

Support for Physical Activity



How does social support help?

Support from friends will help your child do more GREEN activity.

It isn't always easy to do GREEN activity. You know that. There can be problems with weather. There can be challenges in scheduling time. There may be some special clothing or gear your child needs.

But these are usually not the biggest barriers. You can help your child plan for them.

Often the biggest barrier is not being sure you want to do it. Lack of desire. Feeling unmotivated. It may be hard to get up and do an activity. Hard to feel motivated. Your child may be bored. He may not feel like doing it. He may be tired.

Or maybe he doesn't feeling like pushing himself to do more. He thinks, "Who needs to do Fitness Boosters? Why should I do GREEN activity 45 minutes a day? I'm fine doing 30."

And that's where support comes in. It's *easier to keep going* when friends and other people encourage you. It's

easier to push yourself when friends are doing it with you. It's also more fun.



Just how important is social support right now?

You and your child are meeting with your PAL less often than before. Your child needs to do more on her own. She is learning to be her own lifestyle coach. That makes support even more important now. Having support will help her have continued success. The more support she has, the easier it is to make healthy lifestyle changes. The stronger her support, the better.



Getting support will help your child meet 4 key goals:

- ⊙ Limit RED foods
- ⊙ Increase GREEN activity
- ⊙ Hold Family Meetings
- ⊙ Keep Track of Weight



How can I help my son build a support network?

► Make it a priority.

Make sure your child understands why it's so important to have a support network. He won't see his PAL as often. He'll have your support. But he'll still have to make more decisions on his own. That's why support from friends is so important.

► Help him make a list.

He should list people he would like to do activities with. He can start by listing friends he spends time with at school, after school, or on weekends.

Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- Helping your child identify friends who can support healthy lifestyle changes
- Asking for support
- What to do if a friend doesn't come through



Support from friends makes it easier to do GREEN activity. It makes it easier to keep going.

Then think about who could give him the most support for GREEN activity. They may be friends who like to do GREEN activity themselves. Or they may be people who care a lot about him. Try to be open to your child's friends. But be sure that you also feel comfortable with the list.

▶ **Match the activity to the friend.**

Have your child write down two ways he could make a healthy change in his activity habits with each of these friends.

Asking for support

Go over these tips with your child:

- ▶ Pick a good time to ask.
- ▶ Thank the person for what she has already done.
- ▶ Explain how diabetes can harm you.
- ▶ Explain how you need to take care of diabetes.
- ▶ Explain how she can help you more.
- ▶ Be honest and clear about what you want.
- ▶ Thank her for helping.

Think about doing more activity. Think about also doing Fitness Boosters. For example, he could:

- ▶ Play basketball with David for 30 minutes after school.
- ▶ Switch 2 hours of playing video games with David on Saturdays to 1 hour of riding bikes and 1 hour of video games.

Think about all the specifics. Think about the time he could do an activity. Think about the place. Will he need transportation? Money? Equipment?

▶ **Plan how to ask.**

Help your child plan how to go about asking. When is a good time to ask each friend? He'll need 5-10 minutes when nothing else is going on. It won't help if the friend is distracted.

Go over what he will say. He could start by telling his friend about his activity goals. He should make it clear how his support would be important. How physical activity helps him manage his diabetes. He should say how much he wants to do the activity with his friend. He should explain how important it is to him. He is really counting on his friend.

Make sure he is specific about the help he wants. Tell him to ask about the times his friend could do an activity. The

place. What he should do. The amount of time it would take. Every detail helps.

PARENTS ASK:

What else can I do to help?

Practice asking with your child. Pretend to be one of his friends. He should ask for the help he wants.

Practicing like this can be a big help, especially if your child feels shy about asking. Sometimes you should act like a friend who will say, "No." He needs to practice dealing with that as well.

PARENTS ASK:

What should I do if my child's friend doesn't show?

Prepare for it. Talk about it in advance. Having a back-up plan in place will help your daughter meet her goal.

Friends may sometimes let her down. Friends aren't always reliable. You can't always depend on them. That's why it's good to have a back-up plan in place. She needs to know what

Make sure your child has a back-up plan in mind. It helps to know what you can do if a friend doesn't come through.

Alicia was getting about 30 minutes of GREEN activity each day. That put her at the silver medal level. But she wasn't pushing herself to do more. She wasn't pushing herself to do Fitness Boosters. Alicia's mother asked her about her physical activity. "How are you doing? How could you feel better about what you're doing?"

"It's OK," Alicia said. "But I'm kind of bored. All I really do is walk. I like it when you walk with me. But a lot of times I walk by myself, and it's kind of boring."

"Maybe it's time to get some friends involved. I enjoy walking and talking with my friends. Let's see if we can find some friends for you to do activities with. Let's start by making a list of your friends. Then we'll pick a few people to ask," her mother said.

They made a list of her friends. They checked off people who believed in being healthy themselves. They checked off people who really cared about her.

Then Alicia thought of two ways she could make a healthy change in her behaviors with each of these friends. Some of these changes were Fitness Boosters.

That was a new way to look at things. "I don't do much biking myself. But Monica does. And Theresa plays in a basketball league at the Y," Alicia said. "But I don't know if they'd want to do anything with me."

"You'll never know if you don't ask," her mother said. "It's not the end of the world if they do say, 'No.' You can just go down your list of friends to ask."

"But I'm not very good at basketball or biking," Alicia said.

"I don't think they are much better than you. Monica says she likes to bike. But she doesn't do it much. She might like company when she bikes. She would probably do it more if you did it with her. And Theresa just started at the Y. She might enjoy practicing with you. You might even want to join her team. That would be a great way to do physical activity, and the Y is a great place to meet people," her mother said.

"Now let's make a plan. Let's figure out whom you can ask first. Let's decide what you will ask her to do. And when you could do it," her mother said. They did that. Then Alicia practiced asking. Her mother pretended to be Monica and Theresa.

Alicia went ahead with the plan. She wasn't feeling very sure of herself, but she tried. She talked to Monica first. Then to Theresa. She was really surprised at their reactions. Once she explained herself, they were excited to be asked. They wanted to help her be more active. "It will help me, too," said Theresa.

"You were right, Mom," Alicia said later. "They were excited to help. Thanks for encouraging me. Thanks also for helping me practice asking."

"You're certainly welcome. Now we should practice what to say if a friend doesn't show," her mother said. "We also need to make a back-up plan if a friend lets you down."

Your child doesn't need a lot of friends in a network. Even a few can give strong support.

What do you like about what Alicia's mother did?

How can you help your child find more support?

to do if someone doesn't come through for her.

Here are some things to think about when making a back-up plan:



- ▶ Can she go ahead and do it alone?
- ▶ Does she need to have another activity to do? What activity?
- ▶ Is there anyone else she can get to fill in on short notice?
- ▶ Can she reschedule with the friend?
- ▶ Tell your daughter not to get discouraged if a friend lets her down. Taking it personally won't help.
- ▶ Tell her to say she's disappointed if a friend lets her down. She can say how much she counts on her. She can say how important the activity is. She could ask about the reason her friend backed out. Is it the activity itself? Is it a scheduling problem? Is it an equipment problem? Some of these reasons can be planned for.
- ▶ Practice with your child so she knows what to say.
- ▶ If it happens several times with the same friend, your daughter may need to ask someone else.

How many friends should my son ask? How large a support network should it be?

- ▶ The long-term goal is to have a network strong enough so that your child could get support for GREEN activity throughout the week.
- ▶ A short-term goal should be to talk to 1 or 2 friends over the next 2 weeks. That will get your child started. You build a support network one friend at a time.
- ▶ A good network doesn't need to be huge. Even a few friends can give strong support. What's important is that they really want to help. That's more important than their number. Of course, your child needs to spend enough time around them during the week to get support.
- ▶ Make sure you are on the list. Ask your child what other ways you can give him support.

How to help yourself get support for physical activity

- ▶ Identify friends who can support my healthy lifestyle changes.
- ▶ Ask 1 or 2 friends for support.
- ▶ Move on if a friend says, "No."

How to help your child get support for physical activity

- ▶ Help her identify friends to ask.
- ▶ Help her plan what to ask.
- ▶ Practice asking with your child.
- ▶ Prepare her if a friend lets her down

Support for Physical Activity

Build Support for Your Child's Physical Activity

Your child is trying to find friends to support his goals for GREEN activity. He will be talking to you about this at a family meeting. Use this chart to get prepared. Fill it out as well as you can.

Make a list of the people your child often spends time with. Put a checkmark (✓) by the friends your son spends the most time with. Write down ways he could do GREEN activity with each of them. Put a star (*) by those who could give him the most support. Talk about this chart at a Family Meeting.

Name	✓	*	Possible Activities

Build Support for Your Own Physical Activity

Step #1: Write down the names of people who could give you support for doing GREEN activity. They may be people who do GREEN activity themselves. They may be people who really care about you. They may really want to help you lose weight and be healthy.

Name	Name	Name

Step #2: Read over your list. Pick 3 people who could give you support for being physically active. Write their names in the space below. List 2 ways you can do GREEN activity with each person. Be as specific as you can. This will help you ask for their support.

Step #3: Make a plan to approach these people. Use the 5 questions to guide you. *When? Where? What? How? What to do instead if my plan falls through?*

Name: _____

Physical Activity #1: _____

Physical Activity #2: _____

My Plan: _____

Name: _____

Physical Activity #1: _____

Physical Activity #2: _____

My Plan: _____

Name: _____

Physical Activity #1: _____

Physical Activity #2: _____

My Plan: _____

Step #4: Start asking! These are the first people to ask. They are most likely to help. Go on to others if some of these don't work out.

Support for Physical Activity

Help your child build a support network.

It's a lot easier to do physical activity if the people your child spends time with are behind her. It's a lot harder if they aren't.

- ▶ Ask your child:
 - ▶ What friends do you often do things with?
 - ▶ Who likes to do physical activity?
 - ▶ Who cares a lot about you?
- ▶ Have your child write down 2 ways he could make a healthy change with each of these people. Be as specific as you can. Use the questions on the Help Sheet as a guide.
- ▶ Help your child practice asking. Role-play by acting like a friend your child is asking. Act like a friend who will say, "No." Go through it several times.
- ▶ Plan how your child will go about asking. Figure out a good time for your child to ask. Go over what your child will say.
- ▶ Follow up. Ask your child how it went. Offer encouragement.



What to say to your child if a friend lets her down

- ▶ Don't get discouraged, and don't take it personally.
- ▶ Ask your friend to explain. Is it something that could be fixed, like a schedule?
- ▶ Use your back-up plan. Here are some things to think about when making a back-up plan:
 - ▶ Can I go ahead and do the activity alone? How?
 - ▶ Do I need to have another activity to do? What activity?
 - ▶ Is there anyone else I can get to fill in on short notice?
 - ▶ Can I reschedule with the friend?

How many friends should your child ask?

The goal should be to talk to 1 or 2 friends over the next 2 weeks. That will get your child started. You build a support network one friend at a time.