



News Release

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Healthy Kids Know Nature is the Best Medicine

BRANTFORD, ON – The City of Brantford and the County of Brant are excited to announce the launch of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, ***Power Off and Play - Nature is Best FREE Community Summer Program***, that focuses on replacing recreational screen time with healthy outdoor activities.

To help encourage families to replace screen time with other activities like family yoga in the park, biking, and river rafting, children in Brantford and the County of Brant can experience a variety of FREE activities as part of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge **FREE** Summer Passport Program.

Residents will be familiar with the popular passport program that was also offered earlier this year during March Break. The Summer Passport Program includes a number of free activities for children and their families to enjoy over the summer in an effort to encourage children to reduce screen time in favour of healthier and more active experiences. Children can participate in as many activities as they like from July 1st – September 3rd. Passports can be picked up at City and County facilities or downloaded and printed from www.brantford.ca/NatureIsBest.

In addition to all the excellent free programming, those who participate also have an opportunity to win great prizes by completing at least 10 activities and dropping off their passports to any community centre after September 3rd, 2018.

Screen time is the time spent using a screen-based device, such as smartphone, tablet, computer or TV. Screen time can make it difficult for children to stay healthy by interfering with important daily routines. While screens can offer engaging ways to learn and communicate, most often, children use screens for recreational activities like playing video games or watching movies. Typically, children are sedentary while using screens for these purposes.

Screen time affects many aspects of children's health. Lori-Dawn Cavin, Manager of Community Recreation Development with the City of Brantford says that, "Creating routines that incorporate screen 'down time' is vital for children. Play supports important development for children and can directly contribute to

their well-being as well as their social, emotional and physical growth,” she said. The Summer Passport Program is a great way to help families kick-start a change in routines over the summer.”

Not only can screen time negatively affect sleep quality for children, but also typically prompts children to make unhealthy food choices. In fact, children who routinely eat meals while watching TV eat fewer fruits and vegetables and more pizza, snack foods and sugary drinks. Experts suggest that children under the age of two avoid any amount of screen time, while children between the ages of two and four be limited to less than one hour. It’s recommended that children five and older consume no more than two hours of recreational screen time per day.

The Healthy Kids Community Challenge is a Ministry of Health and Long Term Care initiative that is designed to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity by developing programs and policies that support healthier lifestyles. The 'Challenge' is a key part of Ontario's Healthy Kids Strategy, as well as the City of Brantford's Healthy Brantford Strategy, and utilizes a community-led approach, where partners from both the private and public sectors contribute expertise and resources to implement projects and programs. Since the start of the Challenge, over 200 community stakeholders including health organizations, social service agencies, and local businesses have provided in-kind support, contributing greatly to the program’s success.

LEARN MORE

www.brantford.ca/NatureIsBest

www.brantford.ca/healthykids

[The Healthy Kids Community Challenge](#)

-30-

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