Why is Kids – ‘Go for your life’ important?

While many children enjoy the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, there is an increasing number of children who are missing out on the healthy food, drinks and physical activity they need to help them live, learn, grow and play.

Here are some great reasons to encourage all children to enjoy healthy eating and physical activity, every day.

1. Reduced lifelong risks for type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and some cancers
   - Improved cardiovascular health
   - Longer, healthier life

2. Running Smooth
   - Energy to play
   - Improved posture, and coordination
   - Decreased constipation

3. Staying Well
   - Increased fitness

4. Growing Strong
   - Improved mood and behaviour
   - Better self esteem and body image
   - Making friends

5. Feeling Good
   - Healthy teeth and strong bones
   - Healthy growth and development
   - Healthy weight

6. Brain Power
   - Increased concentration
   - Improved learning

1.4
Why support Kids – ‘Go for your life’ healthy messages?

Childhood is an important period in which children develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours for lifelong health. The Kids – ‘Go for your life’ six healthy messages have been selected as key habits to improve the health of Victorian children. Here are some important reasons to promote these behaviours. Find out more in Section 3.

- **Drinking water** instead of sweet drinks provides hydration for concentration and learning and promotes healthy teeth.

- **Fruit and vegetables** provide essential nutrients for healthy eyes, skin and hair and protect against many diseases.

- **Less ‘occasionally’ foods means** children fill up on nutritious foods and drinks required for growth and lifelong health.

- **Physical activity** promotes a longer healthier life. Its many benefits include increased fitness, motor skills and confidence.

- **Less screen time** means more time for children to develop physical, social and emotional skills through active play.

- **Walking and riding** are great ways to increase physical activity as well as reduce traffic congestion and promote a healthier environment.

Every Victorian child can enjoy the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity

Many children enjoy healthy eating, however:
- Almost 60 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls have more than one high sugar drink every day, such as soft drinks, cordial, fruit drinks and energy drinks.
- Less than one quarter of children eat enough vegetables and over 30 percent of children do not have the recommended two pieces of fruit per day.
- More than half of students have more unhealthy foods in their lunchbox than is recommended for the whole day.
- More than half of 12 year olds have dieted or considered dieting.

Children love to be active and play with friends however:
- Children are averaging 2.5 hours of television per day, which is above Australian recommendations.
- Children are now 3.5 times more likely to be in front of a computer or television screen after school than playing sport.
- 72.3 percent of children in grades 3–6 are driven to school; 61 percent of these children said they would prefer to walk to school if given the choice.