1/3 of American children and teens are overweight or obese.

**HEALTH BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

- Reduced blood pressure, cholesterol levels, anxiety and depression
- Reduced risk for diabetes, asthma, cancer, arthritis
- Increased mental health and self esteem

*(measured by number of laps on PACER)*

**ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

- Higher fitness levels* are associated with spelling and math *achievement*
- Daily physical activity is associated with higher school attendance

75% of children 6-15 years do not meet US physical activity recommendations

- Physically fit students had the best average standardized test scores in reading, math, science, and social studies
- Lack of physical fitness was associated with the lowest test scores
- Exercise significantly increased the odds of scoring >75th percentile on standardized tests
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH

“Because of the increasing rates of obesity, unhealthy eating habits and physical inactivity, we may see the first generation that will be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.”

–US Surgeon General Richard Carmona

BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

• Daily physical activity reduces body mass index (BMI) and is associated with cardiovascular and metabolic benefits including:
  o Reduced blood pressure and cholesterol levels¹
  o Boosts in bone health and development²
  o Improvements in mental health, self esteem; lower levels of depression and anxiety³
  o Reduced risk for diabetes, coronary artery disease, arthritis, asthma, stroke, and cancer⁴

• Youth who remained active during a 6 year follow-up period had more favorable cardiometabolic risk profiles (lower insulin and triglyceride, lower adiposity, and lower cholesterol) than those who remained inactive.²

• A meta-analysis of studies has found that there are consistent negative associations between mental health and sedentary behaviors.⁵

CHILDREN TODAY

Sedentary behavior is emerging as a serious, independent chronic disease risk factor.

32% of US children and youth are overweight²

17% of US children are obese²

Prevalence of obesity tripled from 1971 to 2011⁶

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and youth engage in at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day.

75% of children and youth 6-15 years do not meet the US physical activity requirements²

Childhood obesity is the #1 health concern among parents in the US, topping drug abuse and smoking.⁶

ACADEMIC BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Standardized Tests

• In a two-year study of fifth graders in West Virginia it was found that students who had the best average standardized test scores in reading, math, science, and social studies were highly physically fit at the start and end of the study. Furthermore, children who were not physically fit from fifth to seventh grade had the lowest test scores¹.

• In a study of Chilean School-Age Children it was found that children who exercised more than 4 hours/week significantly increased the odds of scoring in the ≥ 50th percentile and the ≥ 75th percentile on their SIMCE composite z-scores².

Grades and Attendance

• In a study of 2nd and 3rd grade students from the Midwest it was found that fitness, measured by number of laps on the PACER, were significantly associated with spelling and math achievement³.

• “Children who participated in daily physical activity showed higher rates of school attendance over a 90 day period”⁴.

• The results from the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health showed that adolescents who were active in school averaged higher grades⁵.