



IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES FOR MIND AND BODY HEALTH



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Kinesiology
KINESIOLOGY.USASK.CA





KEEPING KIDS HEALTHY IS HARD

Almost **one in three of our children** are overweight or obese. With 32% of children across Canada and 29% of Saskatchewan children dealing with weight issues, the problem has become a crisis.

Children who are above a healthy weight are often teased and bullied at school. They tend to disengage themselves from sports and friends due to low self-esteem and self-confidence.

The health issues associated with overweight and obesity go far past being bullied or teased—it disrupts normal growth and development and can lead to health problems such as diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure. We know that 40-70% of

obese children will become obese adults!

This crisis doesn't just affect our children, it also affects our families. For parents, with our busy lives and demanding careers, it's hard to find time to ensure our children stay healthy, especially when we may find it challenging to find time ourselves. Planning healthy dinners at the end of a stressful day is hard. Encouraging kids to exercise when they would rather watch TV or play video games can be a struggle.

Add to that the uncertainty many parents feel about making nutritious food choices—when each day they are bombarded with information. **How do you figure out fact from fiction when it comes to nutrition?**

As a parent who is struggling with these issues, and sees their child is in need of help, where do you turn? How do you encourage your child to live a healthy, active life?



INSPIRING CHANGE FOR LIFELONG HEALTH

The MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition, Do it!) program is designed to **help children and parents make positive changes that last**, by looking at health from a holistic skill-development perspective.

MEND empowers children and families to make long-term changes by focusing on the four pillars of the MEND healthy lifestyle program.

MIND	EXERCISE	NUTRITION	DO IT!
changing unhealthy attitudes about food and activity	incorporating physical activity into every day	learning how to choose healthy foods	taking action to maintain a healthy lifestyle

This free program gives children and parents easy and useable tools to improve their lifestyles step-by-step. MEND teaches the importance of healthy living while having FUN.

Cindy La Chance says her son Braxton is now motivated to make positive changes since starting the spring 2016 MEND SK program in Prince Albert. She says, "He's opening up to new foods and eating a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. Since he's the one who decided on his goal to eat fruits and vegetables at least three times a day he's really sticking to it. I was so surprised to see him eat cantaloupe at the last class. He never would have tried that at home."



People helped by MEND SK to date

(October 2012 to January 2017):

	Totals
Children	1,121
Parents/caregivers*	2,422
All family members**	4,844

* Assume one caregiver per child

** Assume family unit of four

HELPING FAMILIES ACROSS SASKATCHEWAN

Developed in 2000 by United Kingdom experts in childhood obesity, the MEND program has since expanded to the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark and Canada. With 350 locations running annual programs, **MEND has helped over 100,000 people world-wide to date and continues to grow.**

The College of Kinesiology, at the University of Saskatchewan, launched MEND SK in locations across Saskatoon in 2012 with the support of **lead donor Saskatchewan Blue Cross**. Since then, the program has expanded to include three regions across the province: North (La Ronge, Prince Albert and Muskoday First Nations), Central (North Battleford and Saskatoon) and South (Regina, Moose Jaw, Assinaboia, White City and Swift Current).

It has helped almost 5,000 people already, in just a few years.

Erin La Chance, Cindy's daughter, and her son Riley attend the Prince Albert program with Cindy and Braxton. Cindy says, "It's a group effort. The four of us drive an hour and 20 minutes each way from our home in Big River, just to attend the MEND program. It's worth the trip!"

Cindy and Erin also work together at the Se-Se-Wa-Hum School in Big River. Cindy says they share what they learn in the MEND program with their co-workers. "We always come away from the classes learning something new. I wish we had MEND in Big River, where we have 700 kids in two schools. It's such an excellent program that so many families could benefit from!"





NURTURING HEALTH FROM AN EARLY AGE

MEND SK offers three 10-week program streams, based on children's age:

MEND 2-4

Teaching young children, aged two to four, healthy eating and activity habits from the very start. The focus here is on active play, good nutrition, and fun ways to introduce new foods and add variety.

MEND 5-7

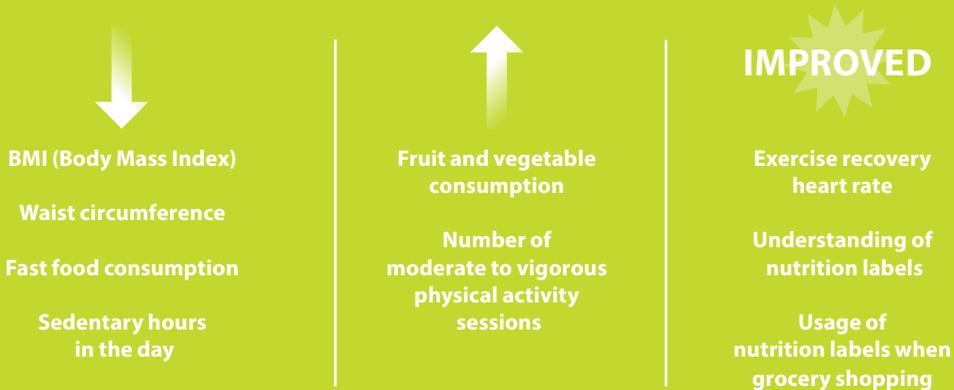
Active play, family workshops and parent discussion groups are all taught in a supportive environment to help children and their families develop and maintain healthy lifestyles. For children aged five to seven who are above a healthy weight.

MEND 7-13

Practical demonstrations, games and tips about healthy foods, label reading and portion sizes are included for children aged seven to thirteen, who are above a healthy weight. Parents and caregivers join their children in each twice-weekly session to learn about choosing healthier foods and spending more time being active.

Participants can be referred to the program, either by a family doctor or pediatrician, a school teacher or administrator, a public health nurse or a community liaison. Interested parents can also self-refer and sign up for the program online at mendsk.ca.

Since 2012, children and parents in the MEND SK program have enjoyed wide-ranging benefits. Research has shown the following successes for Saskatchewan participants:



PROMISING RESULTS

The MEND SK program is administered through the University of Saskatchewan's College of Kinesiology in partnership with the Colleges of Pharmacy and Nutrition, Nursing and Medicine. Together, we bring our **expertise in the areas of nutrition, behavior change, physical activity, programming, community mobilization, nursing, research and evaluation** to the program.

Undergraduate and graduate students are trained as program leaders for the MEND program. Additionally, the Department of Pediatrics helps promote the program to all pediatricians in the province, which has been essential in recruiting families to the program. The success of referrals from family

physicians and other healthcare professions has produced wait lists in some programs across the province.

With the support of lead donor, Saskatchewan Blue Cross, and funding from Community Initiatives Fund and SK Sport, **154 programs have been delivered in nine communities across Saskatchewan to date.**

Its expansion across the globe, and across our province, is due to its incredible success and its **focus on results**. The MEND program has over a decade of research world-wide, demonstrating **significant improvements in children's fitness levels, weight and self-esteem.**



**YOUR GIFT =
CONFIDENCE,
VIBRANT
HEALTH,
HOPE**

**GIVE HEALTH
AND HOPE
TO CHILDREN**

With your donation to MEND SK you can ensure that children throughout the province have support to improve their health.

MEND SK empowers children and families to make changes in their behaviour to support a healthy lifestyle. **Early intervention, education and prevention are the keys to help us put an end to the increase in childhood obesity rates in our province.**

Your gift ensures the momentum that has been built through the MEND SK program continues, and assists children and their families in living healthier, fitter and ultimately happier lives starting right now.

"I'm really looking forward to our next class, which will be taking the kids on a grocery store tour, where we will all learn how to read food labels. That's the biggest benefit it's had on us —helping us become more conscious of our choices. We know what's healthy now, and how to make good choices."

- Cindy La Chance



For more information, or to discuss this opportunity further, please contact: James Perkins, University Relations
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Visit mendsk.ca for the MEND SK video, news, events and to see kids in action!