

## Nutrition & Physical Activity Programs



### Helping Aussie Kids Get Their Active Factor

Research released in early September of 2004 by the University of South Australia provided critical information about the factors influencing children's activity levels and their involvement in sport and physical activity. The research provides new insights into effective ways to encourage children to be more physically active.

The research, commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission and funded by Coca-Cola Australia, is the first of its kind to classify Australian kids according to which physical activity cluster suits their personality type. The clusters include sporties, screenies, autonomes for boys and players, screenies, sporties and socializers for girls.

- Sporties are an active group who spend a large amount of time playing sport, little time in play and an average amount of time in front of a screen.
- Screenies spend large amounts of time watching television and/or playing video games and play little sport.
- Autonomes spend a lot of time in activities that they can create and participate in by themselves without the need for external organization or stimulation.
- Players spend most of their time playing and very little time in front of a television or computer screen.
- Socializers are girls who spend a lot of time in inactive socializing, such as sitting and talking to friends, and little time in sport or play.

According to lead investigator on the research, Dr. Tim Olds from University of South Australia's School of Health Sciences, children are increasingly choosing inactive, or sedentary activities, such as watching television or playing video games, over physical activity. This lack of physical activity is a major contributing factor to Australia's growing obesity problem.

To help parents understand how to use the new research to encourage their kids to be more active, Coca-Cola Australia has developed an Active Factor booklet. The booklet includes physical activity recommendations from Associate Professor Jeff Walkley from RMIT University, looking specifically at recommending activity for each cluster.

"The clusters identified in this research are very important as they highlight that there are certain activities that parents can encourage their kids to do based on their activity type. For example, parents of screenies may like to provide interactive electronic games that require some form of physical activity such as dance mats, whereas parents of socializers may like to encourage their kids to invite others over to build a cubbyhouse.



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"It is not about forcing the same activity on every kid - as what works for one will not necessarily work for another. Instead parents need to work with their kids' natural instincts to maximize every opportunity for sport or play," added Associate Professor Walkley.

Coca-Cola Australia's commitment to this research, and the development of such a Booklet, is part of the company's commitment to their new Active Lifestyle Program. The Active Lifestyle Program, through a combination of products, policies and programs, aims to help Australian kids lead a healthy life through encouraging participation in physical activity and a healthy diet.

For a copy of the 'Children and Sport' Research Report or the Active Factor Booklet please visit [www.activefactor.com.au](http://www.activefactor.com.au)