



The Development of a Leisure Lifestyle

Development of a leisure lifestyle includes participation in registered recreation programs, individual leisure, leisure activities shared with peers, as well as family leisure, which includes the time that parents and children spend together in specific activities, or in spontaneous ones. When children try a variety of different leisure experiences, they tend to discover which activities they like and dislike. As a child ages they develop activities they are passionate about and show commitment towards, these are core leisure interests. These core leisure interests often become life long interests.

Participating in an active leisure lifestyle enhances your child's development, improves fitness, overall health, social development, and provides benefits that encourage creativity, satisfaction, perceived competence, self-awareness, enjoyment and happiness.

Physical activity also plays an important role in, quality of life and independence in daily activities. Regular physical activity helps to improve strength, endurance, flexibility, energy level, self-esteem and confidence.

Physical literacy includes movement skills that allow your children to move competently and confidently in a wide range of physical activities. It is important to encourage physical literacy skills in children starting at a young age. Fundamental movement skills include running, balance, hopping, skipping, jumping, throwing, catching, kicking and striking. Without physical literacy, children may withdraw from physical activity and sports as they become older, limiting their range of choices during their leisure time.

Recreation and leisure is more than sports and social. It is holistic and includes activities and programs in many different areas such as:

- Art and Drama
- Sports
- Music
- Nature
- Animals
- Volunteering
- Spiritual
- Technology
- Social
- Etc.





The following shows the progression of how your child's leisure interests develop.

AGE: Birth - 2

- Parents encourage movement skills (the beginning of physical literacy)
- Playtime is when your child can actively explore the environment, practice cooperating, sharing, and dealing with conflict.
- Play strengthens thinking skills, language and literacy development
- Children start to develop independent play skills at home
- Children take part in family leisure activities such as biking (Weehoo or bike trailer), nature walks, going to the playground, visiting extended family, camping, playgroups, etc.
- Families participate in parent and child community recreation programs together with other parents and children. Examples include swimming, music, gym activities, games, outdoor activities, yoga etc.
- Limited community recreation programs are offered where children participate with their peers while parents watch
- Parents select the recreation program or family leisure experience for their child, often selection is based on parent interests, experiences or importance

AGE: 2 - 5

- Children are encouraged to interact with other children in recreation activities
- Children need opportunities to express themselves through movement and imaginary play. Play that allows children to create new ideas and solutions helps to develop their thinking and social skills
- Physical activity continues to support learning and social development
- Physical skill – physical literacy continues to develop a broader range of skills
- Children learn the basics of skills that are further developed through team sports, school, social peer interventions
- Family leisure continues, both spontaneous and organized activities
- Some parent and child recreation programs are still available such as swimming, soccer, basketball, floor hockey, etc.
- Children participate in community recreation programs with their peers, parents watch from the sidelines
- Recreation programs include a structure component such as circle time
- Parents explore different facilities when recreation programs are offered
- Time for exploratory activities on an individual level
- Children are dependent of parents for recreation entertainment but are starting to develop and express likes and dislikes
- Children start to entertain themselves at home





AGE: 5 - 11

- Children participate in team sports or group activities
- Children begin to participate in competitive experiences
- Recreation and social skills are further developed
- Children will entertain themselves at home for longer periods of time
- Friendships are further developed
- Children express likes and dislikes and are starting to ask for involvement in specific recreation activities
- At school children may be involved in new experiences in physical education and class trips/outings, such as skating
- Leisure activities and experiences influence self-esteem and self-awareness

AGE: 12 - 16

- Continued involvement in team and competitive activities
- Refining and perfecting physical, athletic, artistic, musical skills, etc.
- Participating in recreation activities for entertainment and social interaction
- Desire to participate in recreation without parents
- Developing leadership skills and responsibility skills
- In control of leisure lifestyle with definite specific interests and preferences
- Leisure activities influence self-esteem and self-awareness
- Family leisure remains important but to a lesser extent

AGE: 16+

- Participate in areas of interest and preference
- Ability to independently explore new leisure options
- Leadership skills and leadership style further developed
- Expressing a leisure lifestyle influenced by past experiences that will carry through the rest of life
- Leisure activities influence perception of self and self-esteem
- Leisure activities influence peer relationships

**For more information, questions or consults please call
KidsAbility and ask for a Recreation Therapist
519-886-8886 or 1-888-372-2259**

