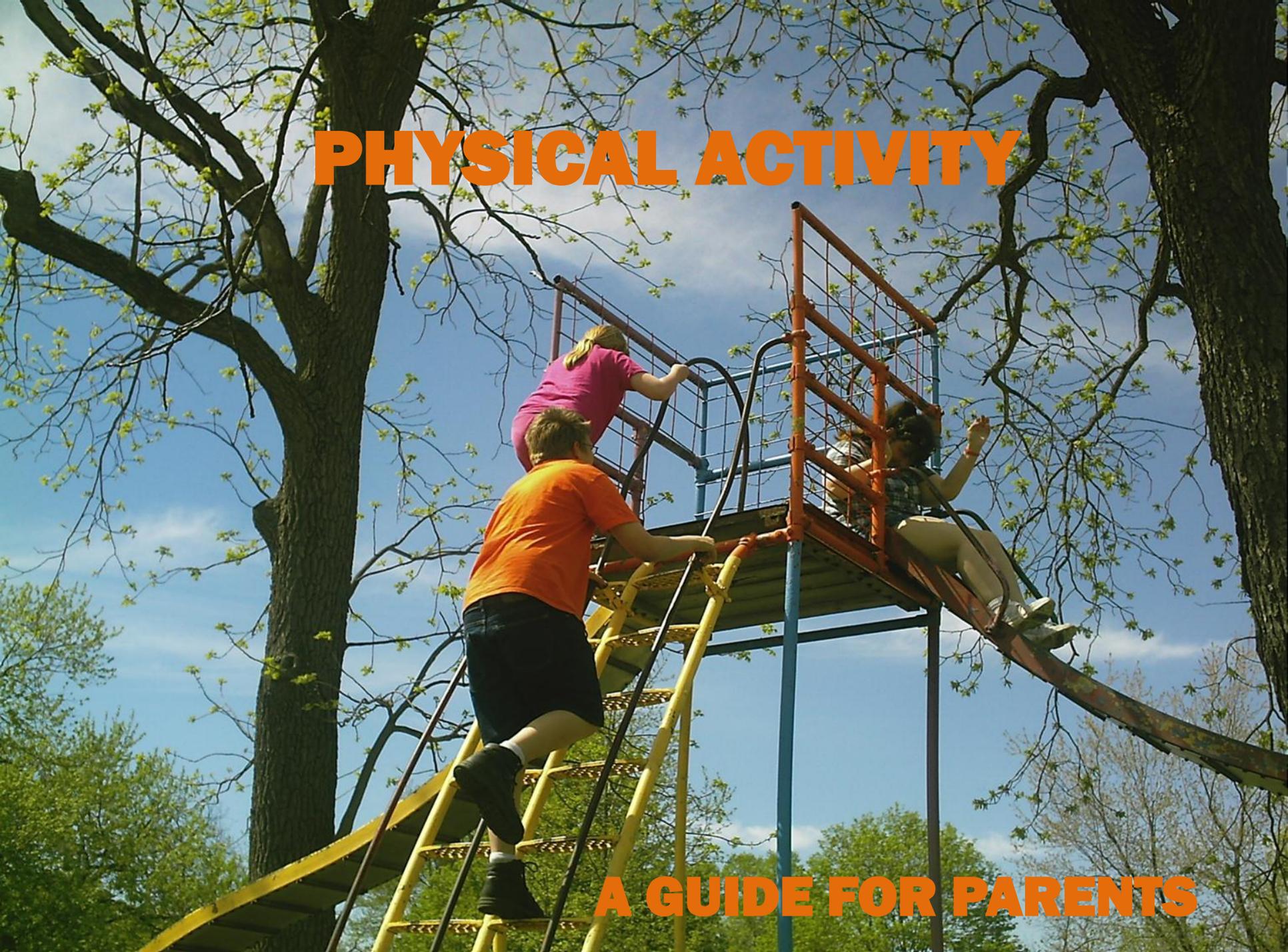


# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A photograph of three children playing on a colorful metal playground structure. One child in a pink shirt is on a platform, another in an orange shirt is climbing a yellow ladder, and a third in a dark shirt is sliding down a slide. The structure is set against a backdrop of large trees and a clear blue sky.

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

# School children (6-12 years)

Children 6-12 years old need 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity every day. Activity does not have to be all at one time; children should be active throughout the day.

Active children:

- Do better in school
- Sleep better at night
- Reach a healthy weight
- Feel better about themselves
- Get along with friends
- Grow strong bones and muscles
- Have more confidence to play sports and take part in gym class

# What counts as physical activity?

There are three types of physical activity that are important for children.



## 1. **Aerobic activities** (make you sweat and breathe harder)

- Running or walking quickly (power walking)
- Dancing
- House work, like sweeping the floors
- Games like tag, soccer, catch, and basketball
- Riding a bike
- Cheerleading and gymnastics
- Skateboarding
- Martial arts like karate



## **Muscle-strengthening activities** (make your muscles stronger)

- Push-ups and sit-ups
- Games like tug-of-war
- Resistance exercises using body weight or exercise bands
- Cheerleading and gymnastics

## **Bone-strengthening** (activities make your bones stronger)

- Hopping and skipping
- Jumping rope
- Running
- Sports like basketball, gymnastics, and tennis



As children get older, they spend more time going to school, hanging out with friends, watching TV, and using the computer. These activities can become more important to a child than physical activity. As a parent, you can help shape your child's attitudes and behaviors toward physical activity;

- Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself.
- Make physical activity part of your family's daily routine by taking family walks or playing active games together.
- Give your children equipment that encourages physical activity.
- Take young people to places where they can be active, such as public parks, community baseball fields or basketball courts.
- Be positive about the physical activities in which your child participates and encourage them to be interested in new activities.
- Make physical activity fun. Fun activities can be anything your child enjoys, either structured or non-structured. Activities can range from team sports or individual sports to recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, swimming, playground activities or free-time play.
- Instead of watching television after dinner, encourage your child to find fun activities to do on their own or with friends and family, such as walking, playing chase or riding bikes.
- Be safe! Always provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads or knee pads and ensure that activity is age-appropriate.

## What if my child has a disability?

Physical activity is important for all children. It's best to talk with a health care provider before your child begins a physical activity routine. Try to get advice from a professional with experience in physical activity and disability. They can tell you more about the amounts and types of physical activity that are appropriate for your child's abilities.



## Help your child move more!

- Choose the right activities for your child's age and abilities
- Give your child plenty of chances to be active
- Set up a schedule for activity and make it a part of everyday life
- Be a role model
- Keep the focus on fun
- Don't be a couch potato