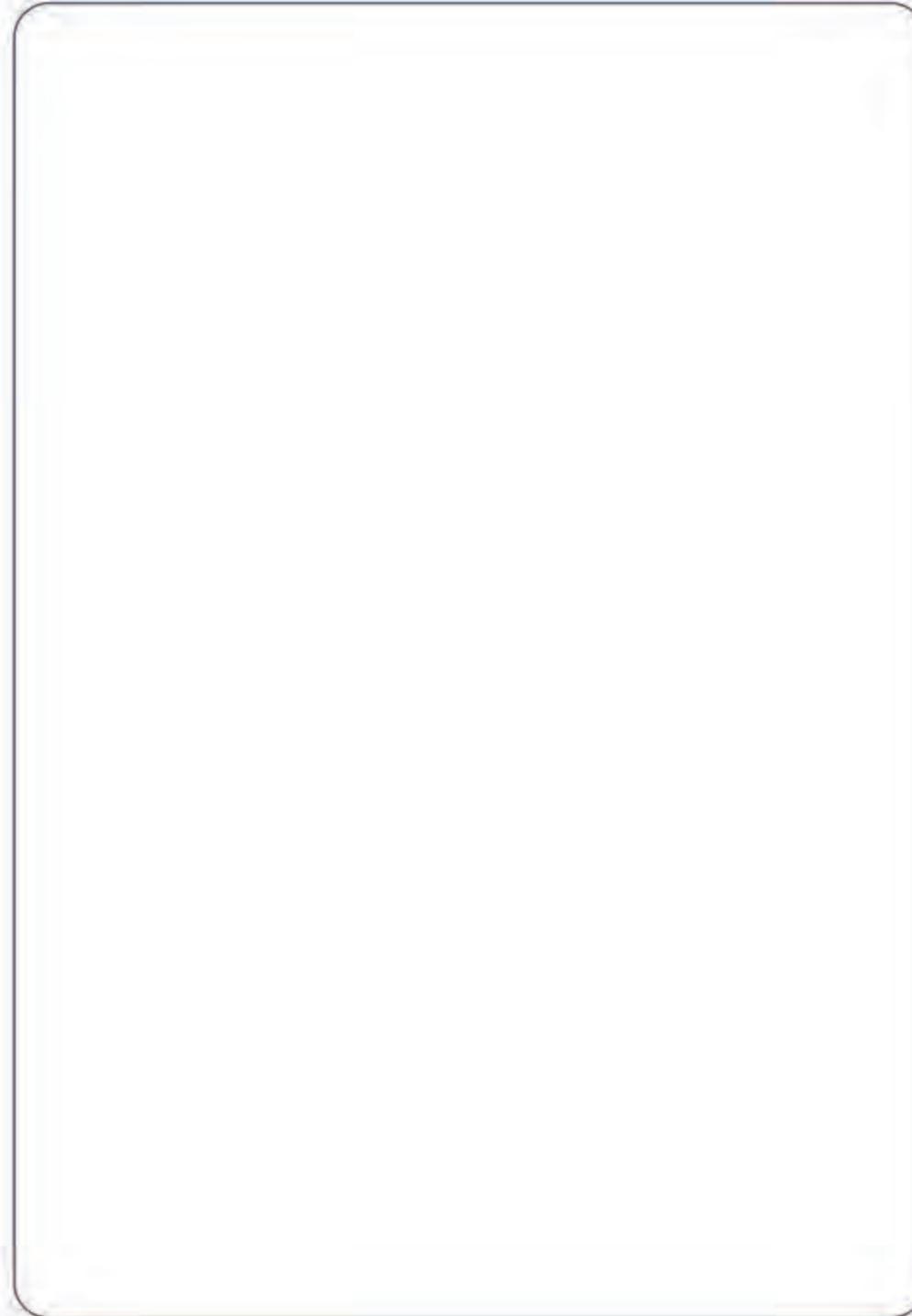
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