

# Climate & Healthy Weights in Children



**Climate Change** has been deemed the most significant public health threat of our time, affecting respiratory and cardiovascular health and mental wellbeing, increasing instances of vector-borne diseases, and harm from extreme weather events. Health Professionals are uniquely positioned to lead by example (and encourage their patients) to adopt climate friendly, healthy habits.

## The TWO and TWENTY Challenge

The goal is to be active for at least Two hours a week, being physically active at least 20+ minutes in length. Research shows that people who spend at least 2 hours per week have better health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> [Take Part Here](#)

## HOW NATURE HELPS HEALTHY WEIGHTS

- *Nature is Active*- Children who engage with green spaces are more physically active throughout their lives and have fewer health complications as they get older.<sup>2</sup>
- *Helps Combat Obesity*- Children who live and or interact with green spaces have a reduced risk of developing childhood obesity.<sup>3</sup>
- *Better Motor Skills*- Children who play in nature compared to a traditional playground develop superior motor skills, balance, and coordination.<sup>4</sup>
- *Helps to Create the Whole Child*- Children who play in groups in nature or green space rather than conventional playgrounds are more cooperative, communicate better and decrease aggressive behavior as they become young adults compared to those who do not.<sup>5</sup>

## CLIMATE & HEALTH

**Tips when talking about climate & health. The subject of climate change can feel overwhelming.**

**These approaches can help link the impact of personal choices on our health and the health of our environment.**

- Respect the environment—and the patients you help. As individuals spend more time in nature, they are more likely to engage in practices that limit their impact on the climate at both a local and global level.
- Outdoor Activities and reducing climate impact can be as simple as "This for That" by substituting outdoor activities for indoor ones.
- Apply the **Precautionary Principle**, developed initially to protect the environment and help to guide health protection activities. Applying the precautionary principle means that risk reduction activities with individuals, families, and communities should minimize creating negative environmental and avoid hazards while maximizing the overall positive effects on people's health and wellbeing. An example of this is riding your bike, riding you bike in high traffic areas can come with more risk then riding your bike on a trail system or in a park.
- Engage with nature in a way that has an impact on you. Love the water? go for a swim, and think about how you can protect the water for future generations.

### CITED SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> Frontiers Psychology. Volume 10, 722 (2019)

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Planning Literature. Volume 30, 433-452 (2015)

<sup>3</sup> Journal of Human Biology. Volume 31, 183-220 (2019)

<sup>4</sup> Science Rep. Volume 9, 7730 (2019)

<sup>5</sup> Dymont, J.E. Gaining ground. Toronto, Canada: Evergreen (2005)