

# Scientific Rationale for 5-2-1-0

## **5** or more fruits and vegetables.

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables provides vitamins and minerals, important for supporting growth and development, and for optimal immune function in children. High daily intakes of fruits and vegetables among adults are associated with lower rates of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, and possibly, some types of cancers. Emerging science suggests fruit and vegetable consumption may help prevent weight gain, and when total calories are controlled may be an important aid to achieving and sustaining weight loss.

## **2** hours or less recreational screen time\*.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP,) the average child watches an average of 5–6 hours of television a day. Watching too much television is associated with an increased prevalence of overweight and obesity, lower reading scores, and attention problems. The AAP therefore recommends that children under age two shouldn't watch any television. In addition, the AAP recommends no TV or computer in the room in which the child sleeps, and no more than 2 hours of screen time a day.

## **1** hour or more of physical activity.

Regular physical activity is essential for weight maintenance and prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, and osteoporosis. While most school age children are quite active, physical activity sharply declines during adolescence. Children who are raised in families with active lifestyles are more likely to stay active as adults than children raised in families with sedentary lifestyles.

## **0** sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk.

Sugar-sweetened beverage consumption has increased dramatically over the past 20 years; high intake among children is associated with overweight and obesity, displacement of milk consumption, and dental cavities. It is recommended that children 1–6 years old consume no more than 4–6 ounces of juice per day and youth 7–18 years old consume no more than 8–12 ounces. Whole milk is the single largest source of saturated fat in children's diets. Switching to low or non-fat milk products significantly reduces dietary saturated and total fat, as well as total calories.

\*Keep TV/computer out of the bedroom. No screen time under the age of 2.

Adapted from the Maine Center for Public Health