**Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools**

**Physical Activity**

**Walk or Wheel**

Walking or cycling to school is a great way for your child to get the 60 minutes of daily physical activity that’s needed for good mental and physical health. It also builds responsibility and independence and helps them feel more connected to the community. More walkers mean less traffic around schools, which helps keep students safe and improves outdoor air quality. Even one day a week of walking or cycling to school can make a big difference!

To find out more about how to support active and safe routes to school through School Travel Planning, visit <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/>.

**Outdoor Play**

Active play does more than help kids to achieve the 60 minutes of physical activity they need every day. It supports their development in many ways – especially when the play is outdoors, self-directed and fun. This allows kids to test boundaries and problem-solve, develop social skills and resolve conflict, and learn to control their emotions and behaviour.

Active play outdoors in the fresh air and nature also helps to improve mood and lower stress. Support your child to play outside with friends in the neighbourhood and at your local park as much as possible.

For more information, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.simcoemuskokahealth.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7CStephanie.Ross%40smdhu.org%7C10c8a8fc537648c4a56f08dbeb9c362a%7Cff1522bfac0b4820bc4c4c6186b0fc89%7C0%7C0%7C638362828384161480%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Hc2DrpZC6haZaA9xoOFvyyXttGFfrLj5wYR5DWVQwK0%3D&reserved=0).

**October is International Walk to School Month**

Get in on the fun and be part of this worldwide event!

* Encourage your child to walk or cycle to and from school if you live close by and team up with others to make the trip more fun.
* If you usually drive your child to school, try getting them to walk part of the way.
* If your child takes the bus, walking to and from the bus stop is a great way to add physical activity minutes into the day.

Walking or cycling allows kids to enjoy the outdoors and get their recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Learn more from <http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/international-walk-to-school-month/>.

**Be a Kid Again**

Share time and create some memories with the children in your life.  Build relationships through outdoor play! Playing tag, taking the monkey bar spaceship to Mars, pretending to be a squirrel getting ready for winter, snuggling under a sheet fort, building a tree house or even going karting, are all examples of fun outdoor activities.

The possibilities are endless!  Sharing these experiences with our children provides opportunities for them to build positive connections with adult role models and fosters a love for being active outdoors.  Do you have the time to lead a tai chi session over nutrition break?  What about starting a walking school bus to and from school? Musical drama? We all need to stay active for life and what a great way to pass along your memories and create new ones with the next generation.

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**Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools**

**Physical Activity**

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**Active Transportation**

Choose to walk, bike, roller blade or skateboard as much as possible to places like school, work, shopping and visiting friends, and encourage your teens to do the same.

* Organize a walking or cycling group.
* Talk with your school principal or employer about installing secure bike racks in a visible location.
* If you’re concerned about safety, speak with your mayor or municipal councillor about what is needed to be able to walk and bike in your community.

Interested in getting more teens to actively travel to school, check out

<http://ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning/school-travel-planning-toolkit/>

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**Lead the Way!**

Habits can last a lifetime and have a real impact over time. Find fun and easy ways to fit physical activity into your day; you don’t have to run a marathon. Do you like to dance? Hike? Run errands for people who are stuck indoors? How about volunteering at your school to teach yoga? Or Tai Chi? Whatever you choose work towards sixty minutes a day, every day.

For more information, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.simcoemuskokahealth.org%2F&data=05%7C01%7CStephanie.Ross%40smdhu.org%7C10c8a8fc537648c4a56f08dbeb9c362a%7Cff1522bfac0b4820bc4c4c6186b0fc89%7C0%7C0%7C638362828384161480%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Hc2DrpZC6haZaA9xoOFvyyXttGFfrLj5wYR5DWVQwK0%3D&reserved=0)

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**Need Volunteer hours?**

Did you know you can volunteer and be active at the same time?  There are opportunities everywhere! Look around where you live.  Are there leaves to rake? Snow to shovel? Yards to clean up? What about painting? Your municipal councillor may even have a wall that needs a mural. Do you like to dance? Are you good at drama? Reach out to your elementary school or community center to help with an annual performance. Do you enjoy sports? Youth programs and shelters are often in need of youth to lead fun outdoor activities. Volunteering is a great way to demonstrate your skills, learn new ones, get out, be active and connect with your community. You are the future.  Your contributions make a difference!

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