

Many parents lack the confidence to get their kids to exercise

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If Canadian parents are going to get their kids to exercise more, they need more than just public awareness campaigns.

Parents exposed to one such national campaign were actually less confident they could increase their children's [activity levels](#), according to a recent UBC study.

"With statistics outside this study showing 88 per cent of parents believe their children exercise enough and only seven per cent of [kids](#) meet recommended guidelines, it is clear more needs to be done," says Heather Gainforth, an assistant professor of health and exercise sciences at UBC's Okanagan campus. "While mass media campaigns appear to increase awareness, parents need the support of public policies and programs to help them successfully encourage behaviour change.

"Without that support, parents may not have the tools they need to help their kids become more active."

As part of her study, Gainforth surveyed 700 parents of children aged 5 to 17 across Canada three months after ParticipACTION's 2011 "Think Again" campaign aired, and another 700 parents 15 months after.

Gainforth's study found that parents who saw the campaign were on average less confident that they could encourage their kids to exercise more.

The campaign was designed to raise awareness among [parents](#) of physical activity guidelines, which call for kids to get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise a day.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), a lack of exercise is one of the contributing factors that has led more than 25 per cent of Canadian children to become overweight or obese.

Weight problems, according to the PHAC, are a contributor to increased incidents of Type 2 diabetes and [high blood pressure](#) in [children](#) and young people.

Gainforth's study was recently published in the journal of *Health, Education and Behaviour*.

Provided by University of British Columbia

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