

Creating happy, resilient families Wellbeing Newsletter



This month's wellbeing is talking
about 'Movement: Moving more
for our mental health'



Move yourself to better mental health!

Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 will take place from 13 to 19 May 2024, on the theme of **"Movement: Moving more for our mental health"**. Our physical and mental health is deeply intertwined, and if we are to safeguard our mental health we must pay attention to our physical being.

It can be difficult to prise our children away from their bedrooms or screens and encourage them to get enough exercise, but being active really will help to boost their mood and improve their general mental health.

The 'science bit':

Physical exercise is crucial for mental health for several reasons:

- **Endorphin Release:** Exercise triggers the release of endorphins, chemicals in the brain that act as natural painkillers and mood elevators.
- **Stress Reduction:** Exercise helps to reduce levels of cortisol, the body's stress hormone. Regular physical activity can alleviate symptoms of stress and anxiety by promoting relaxation and improving sleep quality. Exercise can also increase the levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which are associated with feelings of happiness and satisfaction.
- **Learning Function:** Physical activity has been shown to enhance cognitive function and protect against cognitive decline.
- **Self-esteem and Confidence:** Regular exercise can improve self-esteem and self-confidence by providing a sense of accomplishment and mastery over one's body.
- **Social Interaction:** Many forms of exercise, such as team sports or group fitness classes, provide opportunities for social interaction and support. Social connections are essential for mental health, as they can provide emotional support, companionship, and a sense of belonging.



What can you do as parents / carers?

Encouraging your children / young people to exercise can be both fun and rewarding. Here are some tips to help promote their physical activity:

- **Lead by Example:** Children often mimic the behaviour of their parents. If they see you enjoying physical activity and making it a priority, they're more likely to follow suit. Make exercise a family affair by participating in activities together.
- **Make it Fun:** Focus on activities that are enjoyable and engaging for your child. Incorporate games, challenges, and playful elements into exercise routines to make them more appealing.
- **Provide Opportunities:** Create opportunities for your child to be active throughout the day. Limit screen time and encourage outdoor activity instead.
- **Be Supportive:** Offer encouragement, praise, and positive reinforcement to motivate your child. Recognise their efforts and accomplishments, no matter how small.
- **Make it Social:** Encourage your child to participate in group activities, sports teams, or classes where they can interact with peers and make friends. Socialising while being active can enhance the enjoyment of exercise and provide additional motivation.
- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Create a supportive place that promotes physical activity. Provide safe and accessible spaces for play and exercise, both indoors and outdoors. Offer healthy snacks and meals to fuel their active lifestyle.
- **Be Patient and Persistent:** Encouraging children to adopt healthy habits takes time and patience. Be persistent in your efforts, but also be patient with your child's progress. Focus on creating positive experiences that foster a lifelong love of physical activity.

By incorporating these strategies into your parenting approach, you can help instill a love for physical activity in your child and set them on the path to a healthy and active lifestyle.

How will you encourage your child to get moving for their mental health today?

Wellbeing Newsletter

Book of the Month



This Months Podcast



Helpful Websites!

What are the health benefits of being active in childhood?

Being active in childhood ensures children are at a reduced risk of developing a major illness later in life, as their bodies become fitter, healthier and stronger. Modern life, however, can mean children have less opportunities to move or be active. Advances in technology mean children have access to online games and socialising forums, reducing a child's opportunity to move and be active. However, these advances can be combined to continue to increase activity and movement, for example, computer games which require movement or online activity classes or groups for children.

No matter how the movement and activities are accessed, the health benefits of being active in childhood include:

- higher levels of fitness;
- opportunities to socialise and meet new people;
- increased concentration and focus;
- building stronger bones, healthier muscles and a stronger heart;
- higher levels of self-esteem;
- improved posture and balance;
- less stress; and
- better sleep patterns.

Movement Activities for Children: 7 Powerful Wellbeing and Learning Benefits

In this article about movement activities for children I will look at the benefits of movement for both learning and emotional wellbeing. I'll give you lots of ideas and resources too. If you're a parent, teacher or classroom assistant, this is essential reading!

We were designed to move. Originally hunter gatherers, humans moved for a large proportion of the day. Our more sedentary lifestyle is much more recent in our history. Young children move naturally as they play. Older kids are expected to sit still for long periods of time during the school day, and this can have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.



Written by education advisors with over 30 years experience

