

The Active NDN

"Exercise & Native Youth"

Volume 1 June, 2007



What is the Active NDN?

The Northern California Indian Development Council, Inc. (NCIDC) recently received an award from the State of California, Department of Community Services and Development-Targeted Initiative Funds. NCIDC will use this grant to provide information statewide regarding youth obesity prevention and reduction. Information about related topics such as exercise, food and nutrition, and community resources will be shared with Tribes and Tribally operated health clinics, Indian Head Start Centers, Indian Education Centers, and other similar youth related Indian programs.



No. Calif. Brush Dance demonstration

With this grant we seek to help California Indian programs find information leading to changes in the behavior of American Indian youth towards more positive choices that includes exercise and healthy eating. The *Active NDN* is grounded in the hope that by looking to our culture, Native people can achieve the health and longevity of our ancestors.

This project will produce four issues of a quarterly newsletter, targeted at the staff of local Indian Tribes

and agencies. This newsletter will be available both in PDF format on the web, as well as distributed in printed format to Indian Tribes and agencies throughout California. *The Active NDN* will focus on activities, resources and information which can be incorporated into your operations to further the goal of obesity reduction and prevention in Indian youth, as well as related food, nutrition and health issues.

In addition to this quarterly newsletter, NCIDC will provide some "generic" newsletter articles for you to include in your own communication with clients/members. These articles will target American Indian youth and their families, explaining healthful activities and eating patterns in an interesting and fun way. The articles are available for download and will be provided in MS Word format for use by any Tribe or Indian organization served by this program. You may add these articles to your own newsletters, modify the content as you see fit and distribute to your local population.

We encourage you to email us with your advise, questions, comments, and evaluations regarding any aspect of this newsletter and/or our Obesity Prevention and Reduction Program at activendn@ncidc.org.

Read, learn and enjoy.

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Fitness & Your 6 to 12 Year Old

Kids 6 to 12 years old need physical activity to build strength, coordination, confidence and to lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle as they grow. It's a time when kids gain more control over how active they are and what activities they choose.

It is important to give your school-age child as many opportunities as possible to be active and to make sure your child is involved in a variety of activities, sports and games that are a good fit for his or her personality, ability, age and interests. Brainstorm together and let your child choose activities that feel right. Typically kids won't mind a daily dose of fitness, as long as it's fun, fun, fun!

The National Association for Sports and Physical Education recommends that school age children:

- Get 60 minutes or more of activity every day
- Be active throughout the day, which can be broken down into mini-workouts of 15 minutes
- Avoid periods of inactivity of 2 hours or more

Many parents and kids think of organized sports when they think of fitness. There are many advantages to signing up your child for a softball team however, practice and games once or twice a week will not be enough to reach activity goals. In addition, parents can no longer rely on physical education in the schools to provide enough physical activity for children. There are many ways you can keep your kids moving at home.

- Incorporate physical activity into the daily routine. From household chores to an after dinner walk, keep your family active every day.
- Allow enough time for free play. Kids can burn more calories and have more fun when left to their own devices. Playing tag, riding bikes around the neighborhood, and building snowmen are some favorite childhood pastimes.
- Keep a variety of games and sports equipment on hand. It doesn't have to be expensive, an assortment of balls, hula-hoops or jump ropes can keep kids busy for hours.
- Be active together. It will get you moving and kids love to play with their parents.
- Limit time spent in lazy activities, such as watching TV, going online, and playing video games.

When you have exhausted the ideas at home, take advantage of local playgrounds and athletic fields. Make family fitness outings part of your regular routine. Part

of helping your child commit to fitness includes being a positive role model by showing your child that exercise is important by regularly exercising yourself.

As you're thinking about your child's fitness, it's important to keep in mind your child's age and developmental level, natural abilities, and interests. Through physical activities, kids can learn about setting goals, meeting challenges, sportsmanship, teamwork, and the value of practice.

Between the ages of 6 and 8, kids are sharpening their basic physical skills like jumping, throwing, kicking, and catching. Some kids enjoy doing this in organized sports teams, but non-competitive leagues are the best choice for younger kids. Coaching your child's team or cheering from the stands on game days are ways you can show your support.

Kids who are 9 to 12 years old are refining, improving, and coordinating their skills. It's a time when a child's commitment to a sport may be reaffirmed, while other kids may drop out as competition heats up and level of play improves. It's okay if your child is not interested in traditional sports, but it's important to find alternative ways to be active.

If your child doesn't like soccer, basketball, or other team sports, explore other options and encourage your child to be creative. There are plenty of fun and challenging activities that your child might like more: karate, fencing, golf, bicycling, skateboarding, and tennis to name just a few.

Kids who enjoy sports and exercise tend to stay active throughout their lives. And staying fit can help improve self-esteem, help maintain a healthy weight, and decrease the risk of serious illnesses such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

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For more information please call (707) 445-8451 or email activendn@ncidc.org



Obesity Prevention Projects in Indian Country

The NCIDC is pleased to announce that we have funded our first seven mini-grants for this year for Native American Youth Obesity Reduction or Prevention Programs.

The purpose of these mini-grants is to provide resources that will allow Indian organizations to focus on reducing the impacts of obesity, increasing lifelong physical activity, enhancing nutrition and improving health among American Indian youth.

The following is a list of entities funded through this round of our mini-grant RFP process:

American Indian Center of Central California, an American Indian Education Center (AIEC), Fresno County, \$5,000.

Elk Valley Rancheria Head Start (C.R.I.H.B.), Del Norte County, \$3,347.

American Indian Child Resource Center, an AIEC, Alameda County (Oakland), \$5,000.

Local Indians for Education (LIFE), a CSBG sub-contractor and AIEC, Shasta County, \$5,000.

San Diego American Indian Health Center, San Diego County, \$5,000.

Woodsford Indian Education Center (AIEC), Alpine County, \$5,000.

Coyote Valley AIEC, Mendocino County, \$5,000.

In each of our next four newsletters, we will be profiling some of the proposed activities of these mini-grantees.

In this edition we will provide a summary of two projects: The American Indian Center of Central California Youth Obesity Prevention Project in Fresno; and the San Diego American Indian Health Center Summer Culture Camp.

The American Indian Center of Central California (AICCC) Youth Obesity Prevention Project

This project targets central California's rural rancheria youth by providing activities, education, and experience addressing physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental engagement for obesity prevention.

The activities of the project include development of a community garden; nutritional training regarding garden food preparation; cultural plant gathering and food preparation; boating, fishing, identification of native plants and animals; hiking; camping; and swimming and water safety training.

The project will bring inter-generational teaching and knowledge of healthy lifestyles to the youth involved. The culmination of the activities will be a fall feast which will include food prepared from the garden, and youth photo presentations of activities.

San Diego American Indian Health Center Native Youth Culture Camp

The goal of the Culture Camp is to provide a holistic approach to wellness for the youth including aspects of Mind, Spirit, and Health. Daily activities will include health education and physical activities (i.e. walking, running, swimming, surfing, and bicycling). Pedometers will be distributed on the first day of camp. At the end of camp, a reward will be given to the youth that accomplishes the most steps over the course of the week. Educational materials will focus on exercise and dietary health.

The camp will include activities that foster an understanding of traditional ways and values with many different interactive aspects of cultural experiences such as dancing, storytelling, crafts, gourd-making, and local traditions. Families are encouraged to participate with youth to foster healthy lifestyles within the entire family.

There is currently a second round of Mini-grants available, targeted at eligible Tribal Governments located within California. Obesity Reduction is included as one of several eligible areas of service in the RFP. The submission deadline for the Tribal RFP is July 27, 2007. The RFP can be downloaded from www.ncidc.org (see link to RFP at bottom of [ncidc.org](http://www.ncidc.org) home page).

Infant and Toddler Exercise

Over the past few years, there has been an explosion of exercise programs for infants and toddlers. Swim classes, yoga classes, playgroups, parent/child dance and aerobics, and the list goes on. Some of these classes are organized by for-profit franchises, others are non-profit in nature. The expense of these activities for parents can vary as well, with some being subsidized for low-income participants, and others being very expensive.

It is not mandatory to have an infant or toddler in a structured program for exercise and development, however it may help parents to focus on keeping both themselves and their child active. Personally, I have a one year old at home, and Mom and I have found that structured programs are actually fun, something that both the parent and child benefit from and enjoy!

During the first years of life, children gradually gain control over their developing bodies. They will learn to roll over, then to sit up by themselves, and eventually to crawl, walk, and run. You will find that your infant or toddler will love the successes they achieve and will delight in practicing newly learned activities over and over again.

According to Henry Bernstein, M.D, associate chief of the Division of General Pediatrics and the director of Primary Care at Children's Hospital, Boston "There are many such structured programs that focus on child development, offering parents the opportunity to more easily follow their child's developmental progress over time. A safe environment is created for kids to attain the motor skills and confidence they need to grow and explore the world around them. The activities are planned and tailored to age-specific groups, making it easier for children to achieve milestones. These programs are fun for kids and allow them to interact with each other.



Parent and Child Swimming Class

Parents may also find the social atmosphere pleasant, exposing them to other adults with same-aged children and common life experiences."

If you do not have any classes for infants or toddlers in your area, consider suggesting to local agencies that they create one. Tribal or other local recreational programs can start by sponsoring a "playgroup" in the local gym or just a large meeting room. Parents can provide a volunteer base to operate the group, making sure the room is set up and put away for each session and posting flyers to promote the group. Donations can be solicited from a wide variety of sources for age-appropriate toys, including parents of the group as their children grow too old to play with their infant toys.

Toys for active physical play are important for this age group. They also start make believe play in this age group. Of particular interest are sorting and fitting toys, as well as musical instruments.

Toys for playgroups of infants and toddlers ages 1-3:

- * Push-pull and ride-on toys
- * Small tricycle and wagon
- * Balls over 1.75 inches in diameter
- * Play appliances, food and utensils
- * Dolls, stuffed animals and doll furniture
- * Simple puzzles, shape sorters, pegboards and rings on pegs
- * Blocks
- * Rhythm instruments
- * Picture books



Infant and Toddler Playgroup

Other activities that may already be in your community, or that could be considered for a new program, include: "Baby Boogie" style activities that incorporate music, dance and rhyme sessions for pre-school children and their parents; Baby Yoga classes for parent and baby; and Introduction to Swimming classes for parents and toddlers.

Whether you are attending an existing infant/toddler class, or trying to advocate to start a new one, the safety factor should always be the highest priority. Each

individual program must be scrutinized to see that the plans and designs are indeed suitable for the particular child in question. Furthermore, no matter how appropriate the activities and equipment may be, it is important to make sure that proper supervision is practiced at all times. Finally, if there is any doubt about any aspect of the program itself or a child's participation in it, a pediatrician should be consulted beforehand.

Another aspect of starting a infant or toddler program is educating the staff, volunteers, and parents. See if you can get the local Indian Health Service program to offer no-cost Infant CPR and First-Aid training to interested staff and parents. The best place to start is the local IHS Public Health Nurse or program. (Red Cross also offers services, but the cost can be too high for parents to afford). Swimming classes in particular require trained staff or volunteers to operate safely.

The agency sponsoring the activity should also consider appropriate screening of staff through the Department of Justice background check system, http://ccl.d.ca.gov/TheBackgro_1785.htm

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<http://life.familyeducation.com/baby/fitness/40599.html>

<http://www.uwbg.org/successbysix/remainshealthy/toysafety>

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0816/is_1992_Feb/ai_12154392



Getting Teens to Exercise

Teens may need some encouragement when it comes to getting enough exercise on a regular basis. Here are ten good reasons to present to your teen to encourage them to exercise:

1. Aerobic exercise can help make feelings of depression and frustrations simply disappear. After 20 or more minutes of continuous slow running, your body releases powerful hormones (called endorphins) that start pumping through your bloodstream, producing a strong "runner's high" and does wonders for your self-esteem.

2. It makes you mentally feel good. Not everyone has the discipline and ability to set a goal and reach it with slow, steady and hard work.

3. It makes you physically feel great. The progress

is truly dramatic! Every time you work out, your muscles develop strength and power. Your lungs hold mega amounts of oxygen. You'll notice in full-length mirrors you look awesome. Forget about dieting, your metabolism will burn extra fat long after exercise.

4. The more exercise you do, the more energy you'll have for hours afterwards. Your body will kick into overdrive after a few weeks of conditioning and you will feel more energized than you ever have before.



5. The benefits of cross training extend to all sports. Aerobic exercise conditions your body to perform longer, faster and more efficiently. Wait until your coach sees you play basketball, baseball or other sports.

6. It's a perfect time to be alone and think. You'll be blown away by the creative thoughts – ideas for research papers, ways to end that fight with your best friend and what to say to that cute boy or girl.

7. It's an awesome time to visit with friends. Talking slows your pace, but you'll probably exercise for longer periods of time.

8. Your heart becomes more efficient at pumping blood and oxygen through your body every time you aerobically exercise. You'll think more clearly. You'll raise HDL levels (high density lipoprotein) in your arteries to protect you from heart attacks and strokes when you get really old – like in your 40's and 50's.

9. Running doesn't cost much. Splurge on good shoes, but spend less on shorts, t-shirts and sweats.

10. Running and walking are convenient. All you have to do is walk out the door and put one foot in front of the other.

Finding an activity teens enjoy is key -- if the activity is not fun, they probably won't stick to a routine.

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<http://life.familyeducation.com/teen/exercise/29461.html>

The Dangers of Summer

Summer time is usually what we look forward to for rest relaxation and a vacation. Take care, that break in the routine of students can lead them to a slippery slope down towards obesity. Researchers at the University of Ohio have shown that kids can gain up to 15 extra pounds over the summer if parents are not careful. With more free time, empty stomachs and boredom in front of you, it can be a battle. Just be prepared for the whining when you limit their screen time on computers, video games and television.

Make the summer full of fun and activities that you enjoyed as a child. Go swimming with your kids, at the pool, creek or beach. You can take them to summer outdoor activities such as pow-wows, gatherings and reunions where there are plenty of opportunities for them to meet cousins, friends and burn off energy. You can also explore your local area. Try hiking with families and point out traditional plants, herbs or medicines along the way. Spending more active time with the family reaps many rewards!

On all of these excursions you can save money and time by bringing along some healthy snacks. Ripe fruit is always refreshing and available at this time of year. A great idea is to serve it chilled or frozen. Whole grain snacks and some lean protein like sliced turkey will help energize the kids and keep a smile on your face during the new activities you choose to explore with your family.

If you can keep these ideas, activities and suggestions in balance with your workload and schedule, it will help the summer be an invigorating healthy break.

Pinêhfish Iin Móox Fíthi (Karuk)

(Coyote Has Smelly Feet)

Here is a game that you can play with young people that are hanging around the Tribal Offices this summer. Jump in and play yourself, but be sure and use your foot powder.

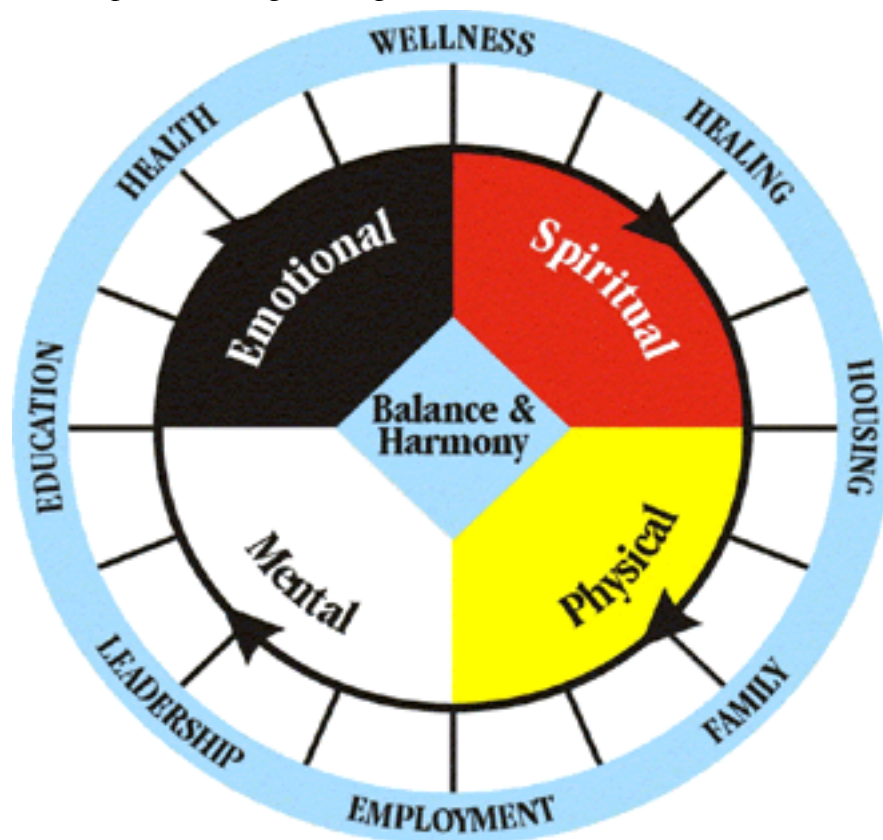
The game is called Coyote Has Smelly Feet and will help improve coordination and endurance in your students. All you need to play is four cones or any other kind of boundary markers.

Start by setting up the lay out of the “field”. It should be about 20 steps by 20 steps to give the kids and adults enough room to roll and play. Then pick 4

or 5 students to be “coyotes” (or whatever the word for trickster is in your language). Each “coyote” should have a line of kids behind them on opposite sides of the playing area.

Players in each of the lines should jog past coyote, while patting him and shouting **“COYOTE HAS SMELLY FEET!”**

The point of the game is to avoid coyote and his stink feet, don’t let him tag you if you can help it.



Integrated Native Lifestyle

When the last player pats coyote’s head then everyone runs to avoid being tagged. Coyote should prance about and snarl and trick as many kids into getting tagged as possible. If you are tagged then you are the next coyote. You can always pause and start over with new coyotes and catch your breath.

The activity in this article is adapted from the Pathways Curriculum from the University of New Mexico.