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A close look at kids' health

Posted By DAVID NESSETH DNESETH@STANDARD-FREEHOLDER.COM

Updated 7 hours ago



A report from the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network shows that local kids aren't getting as much exercise, or eating as healthy, as their parents perceive them to be. Local parents Carmelle and Mark Duperron got a bit of exercise at the park Saturday with their kids Ryden, 2, (left) and Raedia, 4, at a city park.

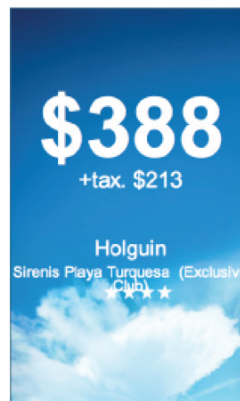
Nearly 90% of parents consider their child to be active, according to a local health study, but national statistics reveal that 87% of kids aren't getting enough exercise.

That gap between perception and reality is the reason for a new health promotion campaign called Know More Do More, which launched in the region Saturday based on research by the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network.

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"Parents play a pivotal influential role in the health of their children," said Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medical Officer of Health for the Eastern Ontario Health Unit, in a news release to media. "We just need to understand there's something more we can do, regardless of how fit or healthy we believe our children to be."

The Champlain Healthy School-aged Children Initiative Attitudinal Research Study found that only 7% of parents felt their child was overweight and almost none felt their child was obese. But data from the Canadian Health Measures Survey released in January 2010 concludes that 26% of children aged 6 to 11 in Canada are overweight or obese, and that number rises to 28% when those kids become teenagers.

"It could be that the parents are eating and exercising the same way, which reflects poorly on them," said Carmelle Duperron, a local mom with two young children.

Even though her kids are quite young, aged 2 and 4, Duperron said she tries to keep them active, whether it's playing soccer or swimming at a city pool.

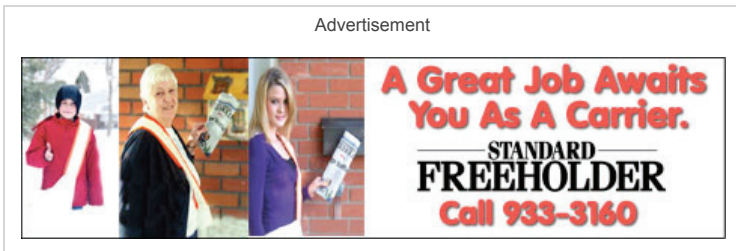
"Parents are always blinded by what they see," said Mark Duperron, Carmelle's husband, about the health stats. "You want to protect your child."

He added that even if a child is in a fight at school, many parents often have a hard time believing their child could be the instigator.

According to local schoolteacher Tracy Champagne, who attended a Liberal "ideas" conference Saturday, technology is making it harder for kids to get the physical activity they need.

The recommended level for kids is 90 minutes of activity each day.

"So many of my students aren't 'Hey, I'll see you outside,'" Champagne said at the conference. "It's hey, I'll see you on the computer."



Healthy eating, not just fitness, is tackled by the Know More Do More campaign. According to the study, only 25% of parents report that their child consumes two or less servings of fruits and vegetables daily. However, the 2009 Heart and Stroke Foundation's Report Card on Ontario's Kids reveals that only 13% of Ontario's kids are eating five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily, which is the recommended amount.

"Role modeling simple things for our kids can make a big difference in their long-term health," Roumeliotis said.

The Know More Do More campaign aims to give local parents more ideas about how to get entire families off the sofa. Here are just some suggestions from a long list that can be found at www.knowmoredomore.ca:

- * Buy a gift that encourages physical activity
- * Organize a scavenger hunt
- * Participate in TV Turn Off challenge weeks
- * Create a physical activity progress chart
- * Try to cook a healthy recipe as a family
- * Have a build your own pizza party with veggie toppings
- * Go on a family bike ride

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We do, they sit on the bench- teaching kids to be active starts when they are born. You can't just start changing habits at 12. The computer is a babysitter now, as well as msn, and video games. This is society unfortunately. It is up to parents to push exercise on their kids, and yes it does take effort, unlike allowing your kid to play video games. This generation is in for a wake up call, and for us parents that do, do our job, our kids will have the world in their hands!

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