



# Youth Health Community

## STATEMENT

### Youth Health Community statement on the impact of COVID-19 measures on the lifestyle and well-being of our children.

#### Call to action

The Youth Health Community believes that every child has the right to grow up healthy and therefore urges governments, politicians and other stakeholders to give the highest priority to the impact of the COVID-19 measures on the lifestyle and well-being of our children and young people.

For months we have spoken about the negative impact and the restrictions. Now it is time that we start to emphasize what is possible and take appropriate action by implementing community solutions, as that is where our children live their lives. A healthy youth is a healthy future, our children need our unconditional support.

#### Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all areas of society. Children and young people are among the groups that have been most hard hit by the COVID-19 measures. The coronavirus itself - so far - seems to have very limited health effects on children and young people, however, the impact of the COVID-19 measures on children and young people has been significant. Research shows that during the first lockdown the intake of unhealthy food increased, physical activity decreased and screen time increased. Children and young people experienced more stress and anxiety, mental health problems increased and their social lives were disrupted. As a result weight gain as well as growing inequality may be expected, especially among vulnerable children and young people.

Today many Youth Health Community members and other similar organisations around the world are facing similar complex challenges exacerbated by the coronavirus, including challenges related to physical and mental health and well-being. Depending on their duration, these unfortunate lockdown effects could have a lasting effect. Improving our children's health and lifestyle is a common international challenge which has become more urgent than ever in these times of COVID-19.

#### Alternatives and solutions

We need to join forces to prevent our children from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Action taken at community and policy level should be inspired by positive alternatives and in response to the negative consequences of the restrictions. For example, alternatives to restricted activities due to school and park closures and the cancellation of team sports should be affordable and easy to integrate into home and neighbourhood-based activities, such as walking a mile every day with your family. Another positive alternative would be providing families with tips and resources on how to overcome their challenges in meeting their daily health goals as a result of COVID-19.

#### References/Literature

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