



Metro Creative Graphic photo
A lack of outdoor, unstructured playtime is a contributing factor to childhood obesity, says Halton health officials.

GROWING NUMBER OF HALTON CHILDREN CONSIDERED OBESE

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Obesity in Halton's children is on the rise. A regionwide kindergarten parent survey conducted by the Our Kids Network reveals that 32 per cent of Halton kindergarteners are considered overweight or obese, compared to 21 per cent a decade ago.

So why is this number climbing?

According to Halton Region's experts, there are a variety of reasons. "Obesity is multifaceted in terms of the risk factors involved. It's not just about physical activity," said Halton medical offi-

QUESTION: WHY IS THE CHILDHOOD OBESITY RATE ON THE RISE IN HALTON?
CONCLUSION: ACCORDING TO LOCAL EXPERTS, THE CRUX OF THE MATTER IS A LACK OF OUTDOOR, UNSTRUCTURED PLAYTIME PAIRED WITH UNHEALTHY EATING HABITS

cer of health Dr. Hamidah Meghani. "The health of our children really starts

at the beginning, from conception onwards." Factors such as breastfeeding for as long as possible and healthy eating habits are critical components in a child's overall health, she said.

A proper diet for children truly is key, echoed Jason Fournier, a fitness advocate and owner of Local Motion Fitness in Halton Hills.

"The survey results don't surprise me. Portion sizes have become huge," he said. "We don't teach cooking to kids anymore, at home or at school. Processed food is now considered acceptable. For millennia, hu-

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