



HAVING A HEALTHY SUMMER ON A RECESSION BUDGET ***The Ontario Psychological Association offers some advice on being healthy this summer***

Finishing school, starting camp, and looking forward to family vacations all make summer exciting for children. However, tough economic times have forced many families to postpone or cancel summer plans, disappointing children looking forward to the yearly family trip or other summertime activities. According to the Ontario Psychological Association (OPA), cutting back on family budgets does not have to mean cutting back on fun, nor do fun family activities have to break the bank. Summer vacation is an ideal opportunity for families to share in healthy activities, increase physical activity, and make a greater effort to eat right.

“Summer is a great time for a mid-year resolution,” says psychologist Dr. Mary Broga, President of the Ontario Psychological Association. “Making physically and emotionally healthy decisions for your children and family is a positive way to start the summer and prepare the coming school year.”

Raising a child with healthy eating and activity habits is now more important than ever. According to statistics, approximately 26 percent of Canada’s children and youth are classified as overweight or obese. Changing behaviours around food and activity is a sometimes difficult, but a doable process for parents. Making a commitment to having a healthy family will help children avoid the emotional and physical issues that come with being overweight.

Activities, such as playing Frisbee as a family or making healthy meals you and your child cook together, are just some ways to put a fun spin on a healthy lifestyle and help parents or children who may be intimidated by adopting a healthier lifestyle and battling behaviours that contribute to an unhealthy weight.

“Healthy, active children require a commitment from parents and caregivers to change unhealthy behaviours,” says Dr. Broga. “The psychology of behaviour is an important building block of a healthy child and taking time to enjoy activities as a family is important to the entire family’s emotional health. Spending time together by taking walks or bike rides around the neighbourhood or going to the community pool as a family are all healthy ways for everyone to reduce their stress and anxiety.”

For more information on psychological and emotional health for your children and your family, visit the APA Help Center (www.apahelpcenter.org) and OPA Help Line (www.psych.on.ca).

The Ontario Psychological Association: www.psych.on.ca
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