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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

David Kittner of JumpRope.com leads a group of students in stretching prior to starting a rope jumping event at Chris Hadfield School Wednesday. JumpRope.com gave the school 800 skipping ropes for its students to get active and healthy.

## Screen time concerning: study

• from CHILDREN on page A1

per cent of boys are getting the recommended 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity, according to the newly released Canadian Health Measures survey. These low percentages garnered an F grade from Active Healthy Kids Canada in the physical activity levels category.

The survey also shows Canadian children are taking almost 2,400 fewer steps daily than their European counterparts.

"It breaks my heart when I walk by a playground and it's not in use. We've got to make spaces in our communities where children are encouraged to be active. We create too many places where they're discouraged to be active, like movie theatres with huge gaming areas," Munro said.

She said unstructured physical activity, such as a game of tag, gets kids moving much more than organized sports, where often kids spend a lot of time waiting for their turn to play.

Screen time is another area of concern, with young Canadians also scoring an F in this category. Six to 19-year-olds spend an average of six hours a day with their eyes glued to television and computer screens, the survey showed. Playing video games is a highly sedentary activity, but Munro said there's another danger.

"The difficulty with gaming is that you can get really good in a weekend. You're constantly given rewards and the game is structured so you're constantly improving... as an

adult we know that's not real. In the real world things take longer to be really good at. But with children, they are making these connections. If I was kid why would I learn to swim or try to be a great tennis player when it takes so long to achieve."

In the Active Transportation category, youngsters were given a 'D', with only 24 per cent of parents saying their kids only use active forms of transportation to get to and from school. Forty-two per cent of parents say their kids are always driven to school, but many survey respondents said they would let their children walk or cycle to school if they weren't alone.

"As a parent I'm terrified to tell my seven-year-old daughter to walk to school, but I did that in Senior Kindergarten," said Munro. "Something's happened from a safety and psychological view that's made that difficult."

She continued, "Real data shows it's not more unsafe at all. But there's more media coverage that's heightened our sense of safety concerns. In reality, it's not more dangerous now than when we were children."

For the last eight years Active Halton has encouraged more physical activity in the region, with a goal of increasing residents' activity levels by 20 per cent by 2012.

Active Halton co-chair Frank Prospero said the Region's aging population is an area where the group would like to focus. "We've got to get people out walking."

Christina Comisso can be reached at [cocomisso@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:cocomisso@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

## Your Family CHIROPODIST

~Registered Chiropodists~

### Foot Health and Aging

As a person ages, their feet tend to spread and lose the fatty pad that cushions the bottom of their feet. Additional weight can affect the bones and ligament structures. Consequently, older people would have their feet measured for shoe size more frequently, rather than presuming that their shoe size remains constant. Dry skin and brittle nails are other conditions older people commonly face, which can be managed with a good emollient. Finally, it's a fact that women, young and old, have four times as many foot problems as men, and high heels are often the culprits. However, the elderly do not have to suffer with painful feet. Preventative foot health is the key to success... it has many benefits. Chief among them are that it can increase comfort, limit the possibility of additional medical problems, reduce the chance of hospitalization, because of infection, and lessen requirements for other institutional care.

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