

more action out of their daily 25 minutes in the gym

Exercise bikes make for more exercise

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Sault Star

There's a new rule in gym class at East View public school: Nobody sits on the bench.

Instead, when children aren't kicking a soccer ball or dribbling a basketball, they're on the stage racking up mile after mile on exercise bikes.

Susan Ritchie said the 28 students in her Grade 6/7 class are getting a lot more action out of their daily 25 minutes in the gym since the bikes were put in last month.

"Fifteen kids were sitting on a bench for five minutes, and then we rotate. They were spending half their time sitting," during a soccer game, said Ritchie.

The bikes, and two treadmills, were a donation from GoodLife Kids Foundation, worth about \$25,000, said Steve Bodnar, East View's principal.

The Algoma District School Board school hooked up with GoodLife through Grade 8 teacher Davey Taylor, who used to work for the fitness company.

"I think the main thing is that we're making all the kids more aware that exercise is important everyday," said Bodnar.

Elementary students across the province are required to spend at least 20 minutes each day engaging in "sustained, moderate to vigorous," physical activity.

The mandatory exercise was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2005 as an effort to address rising obesity among Ontario children

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A Statistics Canada report earlier this month raised alarms after it found fitness levels of children, youth and young adults, regardless of gender, declined significantly between 1981 and 2009.

Bodnar said the daily exercise is a good start, as schools already offer plenty of sports for athletically minded students, but need to reach out to "the artists, the musicians, the computer gaming type of guys."

"Part of the challenge is getting the kids moving who are not athletic," he said.



MICHAEL

Dustin Pine (above) gets a few miles worth of pedaling in while his classmates play soccer. Domminic Hill (below, left) and Sonya Cain watch the rest of their class play soccer in the gym as they use stationary bicycles on stage.

