



FAMILY TIME ACTIVE AND FUN!



TARGET AUDIENCE:
parents with children
2 through 18 years old



GROUP SIZE:
5 to 7
participants



NEEDED TIME:
45
minutes

▶ SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents, caregivers, and their families be more physically active. Participants will discuss why being physically active is important and the challenges to being active every day. Participants will work as a group with partners to come up with solutions to becoming more physically active every day.

Using the handout *Be Active Today*, participants will discuss ways to be physically active and include children in regular physical activities. At the end of the session, participants will be reminded to make being physically active and eating healthy a part of their daily routine. Participants will identify two ways to be physically active at least 2½ hours per week. Participants will also identify two ways to get their children to be more active.

▶ BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

After the session participants will be able to:

- Identify two ways to get at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity physical activity per week.
- Identify at least two ways to help their kids be physically active, every day.

▶ KEY MESSAGES:

- Regular physical activity is a key factor in maintaining a healthy body weight for adults and children.
- Parents play an important role in helping their children make physical activity an everyday habit.

DISCUSSION SESSION

▶ MATERIALS NEEDED FOR SESSION:

- Markers
- Nametags
- Highlighters or pencils (one per participant)
- Flipchart
- MyPlate mini-poster—provide a copy for each participant
- Lively and fun music
- Handout for parents and caregivers: *Be Active Today*
- Optional handout for kids: *Be a Fit Kid*

▶ OUTLINE OF 45-MINUTE SESSION:

- Welcome and introduction to the *Family Time—Active and Fun!* session (5 minutes)
- Discussion group activities (35 minutes)
- Sum up and home activity (5 minutes)



▶ WELCOME TO FAMILY TIME—ACTIVE AND FUN!

Welcome participants and ask them to make their own nametag (first names only). Make sure each has a copy of the handout *Be Active Today* and a highlighter or pencil. Mention other points of interest as needed, such as the location of restrooms and water fountains.

▶ BEGIN:

What are your favorite ways to be physically active? Write responses on a flipchart.

▶ DISCUSSION GROUP ACTIVITIES CONTINUE:

Tell the participants that the group will be talking about how to:

- Plan easy and low-cost ways to be physically active each day
- Include children in physical activity every day

Ask everyone to stand up and then discuss how physically active they think they are by asking the following questions.

► **ASK:**

Do you mostly sit during the day, at work, at home, or somewhere else?

If so, cross your arms in front of your chest.

Do you think you move enough during the day?

If so, shake your hands.

Is your day full of a lot of physical activity?

If so, wave your arms wildly.

► **SAY:**

Clap your hands if you think moving more than you do now would be good for you. Now with that “applause for being on the move,” it is time to get moving! While the participants are all still standing, have fun by being physically active together.

Lead the group and ask everyone to walk in place or dance to a lively song. Spend 2 to 3 minutes in some type of movement. As the participants move, ask them how they feel. If they feel out of breath or any pain, ask them to stop. If people are talking and enjoying themselves, encourage their efforts.

Once you have finished leading the group, explain that being physically active does not mean you have to participate in sports. Any kind of moving around is good, including walking or dancing to music.

► **ASK:**

How did it feel to move a little in our time together today?

(Responses might include: fun, energizing, relaxing, helps relieve stress.)

Could you still talk while you were moving? Could you sing with the music?

Acknowledge responses. (Encourage everyone to try it at home for at least 10 minutes and if they still felt good, to try at least 30 minutes.)

Why is it important for you and your family to be physically active?

Acknowledge responses.

► **POINT OUT:**

- Physical activity helps you control body weight, burn calories, and may reduce your risk of certain chronic diseases.
- It also helps you to sleep better at night, feel better about yourself, and maintain strong bones and muscles.
- Adults need at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity physical activity on most days of the week.
- Children need at least 60 minutes every day. Children and adolescents should include muscle- and bone-strengthening activities, like climbing and jumping, at least 3 days a week.
- Young children 2 to 5 years old need to be active throughout the day. You can encourage your toddler or preschooler to do a variety of activities that help him or her grow and develop.
- Dancing, walking, riding bikes, and climbing stairs are low-cost, fun ways to be physically active with your children.

► **ASK:**

Why it is hard to be physically active?

Acknowledge their challenges and ask, “*What are some solutions to these challenges?*”

Let the group members share their challenges and possible solutions.

▶ **CONTINUE:**

Challenge: “Too tired when I get home”

Solution: Make your lunch or breaktime active; take a 10-minute brisk walk.

Challenge: “No time—too many other things to do”

Solution: Be more active in the everyday things you do; use the stairs instead of the elevator or park further away and walk.

Challenge: “Nobody to be active with”

Solution: Plan fun ways to be active with your family, neighbors, friends; play with your kids; or walk the dog.

▶ **HANDOUT REVIEW:**

Review the handout *Be Active Today* with participants and answer questions from the group.

▶ **SUM UP AND HOME ACTIVITY:**

Now that you know some fun and easy ways to be more physically active and eat healthy, you can take steps to make these habits part of your daily life.

Ask each participant to highlight or circle two activities on the handout *Be Active Today* that they will do to become more physically active.

Offer the optional handout *Be a Fit Kid*. Suggest that parents review the tips and use the information with their children to help them be more active.

For more information visit
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/myplateformyfamily.html.



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