



## **85 PER CENT OF CANADIAN PARENTS SAY IT TAKES EFFORT TO BE A HEALTHY ROLE MODEL FOR THEIR KIDS**

### **Parents more likely to cite outside influences as excellent role models for their child**

**TORONTO:** The 2015 YMCA Healthy Kids Report unveiled that parents are finding it difficult to set a healthy example for their children with 85 per cent stating it takes effort to be a healthy role model. Nationally, 35 per cent of parents do not think their 6-12 year old is getting enough physical activity per week. To encourage families to get out and be active, YMCA is celebrating [Healthy Kids Day](#) on June 7, 2015 – a national day dedicated to improving the health and well-being of kids across the country.

“Children between the ages of 6-12 are at an important stage of their development and this is a key time for instilling healthy behaviour and habits,” said Scott Haldane, President & CEO, YMCA Canada. “While parents may find it difficult to find time in their schedules, local YMCAs offer a wealth of family-friendly programs and activities that can make getting active together easier.”

The study revealed that parents feel they are the most important influence on their young children; however, only a few identify themselves as healthy role models:

- 71% of parents who said they were a role model to their child state they have a lot of influence on their child
- Only 28% of parents who said they were a role model to their child identify themselves as ‘excellent’ role models for their children, ranking outside influences as higher including athletes (56%), coaches (51%) and teachers (38%)
- Parents said they find it difficult to lead healthy and active lives, with only half of those surveyed stating they get more than the recommended 2.5 hours of exercise per week
- Only four in ten parents across Canada (42%) say their child gets the recommended 7 hours of physical activity per week
- 46% of parents cite lack of time as the biggest barrier to participating in activities with their children
- In discussing peak activity levels for their child, 30% of parents said their child was most active at school or after school, 23% said during the summer and only 17% said weekends

In an effort to better understand the needs of parents and to continue its support of the community, the YMCA commissioned this Healthy Kids Report to research the life stage development of children ages 0-29. The theme of this year’s report focused on children aged 6-12 and the importance of role models in promoting their healthy development and activity levels. Additional findings from the report found that

while parents know where to find programs and services that promote active and healthy living, 54 per cent do not have the time or money to access them.

“The YMCA gives children, no matter what their financial situation, the support and opportunity they need throughout the year to learn, play and grow in a safe and supportive environment,” said Haldane. “We hope to welcome even more children and their parents on June 7 when we celebrate YMCA Healthy Kids Day by opening our doors for free for the community.” Check dates, times, and locations at [ymca.ca/healthykids](http://ymca.ca/healthykids)

### **YMCA Success Story – Tyler Ennis**

Growing up with six other siblings, Tyler Ennis and his family were regular members of their local Brampton YMCA, participating in its many fitness and community activities. Tyler’s parents played a key role influencing his journey to the NBA (National Basketball Association), instilling the importance of leading a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

“The YMCA gave me and my family the opportunity to be active together and was instrumental in my development as a basketball player by giving me a space to practice as much as I wanted to,” said Ennis. “My parents were amazing role models for me and my brothers and sisters. They made sure that we had activities and sports that kept us healthy and active throughout our childhood.”

“A good starting point for parents who want to promote active living with their child is to have an open conversation together on how to lead a healthy and happy lifestyle,” says Virginia Dimoglou, Assistant General Manager, YMCA. “This is why we’re promoting #convoswithourkids over social media as well as providing tips and encouraging parents to make simple changes to model healthy behaviours for their families.”

### **Healthy Me Week and National Health and Fitness Day -**

YMCA is also a partner in Healthy Me Week, taking place June 1-7, a collaborative national initiative aimed at addressing, promoting and sustaining healthy active living among Canadian families. June 6 also marks National Health and Fitness Day, a national day established to promote health and fitness for all Canadians.

### **About YMCAs in Canada**

For more than 165 years, YMCAs have been at the centre of communities across Canada, helping people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities reach their potential. A charity dedicated to the health of individuals and communities, the YMCA is committed to nurturing the potential of children, teens and young adults, promoting healthy living and fostering social responsibility. The YMCA is accessible to all, and our Federation of 45 YMCA and 5 YMCA-YWCA Member Associations serves more than 2 million people in more than 1,000 locations annually. For more information, please visit [ymca.ca](http://ymca.ca)

## **About the polling data**

YMCA calculations are based on an online survey conducted by Nielsen for YMCA GTA among 1,760 Nielsen panel members across Canada and YMCA members in the Greater Toronto Area who are parents of children ages 6-12. The survey was available in both English and French, and data was collected from March 26 through April 15, 2015.

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