



The Healthy Kids Community Challenge



What's the key to success for the Healthy Kids Community Challenge? Committed local partners like you. We need your help to promote this important program. We also need you to help think creatively about what you can do to make positive changes in your community.

You could have a huge influence on the policies and programs we create for Ontario kids. You could also shape the environments where our children live, learn, eat, and play.

How the Healthy Kids Community Challenge works

Every 9 months or so, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care launches a new theme. The themes will relate to 2 key factors associated with healthy kids: physical activity and healthy eating. Our community will rally around each theme and take on projects that help to make it real. We will choose the ways that work best for us and fit well with where we live.

We have seen great success with our first theme, **Run. Jump. Play. Every Day.** And we are looking for committed partners to help support our next theme, **Water does Wonders.**

What kids and families will gain

- Better knowledge and skills for staying active and eating well.
- Better access and fewer barriers to healthy choices.
- Safe, supportive environments that make it easier to be active and choose healthy food.
- Closer links with the community and more chances to be involved and included.

How you'll benefit as a partner

- You may be able to expand programs you've already started or start new ones to benefit your community.
- You'll get added exposure for your business, program, or service – for instance, through local media coverage, or events that bring our community together.
- This may be a chance to introduce or enhance programs and policies in your workplace. You may be able to support employees and their families in making healthy living choices.
- You will be mobilizing and joining forces with other community partners. That will make all of our efforts stronger and form bonds that will last beyond the Healthy Kids Community Challenge itself.

Theme 2 – Water does Wonders

This theme promotes the benefits of drinking water. It's about helping kids make healthy choices to quench their thirst. When kids have easy access to safe, free drinking water, we know that:

- It helps increase how much water they drink overall.
- It keeps them hydrated – the body functions poorly when it lacks water.
- If they are drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, it reduces their intake of calories or energy from sugar.

Let's make water the drink of choice

Water is essential for life. It makes up more than half of a child's weight. Children need a steady supply to keep their bodies working properly.

Water contains no sugar, calories, caffeine, or added ingredients like preservatives. It's the right choice for sipping throughout the day.

Plain milk can be another healthy choice for most kids. Fortified, unsweetened soy drinks are a good option for children who cannot drink milk.

Drinks that contain added sugar are not a healthy choice – especially when these drinks start to replace the nutritious drinks and foods that growing children need. They add extra sugar and calories to kids' diets.

Researchers say that sugar-sweetened drinks are the single largest source of sugar in kids' diets. One study found that the risk of becoming obese increased by 60% for every additional sugar-sweetened drink a child consumed each day.

Too much sugar intake has other bad health outcomes as well. They include an increase in the number of dental cavities and a greater risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

How to get involved

Our community will be working hard to support healthy drink choices for our children and families. We can do this through campaigns, policies, programs, and environmental supports.

Partners like you have an important role to play. For example, you could help:

- Educate families about healthy drink habits and choices.
- Build a more supportive food environment with easy, appealing access to fresh drinking water. We need to make drinking water the easy choice in the places where kids spend time – schools, community centres, public facilities, sports and recreation centres, and at community events.

Think about what else your business or organization can do to support access to safe, free drinking water for local kids and families. Our community is in a great position to help kids make healthier choices because we are part of Healthy Kids Community Challenge.

To learn more about the activities in our community or to get involved, contact your Healthy Kids Community Challenge project manager:

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Name

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Email

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Telephone

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Website



Learn more about healthy eating for kids at Ontario.ca/healthykids

