



Départ Santé Healthy Start



Bouge - mange bien
Be active, eat well.

SUPPORTING HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG SASKATCHEWAN EARLY YEARS CHILDREN

Young children (0 to 5 years) need physical activity and good nutrition to support healthy growth and development. Furthermore, it is well documented that early childhood can set the foundation for a lifetime of health. Despite these benefits, it has been reported that Canadian early years children have poor physical activity and nutrition patterns.

WHAT IS HEALTHY START?

Healthy Start is an initiative created in Saskatchewan by a partnership of committed individuals and organizations who strive to enhance the health of young children through physical activity and healthy eating.

The **Healthy Start** initiative consists of several complementary strategies, resources and tools:

- Intersectoral partnerships for participatory action on achieving healthy weights;
- The **Healthy Start Guide for Caregivers** on implementing physical activity and healthy eating for young children;
- Customized training and role modelling sessions in early learning settings;
- The evidence-based resource **LEAP BC™** (literacy, education, activity and play) for educators and families.
- A knowledge translation and communication strategy.

Ten urban and rural childcare centres in Saskatchewan had the opportunity to implement and evaluate the **Healthy Start** initiative. They demonstrated that **Healthy Start** contributes to positive physical activity and healthy eating experiences in young children as well as creating greater awareness among caregivers about the benefits of being active and eating a variety of healthy foods.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

- ✓ **Healthy Start** increased physical activity opportunities during the winter months when children often had to stay indoors.
- ✓ Children who previously stood on the sidelines began joining in the activities and games.

I see kids learning and getting better and it feels so good. For example, children that could not do hopscotch before can do it now. Lots of them take this home and show their parents what they can do.

-Early Childhood Educator

- ✓ **Healthy Start** encouraged changes in educators' classrooms helping to promote physical activity (i.e. creating "LEAP stations").
- ✓ Children's moderate to vigorous physical activity levels increased and sedentary behaviours decreased over the course of the initiative.
- ✓ **Healthy Start** helped improve children's physical literacy.

NUTRITIONAL OUTCOMES

- ✓ **Healthy Start** provided educators and cooks with a number of healthy options for incorporating a greater variety of foods (i.e. use of whole wheat flour and locally grown pulse crops).

The recipes were good because they gave us new ideas for incorporating healthy foods like lentils into the menus and most of the kids liked the recipes.

-Early Childhood Educator

CALL TO ACTION

Our goal is to continue to build partnerships around the **Healthy Start** initiative. How can you help?

- Make the health of young children a priority;
- Show your support - help us expand to the next phase of our initiative;
- Advocate with us - join us in the effort to improve the healthy growth and development of young children in Saskatchewan!

For more information or to get involved contact us at
306-653-7445 or email rsfs@shaw.ca.

WEBSITE: http://www.canadainmotion.ca/healthy_start/



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