



Get those kids off the couch

Each hour of TV watched by a child between the ages of 2 and 4 contributes to his or her waist circumference by the end of grade 4 and his or her ability to perform in sports, according to a study at the University of Montreal.

The findings were published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. Parents were asked about their child's TV habits. Trained examiners took waist measurements and gave the standing long-jump test to measure child muscular fitness.

When the children were 2¹/₂ to 4¹/₂ years of age, their parents reported how many hours of TV they watched during the week and weekend. The average was 8.8 hours per week at the onset of the study, and by the end, 15% of the children participating in the study were already watching over 18 hours per week according to their parents' reports.

Children over the age of 2 should not watch more than 2 hours of television per day, according to the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.