

A new study, published in the journal *Health Affairs* has attached a hefty price tag to the issue of inactivity in American children.

According to the study, only about 40 percent of children get 25 minutes of high-calorie-burning physical activity three times a week, which could result in one-point-one trillion dollars in direct medical costs over the course of their lifetimes.

This is something OSF HealthCare Center for Healthy Lifestyles Manager Erin Kennedy says could be changed with a little early intervention.

SOT

Erin Kennedy | Manager, OSF HealthCare Center for Healthy Lifestyles

:18 (EK2) "Exercise should be fun, and when you start at a young age it will not become a chore, but it will be something that people look forward to, and that's what our communities need, we need to want to be physically active and want to be outside of that house."

Researchers came to these findings by developing a simulation model to represent all U-S children ages 8 to 11 years old. These kids are often sedentary at school, with physical education and recess time shortening, or in some cases disappearing altogether.

According to Kennedy, when classroom activity doesn't cut it, the responsibility rests at home.

SOT

Erin Kennedy | Manager, OSF HealthCare Center for Healthy Lifestyles

2:40 "It's the parents who have to take the ownership and have the kids go outside. And not only 'Hey kids. Go outside and play.', but you know what? This is good family time – we are going to spend an hour a day after dinner, before dinner, whatever it may be, and we're going to play together."

It's never too late to start making your family's health and well-being a priority with some extra activity. According to Kennedy, the time to start is now.

SOT

Erin Kennedy | Manager, OSF HealthCare Center for Healthy Lifestyles

1:04 "We always start from today. We think, 'what can we do today that is better than yesterday?' And as long as we have that thought process in mind, it doesn't matter what happened in the past, starting forward and looking forward and saying, 'you know what? Today I'm going to make a difference.'"

The Center for Healthy Lifestyles is located at OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center. It aims to help community members achieve healthier behaviors and make informed health care decisions through education, counseling and diagnostic services.