Exercise for Kids

Pre-reading

Questions: Why is exercise important for kids?
What are some ways kids can exercise?

Definitions: Obese – very overweight
Ensure – to make sure something with happen
Motivate – to give someone a reason or desire to do something

Reading

Many of our nation’s children are overweight. In fact, childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 30 years. Why? Exercise is a key factor; kids are not getting enough of it.

Exercise has many benefits. The positive effects of exercise include:

- Stronger muscles and bones
- Less likely to be overweight
- Decrease in the risk of type 2 diabetes
- May lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- Better sleep
- Happier state of mind
- Better stress management

If possible, kids should exercise 1 to 2 hours every day. Although this seems like a lot of time, exercise should be a fun part of their regular, daily routine. Kids can get exercise by climbing and running at the park or by playing games like tag and hopscotch. Mowing the grass with a push lawn mower and raking leaves are also good forms of exercise.

One way to ensure kids are more likely to get exercise is to limit the amount of time they spend in sedentary activities. Kids need to sit less and move more. The amount of time spent watching television and playing video games should not be more than 1 to 2 hours per day.

Children should be encouraged to be active. Biking, dancing, jumping rope, hiking, swimming, and participating in team sports are fun ways to be active. Playing tennis with a friend or shooting hoops is also fun.

Adults play a very important role in getting kids to exercise. One way parents and other adults can motivate kids to exercise is by exercising themselves. Children learn from example.

Walk a mile every morning and ask your child to join you. Bike to the post office instead of driving. Do yoga before bed. Encourage children to exercise through words and actions.
Understanding

1. What does the word *sedentary* mean? ______________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. What are some examples of sedentary activities? _____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. Why is childhood obesity a concern in the United States? _________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. How can adults help kids get more exercise? _____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. What types of fun exercise can kids do? __________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

6. How does exercise benefit kids and adults? (List at least three ways.) ______________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

7. How much exercise should kids get each day? _____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What types of exercise do you do and how often? How does it make you feel?

Option C: What types of exercise do your children enjoy? Are you involved in their exercise? If yes, how are you involved in it? If no, how could you be more involved in it?