

Month 9: Olympics and Heart Health

Introduction

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will expose children to the Olympic spirit by incorporating age-appropriate gross motor activities into their environments which build on the winter Olympic theme.
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating age-appropriate cardiovascular or aerobic activities into their environments.
3. Children will gain some knowledge about their cardiac systems, tailored to their developmental level.
4. Children will explore movement and their physical environments through fun aerobic activities which will aid in the growth and development of the entire body.

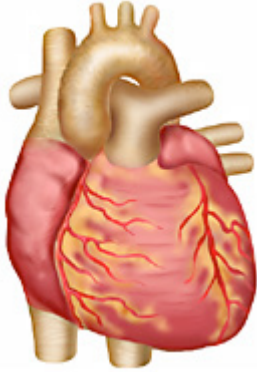
Olympic Themes

In this month's curriculum, we attempted to incorporate physical activities that relate to winter sporting events, so that families and caregivers can get children excited about the Winter Olympic Games being hosted in Vancouver this year. It is never too early to educate children about the Olympic spirit and build their excitement around this event. It is never too young to dream about participating in the games and maybe one day, standing on the podium! We hope you and your children have fun with the ideas we've developed.

Heart Health

With February being the month of Valentines, we also thought this would be a great time to educate children in our area about "Heart Health". With increasing childhood obesity rates, teaching our children about healthy hearts, eating habits and exercise cannot happen early or often enough.

Working That Muscle



The heart is really a muscle. It's located a little to the left of the middle of the chest, and it's about the size of your fist. There are lots of muscles all over our bodies — in your arms, in your legs, in your back, even in your behind. But the heart muscle is special because of what it does. The heart sends blood around our bodies. The **blood** provides our bodies with the oxygen and nutrients it needs. It also carries away waste.

The heart is sort of like a pump, or two pumps in one. The right side of our heart receives blood from the body and pumps it to the lungs. The left side of the heart does the exact opposite: It receives blood from the lungs and pumps it out to the body.

We Got the Beat

How does the heart beat? Before each beat, our heart fills with blood. Then its muscle contracts to squirt the blood along. When the heart contracts, it squeezes — try squeezing your hand into a fist. That's sort of like what your heart does so it can squirt out the blood. The heart does this all day and all night, all the time. The heart is one hard worker!

School-aged children can be taught to take their own heart rates, and the facilitator will assist the children in doing so. Our pulse or heart rate measures the number of times that our hearts beat in one minute. This number changes depending on if the individual is resting or actively playing, exercising or working. Below is the range of normal, resting heart rates for children:

Infants:	100-160 beats per minute
Children 1-10 years:	70-120 beats per minute
Children over 10 years:	60-100 beats per minute

Exercise Makes Your Heart Happy

You may know that your **heart** is a muscle. It works hard, pumping blood every day of your life. You can help this important muscle get stronger by doing aerobic exercise.

Aerobic means "with air," so aerobic exercise is a kind of activity that requires oxygen. When we breathe, we take in oxygen, and, with aerobic exercise, breathing becomes faster than normal. Aerobic activity gets the heart pumping, makes us **sweaty**, and quickens our breathing.

When we give our hearts this kind of workout on a regular basis, our hearts will get even better at their main job — delivering oxygen (in the form of oxygen-carrying blood cells) to all parts of our bodies.

Aerobic activity should make up most of your child's 60 or more minutes of physical activity each day. This can include either moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, or vigorous-intensity activity, such as running. Be sure to include vigorous-intensity aerobic activity on at least 3 days per week. Examples of aerobic exercise: swimming, basketball, ice or roller hockey, jogging (or walking quickly), inline skating, soccer, cross-country skiing, biking, or rowing. And don't forget that skipping, jumping rope, and playing hopscotch are aerobic activities, too!

Exercise Strengthens Muscles

Another kind of exercise can help make **muscles** stronger. These are anaerobic exercises, and in these types of activities, the body is working so hard that it cannot supply the muscles with adequate oxygen. Therefore, these bursts of activity can only last a short time. Did you ever do a push-up or swing across the monkey bars at the playground? Those are exercises that can build strength. By using our muscles to do powerful things, we can make them stronger. For older teens and adults, this kind of workout can make muscles bigger, too.

Here are some exercises and activities to build strong muscles: push-ups, pull-ups, tug-of-war, rowing, running, inline skating, bike riding.

Sources:

<http://Kidshealth.org>

www.Americanheart.org