

# First Nations Parents Club Bulletin

## Give Your Family a Fitness Boost this New Year

*Adapted from: Family Guide to Physical Activity for Children and Youth, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2002*

Kids love computers, video games and television. However, while these activities can be educational, what children need more than screen time is plenty of physical activity.

In fact, nearly half of Canada's youth aren't active enough for healthy growth and development! Keeping children active builds strong bones, strengthens muscles, maintains and achieves a healthy weight, improves self-esteem, and increases relaxation, among other benefits.

You can encourage your children to play outside and try to be an active role model yourself. As a parent, you can work with your children to encourage healthy behaviours by setting some physical activity goals.

An excellent place to start is with the *Family Guide to Physical Activity for Children and Youth*, published by the Public Health Agency of Canada. It recommends that families set the following challenge:

1. Increase the time spent on physical activity starting with 30 minutes **more** per day.
2. Reduce "non-active" time spent on TV, video, computer games and surfing the Internet, starting with 30 minutes **less** per day.

The Agency recommends that children and youth build up their level of physical activity over the course of several months until they are doing at least 90 minutes a day. The exercise can be in time periods as short as 5 to 10 minutes, and it can include moderate activities like fast walking, biking and playing outdoors, as well as more energetic activities like running and soccer.

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### Contact Us!

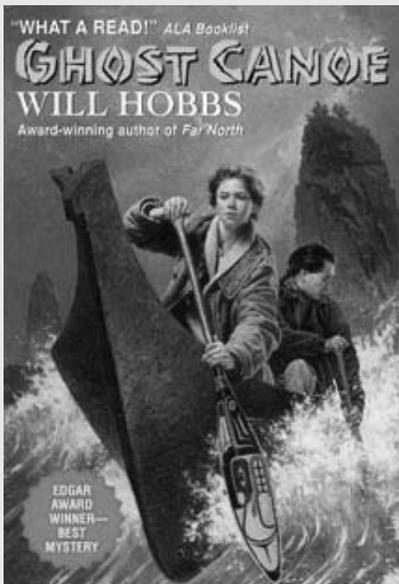
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*“Children are a great comfort in your old age  
- and they help you reach it faster, too.”*

- Lionel Kauffman

# Family Reading Corner:



**Ghost Canoe by Will Hobbs, 1998.** *Edgar Allen Poe Award Winner.*

Set at Cape Flattery in northern Washington, this is a fictional story based on some very exciting Makah history. It is suitable for children from Grades 4 to 8 and was one of the books sent to First Nations Parents clubs.

The story follows Nathan, the son of a lighthouse keeper, on his search to uncover the truth about a clipper ship that sinks off the coast of Cape Flattery. With rumours of a murdered captain, an ancient Spanish treasure, and a theft at the Neah Bay trading post, Nathan can't help but believe that there is a survivor. As he finds mysterious footsteps on the beach and a ghost canoe high up in a tree, he uncovers a truth more dangerous than anyone had expected!

Hobbs has you sitting on the edge of your seat while taking a very in-depth look at the culture and traditions of the Makah people. He includes many Makah and Chinook words, and the history of Cape Flattery fits smoothly into the story. Nathan's view as an outsider following the Makah way of life allows Hobbs to explain situations with a sense of curiosity.

## Fitness Boost *Continued from Page 1*

How do you encourage youth to become more active?

1. **Develop Awareness:** Involve young people in making decisions. Help them become aware of how much activity they do now and how inactive they may be.
2. **Set Goals for the Whole Family:** Encourage small steps and check the results to see what is working and what isn't.
3. **Give Feedback and Praise:** Talk about your family's physical activities every day and praise and reward small steps.
4. **Get Agreement on the Plan:** Talk often about your physical activity goals with the whole family to encourage everyone to do what they said they would do.
5. **Reward and Recognize Change:** Reinforce new behaviour and celebrate successes through rewards and recognition. Reward your kids for doing a little more physical activity each week.

Download the guidebooks from <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/>

[paguide/child\\_youth/resources.html#4](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/resources.html#4). They include a handy *Progress Chart* to record goals and action steps, *sample month by month targets for increasing physical activity levels*, and *tips for making the goals work*.



## More fit tips

- Could your Parents Club or Parent Advisory Council host a family gym night once a week or once a month? With some family-friendly rules, soccer or tag are easy to organize games. For some great fun, you could even try to find some information about games that were traditionally played by Indigenous people in Canada or around the world. For example, one great website is [www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all/indigenous/games](http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/all/indigenous/games). That is a new online activity resource created by the Australian government with over 100 traditional Indigenous games to help children learn about, appreciate and experience aspects of Indigenous culture. For more general games, try Silken Laumann's *A Parent's Guide to Play* at <http://www.silkensactivekids.ca/Images/PDFS/GamesBookWeb-April2008.pdf>.
- Embrace the season! Winter is a great time for getting outdoors as a family for tobogganing, pickup hockey, a snowball fight or just an evening walk. Not realistic for your family? You could remind your kids what great exercise it would be shovel the driveway...
- Consider getting your family involved in traditional drumming and dancing. It's great for the body and the spirit!



*“If you want your children to improve,  
let them overhear the nice things you say about them to others.”*

- Haim Ginott, Teacher and Child Psychologist

## Quick Tips

# Making the Most of Parent Teacher Conferences

- ✓ **Come with a list** – include information you’d like to share and your questions
- ✓ **Bring a friend** – they can help keep you focused, offer another perspective, and be a source of support
- ✓ **Listen carefully** – consider taking notes, or have a support person take notes for you
- ✓ **Ask questions** – this is your meeting, so ask as many questions you like. Remember the age old quote: “the only stupid question is the one not asked.”
- ✓ **Make a plan** – work with the teacher to set some concrete action ideas if there are areas of concern, and set a follow-up meeting if necessary
- ✓ **Stay in touch** – keep looking for more opportunities to talk with the teacher during the rest of the school year

## Gorp to Go...

Here is a quick and easy breakfast idea that kids can help put together.

You’ll need:

- A small reusable container
- Nuts (almonds work well)
- Dried fruit (dried cranberries, apricots, raisins or apples, for instance)
- Whole-grain cereal

Into your container, mix 1/4 cup of nuts, 1/4 cup of dried fruit, and 1/2 cup of whole-grain cereal. Pair your gorp with a thermos of milk or a scoop of yoghurt for a nutritious, road-ready breakfast!

## From the Newsletter Archives

*Here are just a few examples of what Parents Clubs have done in past years. Maybe there are ideas that your club would like to try...*

**Valentine’s Tea:** “the parents did the planning and the students carried out most of the work, and they made personal invitations to all their family and friends. The students baked the goodies, made sandwiches, and served their guests. There were a number of Elders present that told stories of when they were young and went to school. There were a lot of encouraging words made to the students by the Elders.” *Laxgalt’s ap Parents Club, 2004*

“We had our second **Parent Club Board Game Night** on December 9. The kids came in excited about the board game they wanted to play with their parents. Snacks and juice were served and the adults got to choose a prize while the children got to pull a prize from a bag.” *Fort Babine School Parents Club, 2005*

“We are holding weekly in-house **bingo to raise money for a new playground and gym equipment.** To date we have raised a total of \$495.” *Seabird Island Parents Club, 2004*

## Resources

### Make Your Steps Count! Get a Free Pedometer

A pedometer is an easy way to keep track of how many steps you take and it is great incentive to start increasing those steps. Start a family chart on the fridge and have a “race” to see who can log the most steps in a week or a month. *The BC Medical Association is offering one free pedometer per BC family while supplies last.* To receive your pedometer, write to communications@bcma.bc.ca with the following details: how you will use your pedometer to increase your family’s physical activity, the number of members in your family, full name, full address including: Street or PO Box, Apt #, City or Town, Province and Postal Code.

To order **free physical fitness magazines** for children (ages 6-9) and youth (ages 10-14) and for a colourful **fitness chart** with stickers that kids can use to chart their physical activity, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada resources webpage at [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child\\_youth/resources.html#4](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/resources.html#4)



## Parents Report

*Reflections on the BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (BCCPAC) Annual Conference, 2008, and other Club news...*

### **Vicki Liebrecht of Mission Central First Nations Parents Club writes...**

I had the privilege of attending the BCCPAC Conference as a representative of Mission Central's First Nations Parents Club. I would like to thank FNESC for their support in allowing me to attend.

At first I was very nervous and shy to speak. I thought, "What do I have to say that any one of these people wants to hear?" and then I decided to just listen to what had to be said and take with me what would benefit me and the families I was there to represent.

I was disheartened to learn that 48% of all Aboriginal children in BC that start Kindergarten do not finish high school. But I have met with so many people on a local level who are fighting to help our children succeed now that I know these people are out there on a provincial level as well.

I was able to attend a few workshops that I found of personal interest. I got to "Walk a Mile" in the shoes of a child with a learning disability. Everyone I met was passionate about learning what they could do to help children succeed in education. The other parents and the BCCPAC advocates, Janet Philips and Cathy Bedard, inspired me to find my voice. By the end of the conference, I learned that anyone who cares about helping a child succeed at school will be heard. Anyone with a passion to see our kids receive the best education we can provide has a voice.

I encourage all Aboriginal parents – status, non-status or Métis, to contact a First Nations Parents Club or PAC and attend a meeting. *Let's help our children finish school!*

### **Zandra Paul of Journey's of the Heart Program Parents Club writes...**

I wanted to take a moment and thank you for giving me this opportunity to attend the BCCPAC conference. It was a real eye-opener and a reminder to me that as native people we have a role to play in helping educate the non-native public and ensuring that our children get a proper education.

Of the conference content, I felt it was very informative, including the cyber-awareness workshop, which was wonderful. The opportunity to talk with the Deputy Minister of Education was great - I only wish I could have had the opportunity to speak with the Minister herself. This conference took me out of my comfort zone, but it helped me to wake up to what I need to do. I also thoroughly enjoyed the Parents Club conference last February, but this BCCPAC was a particularly good opportunity for me. I hope to be in touch more often.

### **Kelsi Martens, Parent Support Worker, Hummingburde Child Care Centre Parents Club writes ...**

Last month was a busy one for our young parents program. Our group topics included: finding safe and affordable housing, early literacy, making cookbooks, and spaghetti recipes. We also had a guest presenter from the Ministry of Children and Family Development who came to ask our young parents how services and support could improve for them in the Alberni Valley. I gave out your incentive prizes to the young women who attended the most meetings, those did the most creative parent projects and to the parent who completed the most teacher's assistant hours. As always your prizes were a big hit. It is so nice to receive these items as my budget is really tight. With your help I am able to reward the young women for a job well done. Thank you again for your continued support of our program.



### **Need more information?**

Is this the first time you've heard about the First Nations Parents Club? If you would like more information about the initiative, please contact our office at (604) 925-6087. The First Nations Parents Club is sponsored by the First Nations Schools Association to recognize the tremendous dedication of parents who support their children's learning. All Club materials and activities are available for free. To start a Club in your community, just contact us and request a Parents Club start-up package. We'd love to hear from you!