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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Spring into Action – Physical Activity Ideas for Kids

A primary reason for promoting physical activity among children is because regular physical activity along with a balanced diet can help children stay within their appropriate weight range. The Center for the Disease control and Prevention recommends that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week to stay healthy. Examples of moderate physical activity include things such as walking, biking riding and mowing the law; things that get your heart beating fast.

The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) has recommended that preschool children are involved in at least one hour of structured and one hour of unstructured activity every day. Additionally, they recommended that children should not be inactive for more than an hour at a time.

What counts as a physical activity? Any type of movement that uses muscles and burns energy counts as a physical activity. Physical activity does not only mean exercises like push-ups and jogging, but in reality includes things that kids do for fun such as swimming, riding a bike or playing tag. Making sure your kids are exposed to all types of movements involves planning specific physical activities for them. The following are a few things you can do to assist your child in staying active and healthy:

- **Unstructured physical activity** is important and gives children time to play freely which helps the development of their imagination, creativity, body awareness and a sense of space and dimension. Examples of unstructured play may include playing hide-and-go-seek, pushing, playing a game of tag, riding a bike or kicking a soccer ball around in the yard.
- **Activating your family** is one trick to increasing physical activity as well as being a positive role model for your child. Kids naturally love to move so use this to everyone's advantage and encourage play as a family. When families are active together everyone benefits; the kids burn of their excess energy and parents are getting physical activity as well. Try walking the dog together after dinner or venture out on a family bike ride to a local park or gym.
- **The "Coach of the Day"** is a fun way to organize daily family activities. Each member of the family is assigned one evening per week to organize an event or invent a game to play.
- **Plan ahead** for several weekend activities that are available for kids to choose from. Keeping a calendar on the fridge and encouraging kids to brainstorm ideas is a fun way for everyone to be involved.

Parents and childcare providers can also learn more about nutrition and physical activity through the UCCE's Nutrition BEST program at (530) 889-7350 or visit us at <http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu>

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