

Getting Active and Making a Difference

Physical Activity in Mentoring



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Mission

Mobius and the Vermont Department of Health are partnering in an effort to provide resources and guidance for mentoring organizations and mentors across the state to incorporate some form of physical activity into their programs.

This guidebook aims to help mentors and coordinators understand the importance of getting mentees active and aid them in finding ways to do so.

While this mission is driven by the **Healthy Vermonters 2020** goals that aim to reduce the number of obese youth to 8% by 2020, the ultimate purpose of this guidebook coincides with the inherent mission of mentoring, **to enhance the lives of youth and provide them with a foundation for success.**

Ability

Mentors ought to consider their own comfort level and the background of their mentee

How will different activities impact their self-esteem and willingness to continue pursuing these experiences?

Positivity

To create a positive environment, the mentor must be comfortable and confident with the chosen activity

Collaboration

Mentors and mentees should work together to determine what types of activities are appropriate for their age, skill level, and interests

You'd Be Surprised!

When people hear the words “physical activity” they often think of organized sports or exercise. However, every day we are being physically active without consciously trying to be.

**If you're on your feet and moving,
you're being physically active!**

Think of how you can be physically active with your mentee. Exposing them to a variety of activities can help them develop a positive connection to leading a healthy, active lifestyle.

The Problem

Between 1999 – 2013 the number of obese students in grades 9-12 rose 4%

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2014

Only 1/4 of students in this age group meet physical activity guidelines

Both higher screen time and lower physical activity rates were linked with higher odds of psychological distress, including emotional symptoms, conduct problems and peer relationship problems

American Academy of Pediatrics 2009

29% of students in grades 6-8 use a computer for 3+ hours/day for non-school related activities

Vermont Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey



The Solution



Compared to those who are inactive, physically active youth...
May have reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines**

Promote

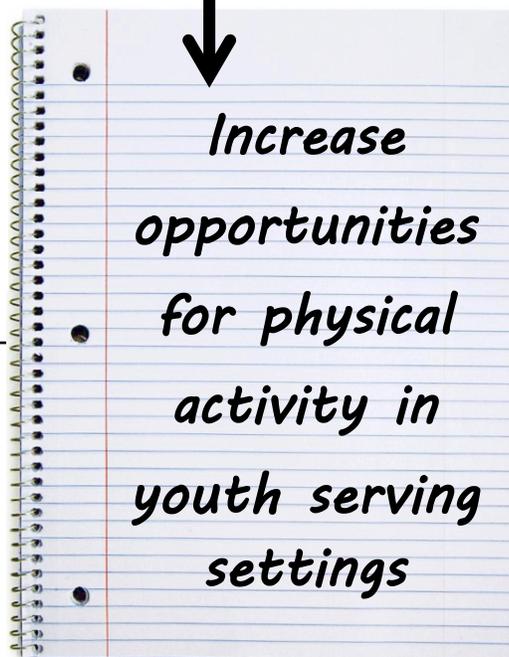
Healthy lifestyles

Provide

Positive, fun experiences

Encourage

Children and adolescents' physical and mental growth



Adults play an important role in providing **age appropriate physical activity** and help lay a foundation for **life-long health**

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines**

** Appendix A

Building a Culture of Health

Involvement

All members of an organization, from the program coordinators to the mentors, need to be united around the *mission* of incorporating *physical activity* into the program.

Support

Program coordinators can provide social and technical support and promote the value of *physical activity* within their programs and among their mentors.

How?

Utilize existing program structures – if there are already program-wide special events or year-end celebrations these are great ways to establish a culture of health by making them physical activity oriented.



National Physical Fitness and Sports Month – **MAY**

Program coordinators can ensure all mentors incorporate some physical activity throughout May, providing a foundation for those who may be unsure of how to get started on their own – www.letsmove.gov

- Hold the event at a park (have a picnic and play lawn games like sack races, badminton, etc.)
- Bring the group on a short hike
- Take everyone to an adventure ropes course

It's Easy! → Being active can mean heading to your local park and going for a walk.

Be Open → Enable mentees to understand why it is important and good for them to be active.

Positivity Leads to Empowerment → Creating a supportive, fun atmosphere while being physically active may lead your mentee to make the choice to be active on their own.



Simply getting children and adolescents to spend time outdoors is a simple and low-cost approach for increasing physical activity because almost all outside child and adolescent appropriate activities encourage some level of physical activity.

Physical Activity Guidelines midcourse report: Chapter 4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Resources and Ideas

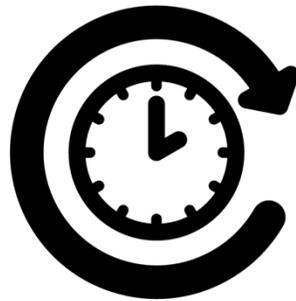
- Check out the Mobius Mentor Discount Card – it's accepted at a number of locations where you can engage in some form of fun physical activity, such as Petra Cliffs. <http://www.mobiusmentors.org/mobius-discount-card/>
- Sidewalk chalk can be used to create games like hopscotch and foursquare. It also is fun to spend time coloring on a safe paved area.
- Taking a walk around town or down a safe road with your mentee while talking with them can be an effective way to connect while engaging in some physical activity.
- Vermont State Parks are great places to explore (See Appendix B).
- Utilize public parks, playgrounds, bike paths, athletic fields, swimming pools, and beaches.
 - Take a nature walk
 - Go for a bike ride
 - Play a game of catch or kick around a soccer ball
 - Take a trip to the playground
 - Go swimming at the pool or beach

Prepare your mentee's brain for learning!

Science tells us that providing the brain with some form of physical exertion actually improves cognitive functioning

“Eleven of 14 studies found one or more positive associations between physical education and indicators of cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behavior and/or academic achievement” – U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC

**10-15
minutes**



All it takes to get moving and improve the quality of your time together

Resources

- Most schools have balls, jump ropes, sidewalk chalk, sleds, and other materials for play/activity.
- Talk with your program coordinator about making connections with P.E. teachers – they know the schedule of gym use and can provide materials for games and activities.
- Take advantage of playgrounds, nearby bike paths or walking paths, and similar infrastructure that is easily accessible.
- School gyms and other non-classroom spaces, like cafeterias, are good locations for quick games or free time during inclement weather. You also may be able to walk the halls if you cannot access another space.

Ideas

- Play quick pick-up games of soccer, basketball, or other similar ball sport.
- Catch, tag, and jumping-rope are fun ways to get active for a few minutes.
- Put on some upbeat music and have a mini dance session to a few songs.
- Walk & Talk – take 10 minutes and make this a special part of the session, where your mentee gets to guide the conversation.
- Get the students out of their chairs and lead some stretching exercises (See Appendix C).
- Read books that explore being active (i.e. athlete bios, adventure stories).
- Have engaged conversations about how being physically active fits into daily life.
- Incorporate activity into reading sessions (i.e. stand while reading aloud, alternating balancing on one leg)

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, Chapter 3: Active Children and Adolescents. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Examples of Moderate- and Vigorous – Intensity Aerobic Physical Activities and Muscle – and Bone- Strengthening Activities for Children and Adolescents

Type of Physical Activity	Age Group	
	Children	Adolescents
Moderate-intensity aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active recreation, such as hiking, skateboarding, rollerblading Bicycle riding Brisk walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active recreation, such as canoeing, hiking, skateboarding, rollerblading Brisk walking Bicycle riding (stationary or road bike) Housework and yard work, such as sweeping or pushing a lawn mower Games that require catching and throwing, such as baseball and softball
Vigorous-intensity aerobic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active games involving running and chasing, such as tag Bicycle riding Jumping rope Martial arts, such as karate Running Sports such as soccer, ice or field hockey, basketball, swimming, tennis Cross-country skiing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active games involving running and chasing, such as flag football Bicycle riding Jumping rope Martial arts, such as karate Running Sports such as soccer, ice or field hockey, basketball, swimming, tennis Cross-country skiing
Muscle-strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games such as tug-of-war Modified push ups (with knees on the floor) Resistance exercises using body weight or resistance bands Rope or tree climbing Sit-ups (curl-ups or crunches) Swinging on playground equipment/bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games such as tug-of-war Push-ups and pull-ups Resistance exercises with exercise bands, weight machines, hand-held weights Climbing wall Sit-ups (curl-ups or crunches)
Bone-strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, tennis Jumping rope Running Hopping, skipping, jumping Games such as hopscotch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, tennis Jumping rope Running Hopping, skipping, jumping

Vermont State Parks Top 5 Parks for Hiking

- Mt. Ascutney State Park - Ascutney
- Gifford Woods State Park - Killington
- Underhill State Park - Underhill
- Smugglers Notch State Park - Stowe
- Branbury State Park - Brandon

<http://www.vtstateparks.com/htm/top5hike.htm>

Vermont State Parks - Swimming

Northeast Parks

- Boulder Beach
- Brighton
- Crystal Lake
- Elmore
- Green River Reservoir
- Kettle Pond
- Little River
- Maidstone
- Ricker Pond
- Stillwater
- Waterbury Center

Southeast Parks

- Camp Plymouth
- Jamaica
- Silver Lake
- Wilgus

Southwest Parks

- Bomoseen
- Branbury
- Button Bay
- Emerald Lake
- Half Moon Pond
- Kingsland Bay
- Shaftsbury
- St. Catherine

Northwest Parks

- Alburg Dunes
- Burton Island
- Grand Isle
- Kamp Kill Kare
- Knight Island
- Knight Point
- Lake Carmi
- North Hero
- Sand Bar
- Woods Island

<http://www.vtstateparks.com/pdfs/swimming.pdf>

Appendix C

Quadriceps Stretch

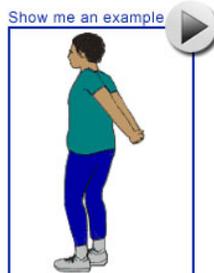


1. Stand next to a counter or sturdy chair with your feet about shoulder-width apart and your knees straight, but not locked.
2. With your left hand, hold a chair or counter for balance. Bend your right leg back and grasp your right ankle in your right hand until your thigh is perpendicular to the ground. Make sure you stand up straight—don't lean forward. (If you can't grasp your ankle in your hand, just keep your leg as close to perpendicular as possible and hold the bend, or place your foot on the seat of a chair.) You should feel a stretch in the front of the thigh.
3. Hold the stretch for a slow count of 20 to 30 seconds, breathing throughout.
4. Release your right ankle and repeat with the other leg.



Hamstring/Calf Stretch

1. Sit forward in a chair with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Extend your right leg in front of you, placing your right heel on the floor, and keeping your ankle relaxed. Don't lock your knee. Slowly lean forward at the hips, bending toward your right toes, trying to keep your back straight.
3. Hold the stretch for a slow count of 20 to 30, breathing throughout.
4. Sit up straight again and flex your right ankle so that your toes are pointing up toward the ceiling. Again, lean forward at the hips, bending toward your right toes and hold the stretch for a slow count of 20 to 30, breathing throughout.
5. Release the stretch and repeat with your left leg.



Chest and Arm Stretch

1. Stand with your arms at your sides and your feet about shoulder-width apart.
2. Extend both arms behind your back and clasp your hands together, if possible, retracting your shoulders.
3. Hold the stretch for a slow count of 20 to 30, breathing throughout.
4. Release the stretch and repeat.

