

## What is Spark Together for Healthy Kids?

Spark Together for Healthy Kids represents the Foundation's newest major public initiative aimed at reducing the deadly impact of childhood obesity on a future generation and the health of our communities.

Spark Together for Healthy Kids is about working together to inspire individuals, families, communities, businesses, industry and government to spark collective change – in how we live, how we act, and how we think – to ignite a brighter future for our children.

## Why was Spark Together for Healthy Kids created?

With 28% of Ontario's children overweight and obese, a rate that has tripled over the past 25 years, today's children are at risk of developing long-term health effects such as heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes at a much too early age – through no fault of their own.

Childhood obesity is creating the first generation that may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

## What is Spark TFHK trying to achieve?

Spark Together for Healthy Kids is the Foundation's strategy calling for public policies that encourage and enable children to be physically active and have access to healthy foods.

We believe every child has the right to grow up healthy. The time to act is now. Say yes to Spark Together for Healthy Kids.

## What is the Spark Promise to Our Children?

The Spark Promise is the Foundation's vision of a healthier tomorrow for Ontario's children. In signing the Promise, you will add your voice to others who believe that the time to act is now. Our goal is to collect as many signatures as possible - from individuals, groups, organizations, corporations... and be able to demonstrate that across the province, there is commitment to make a healthy future for our children. Together we can make a difference!

### SPARK CHAMPIONS:



### SPARK SUPPORTING PARTNERS:

Active Healthy Kids Canada  
Association of Local Public Health Agencies  
Asthma Society of Canada  
Boys and Girls Club of Ontario  
Breakfast for Learning  
Canadian Diabetes Association  
Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network  
Dietitians of Canada  
Health Nexus  
Ontario College of Family Physicians  
Ontario Lung Association  
Ontario Physical and Health Education Association  
Ontario Professional Planners Institute  
Ontario Public Health Association  
Parks and Recreation Ontario  
ParticipACTION  
People for Education  
Today's Parent  
Waterfront Regeneration Trust  
YMCA

## CHILDHOOD OBESITY RATES HAVE TRIPLED OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS

Ontario has a choice of two tomorrows for our children.  
One is the tomorrow we are heading towards right now.  
Where we will all continue to sacrifice our health to the expectations and way of life we have accepted as a society.  
Where our desires to raise active, healthy kids will be forever denied.  
Where we will accept that inactive children and childhood obesity are the norm.  
Where chronic illnesses will multiply.  
Where health costs will escalate and families will struggle under the pressure.  
Because the way we are all living will continue to get in the way of living well.  
That is one tomorrow.

The other tomorrow is a new and bright Ontario that we will create together.  
It will be a thriving community where health will flourish and children will be active and healthy.  
Where we will have sparked a collective change in the way we live our lives  
...as individuals, families and communities.  
Where we will have ignited new possibilities for active, healthier living.  
It is a tomorrow that we must all play a part in creating.  
Because the more sparks we ignite, the brighter the world will be for all Ontario's children.

The choice is ours.  
The time to act is now

### *WHICH TOMORROW SHALL WE CHOOSE?*

Say YES, to Spark Together for Healthy Kids at: [heartandstroke.ca/spark](http://heartandstroke.ca/spark)

### **Why is the Foundation collecting signatures?**

The signatures on the Spark Promise to Our Children demonstrate the level of commitment to this issue. The Heart and Stroke Foundation will compile all signatures and use them to further engage people in dialogue and advocacy activities on the issue.

### **How is the Foundation supporting local communities and action?**

The Foundation is in communities across Ontario encouraging local groups through its **Spark Community Advocacy Fund**, to support projects that are making a real difference to the children of today and tomorrow. The fund provides financial support to groups to advocate for and implement increased opportunities for physical activity and ensure better access to nutritious food for our children.



The Foundation also has 13 dedicated Community Mission Specialists across Ontario working in partnership with Foundation staff and leadership volunteers to develop, deliver and support activities to engage communities in this new vision for our children.

### What is the Spark Community Advocacy Fund?

To support local community action, our Spark Community Advocacy Fund provides financial support to groups to advocate for and implement increased opportunities for physical activity and ensure better access to nutritious foods for our children. The Fund awards up to \$25,000 with the goal of igniting and empowering change within Ontario's diverse communities.

### Why has the Foundation become involved in this issue?

With 28% of Ontario's children overweight and obese, a rate that has tripled over the past 25 years, today's children are at risk of developing long-term health effects such as heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes at a much too early age – through no fault of their own.

The Foundation has a strong history in tackling critical health issues facing Ontarians (tobacco control, stroke care delivery, Trans fats, AEDs)

Childhood obesity is creating the first generation that may have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

### Who is the target audience of this campaign?

The target audience of the campaign is adults, age 25 – 54. We need to engage all adults - as parents, family, community members and voting public. It will take all of us working together to help achieve the policy changes needed to impact childhood obesity, and to truly make a difference. The time to act is now.

### Why do Ontarians need to get involved?

Spark Together for Healthy Kids can only be successful if all Ontarians embrace the vision and create our own sparks individually and collectively in our communities.

The future of our communities depends on the health of our children. It is time, get involved.

## How can partner organizations get involved?

Partners can help to build awareness of the issue through their various networks and with stakeholders. We see the partner role as getting the word out about Spark TFHK and potentially taking on their own separate initiatives in support of the vision of a healthier Ontario for kids. Partners can be directly involved in developing, facilitating, leading and participating in Spark TFHK related activities. Partners can apply for Spark Community Advocacy Grants to implement advocacy initiatives and use our policy document to support such efforts.

## How can you get involved?

- Say YES to Spark Together for Healthy Kids. Visit [heartandstroke.ca/spark](http://heartandstroke.ca/spark) to sign the Spark Promise to Our Children.
- Tell others to say yes to Spark Together for Healthy Kids
- Live Spark Together for Healthy Kids and share your stories with us
- Our collective passion and actions will fulfill our promise to our children and inspire and ignite more action.

## What can I do in my community?

The most important action to take is to Say YES to Spark Together for Health Kids. Join our Spark Together for Healthy Kids community and let's make change happen, one spark at a time.

### **In your home**

- Learn about healthy food choices and physical activity by subscribing to Heart&Stroke He@lthline, the Foundation's free monthly e-newsletter at [heartandstroke.ca/subscribe](http://heartandstroke.ca/subscribe)
- Walk your children to school, the local grocery store and playground.
- Shop for food products that display the Health Check™ logo. Health Check is the Foundation's food information program based on Canada's Food Guide.

### **In your community**

- Organize, volunteer or advocate for local community projects such as farmers' markets, community gardens and walking and biking trails.
- Encourage schools and students to participate in [Heart&Stroke Jump Rope For Heart](#) or [Hoops For Heart](#).
- Contact your local MPP, city councillors and school board trustees about the issues you are concerned about such as subsidized healthy food programs, more sidewalks and access to recreational programming.
- Apply for a Spark Community Advocacy Grant to ignite action in your community.

Tell friends, neighbours and colleagues about why Spark Together for Healthy Kids is important for the health of Ontario's children.