



Viewpoint

Why ALL Kids Should Move More!

Congratulations! We are well on our way to being the most sedentary and unfit population EVER. More children are overweight or obese today than ever before and the numbers continue to grow. Younger people don't know what times were like before video games, technological overdependence and supersizing.

From the lure of the screen, to fast food, to shrinking school budgets, it's a challenge to keep our young people moving. That's why exercise and recreation programs like those offered by KEEN Greater DC have never been more important, especially for children and young adults with significant disabilities. Consider the evidence.

Research confirms that frequent physical activity provides important health and social benefits for children. Despite the growing national trend in promoting fitness and reducing childhood obesity, however, many schools have had to reduce or end regular programs due to funding cuts and scheduling conflicts.



Even physical education for students with disabilities, mandated by the Government Accountability Office, has been affected. Some students require extra modeling or repetition and general phys-ed instructors may need more training to work with this population. Yet resources for training are not always available so schools have found it easier to downsize or eliminate programs.

More and more, the responsibility is falling on families of special needs children to provide exercise opportunities. Some of these programs, however, come with significant expense and are out of reach for many. KEEN Greater DC is different. Since 1992 it has successfully provided thousands of program hours at *no cost* to children with mild to severe physical and developmental disabilities.

These days we know there is an adaptive activity for almost every person with a disability. As an educator and a parent, I accept the responsibility we all have to make healthful and fun exercise and recreation available to ALL children and youth. My commitment to KEEN Greater DC is one way I'm fighting America's challenge of obesity. How will you help?

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