

Cool Kids are Healthy Kids

Summer has arrived! As the kids explode out of doors to play, may sure they DRINK WATER. While kids are busy playing, the last thing they're thinking about is taking a water break! This is where you come in—offering cold water and a healthy snack during your children's play time is the best way to help them stay hydrated and energized. Here are some tips to keep your kids happy, healthy and hydrated:

- **Drink often**--Remember that children need to drink water every 20 minutes when physically active in hot weather. Bring a pitcher of water (or water bottles) out to the yard to make it easy for kids to stop for water breaks.
- **Drink enough**--For longer periods of activity, one gulp from a drinking fountain isn't enough to keep your kids hydrated. Encourage them to **take at least 10 gulps of water**—the more hydrated they are, the longer they will be able to play!
- **Ditch the sugar**— Try not to serve your kids specialized sports drinks. Most of these are designed for endurance athletes who compete for more than an hour at high intensity. Chances are, your kids are not endurance athletes (yet!)—they are running, skipping, jumping, hiding, or waiting in line for a turn. Save the sports drinks for use in all day sports camps when kids are truly active for a long time and/or when they are out playing in high temperatures.
- **Ask questions**-- When you can't be monitoring your children's play, **make sure that day-camps or school programs allow for water breaks** at least once for a half-hour activity time, or up to three times during a whole hour of activity. If your kids come home gulping water, chances are they are already dehydrated from not drinking enough during activity times. While you're at it, ask program leaders what the schedule is for snacks and meals. **Programs should provide time for snacks in between meals, or at least every 2-3 hours.** This is especially important in the morning, as many children eat breakfast well before camp starts, if at all!

Staying hydrated is not only important during hot summer weather, but it is also essential during the rest of the year— especially if children are playing in a gymnasium or indoor area where it gets hot. Setting an example now can help your kids learn how to stay healthy and hydrated as they get older—whether they're playing four-square or playing on a high school soccer team!

“Provided by Harvard Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity.”