

Children's Health

Select A VERB™, Enjoy For 60 Minutes, Repeat Daily

(NAPSA)—Concerns about childhood obesity and health have spread rapidly across the United States since studies showed that childhood obesity levels have doubled in the last 20 years and may lead to the first generation of U.S. youth to lead shorter lives than their parents as a result of obesity-related disease.

Dr. James Marks, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, encourages a commonsense approach in fighting childhood obesity. As a starting point, Dr. Marks suggests parents visit www.VERBparents.com, which contains new ideas and resources to help parents in efforts to encourage their children to increase levels of physical activity.

VERB™ is a campaign developed by health experts at the CDC to inspire children to be physically active on a daily basis. The campaign has been supported by celebrities and professional athletes, such as Olympic gold medal speed skater Apolo Ohno and NBA star Tracy McGrady. Following are Dr. Marks' 10 tips for parents to encourage their children to live a physically active life:

1. Convince your children that they don't need to be superstar athletes to enjoy physical activity. There's a physical activity out there for every child, whatever their skill level.

2. If homework and extra curricular activities consume large



Sixty minutes of physical activity every day can help your child maintain a healthy weight.

portions of your child's day, leaving little time for 60 consecutive minutes of activity, then accumulate 60 minutes of activity over the course of the day. Walk for 10 minutes in the morning. Shoot baskets in the driveway for 20 minutes after school. Play tag for 30 minutes after dinner.

3. Enlist your community's resources in helping your children get active. If you're not sure about what's available locally, log onto www.VERBparents.com.

4. Parents who are active have a tremendous impact on the way their children perceive physical activity. Children tend to follow

their parents' example—even if it's simply a daily walk.

5. Make physical activity an adventure that children will enjoy. For example, instead of driving to the store or to visit neighbors, make time in your schedule to walk or bike on various errands.

6. For those times when driving is inevitable, keep a ball or jump rope or Frisbee or anything else in your trunk that your children can play with in a physically active manner.

7. Adding an element of daily physical activity into family trips and vacations is a great way to set the stage for healthy habits.

8. In addition to encouraging your children to get a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every day, experts suggest keeping the amount of time your children spend playing video games and watching TV to no more than two hours per day.

9. In previous generations, parents could rely on schools to offer physical education curriculum that would provide daily physical activity. Today's parents should take an active role and advocate for a stronger presence of physical activity in school.

10. Support your children in whatever active endeavor they choose. Even if you love baseball, if your children want to skateboard or dance or march in the band, be sensitive to their desires and help them achieve their goals.

To learn more, visit www.VERBparents.com.