Help Kids Stay Active and Safe This Winter

Cold weather, icy streets and fewer daylight hours can make outdoor and physical activity difficult in the winter. However, it is still important for kids to get out and get moving. It is also important to help children stay safe while enjoying winter recreation activities. Missoula Parks and Recreation and Safe Kids Missoula share a common goal of keeping kids safe and healthy so they have the opportunity to become healthy adults, and encourage families to help kids stay safe and active this winter.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day, but many children do not participate in physical activity for 60 minutes or more. Many national agencies, including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), list the childhood obesity epidemic as one of the most important issues in our country. Recently, the average life span dropped for the first time in modern history, with obesity being a factor in that decline. Childhood obesity can lead to many physical, emotional, and mental health issues that last throughout life. Healthy habits from a young age can go a long way for an individual’s health and reduce the chance of chronic health conditions.

Missoula Parks and Recreation provides a variety of programs and activities to get kids-- and adults-- of all ages and abilities moving to achieve their daily activity goals, including swim lessons, contact sport alternatives and outdoor recreation skills. Above all, we promote health and wellness in the community through low-cost recreation programs and convenient access to park facilities.

So, what can you, your family, and your friends do to stay active and safe this winter?
1. Reduce screen time and get into a healthy routine of activity. Find your nearest park, sidewalk, trail, or open space and use it with your friends and family.
2. Eat healthy, balanced meals and snacks, and drink plenty of water
3. Wear proper equipment, which may include shin guards, mouth guards and helmets when participating in activities such as skiing, snowboarding or playing ice hockey.
4. Wear warm clothing if recreating outdoors, and remember to use sunscreen!
5. Sign up for a Missoula Parks and Recreation program! Share The Fun Youth Recreation Grants are available for families who need financial assistance.

Missoula Parks and Recreation services are essential to the quality of life for individuals, families, our community, and to the environment. Public parks and recreation opportunities contribute to a feeling of well-being, can help combat obesity, gets citizens of all ages outdoors and strengthen community connections.

For more information about Missoula Parks and Recreation programs, please visit missoulaparks.org, or stop by the office inside the Currents Aquatics Center. Keep up with Missoula Parks and Recreation on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter using the handle @missoulaparks and check out the Summer/Fall Recreation Guide to be released in late March. For more winter and sports safety tips, contact Safe Kids Missoula at 406.926.2522 or visit fchwmt.org/safe-kids-missoula.

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