

## Tips For Keeping Children Active After School

(NAPSA)—With kids sitting at their desks for six or more hours a day at school—plus time spent doing homework at the table or at the computer—it is critically important for parents to find ways for their children to stay active.

That's because almost two-thirds of the nation's youth are failing to get the necessary exercise and activity for weight management and good health. Experts agree that school-age children need to be moderately to vigorously active for a minimum of 60 minutes a day.

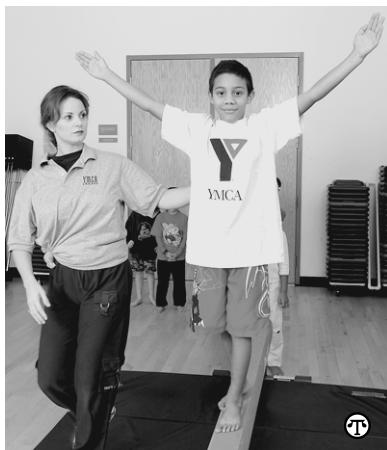
Unfortunately, hectic work and family schedules allow little time for kids to participate in physical activity. Schools struggling to improve academic achievement are dropping physical education and recess and assigning more homework, which leaves even less time for sports and other forms of physical activity.

YMCA experts believe it is important that parents strike a good balance between academic enrichment and playful, recreational activities for their children before, during and after school. The YMCA offers the following tips to ensure your child gets at least 60 minutes of activity each day:

- Limit the amount of time your children spend in front of the television or computer to fewer than two hours per day.

- Help your children understand the importance of fair play, teamwork, sportsmanship and having fun. With more than 9,000 afterschool programs across the country, the nation's YMCAs are a leading resource for parents looking to find fun activities for their children.

- Send your kids outside for playtime. Children who spend time



**Kids who stay active after school are more likely to stay in shape and maintain a healthy weight.**

outdoors are more likely to engage in playful physical activities.

- Plan family activities. Find ways for the family to be active together, such as taking a short walk after dinner, walking instead of driving to the store, riding bikes or swimming.

- Serve as positive role models for your children regarding regular physical activity. Children often learn by emulating adults they love and respect. Show your children how important it is to stay active by making it a priority in your life.

“Like adults, children need physical activity,” said Barbara Roth, YMCA of the USA specialist for child care afterschool programs. “Physical activity helps children manage stress, reduce frustration, create energy and, most of all, have fun while developing healthy habits that will last a lifetime.”

For information about YMCA afterschool programs near you, visit [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net).