

# MCLB ALBANY SAFETYGRAM

ARE YOUR CHILDREN AT RISK FOR MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS?

## KIDS AND COMPUTERS

As technology use becomes more universal across all age groups, we are finding that young adults and children are also at risk of developing repetitive strain injuries. In a series of international studies, up to 60% of students across the globe reported eye strain, neck & shoulder pain, wrist and back discomfort, headaches and fatigue. Symptoms were reported in children as young as in 4th grade. 70-80% of school-aged children now use computers at home or at school. It is estimated that children are spending 2-3 hours daily on the computer.



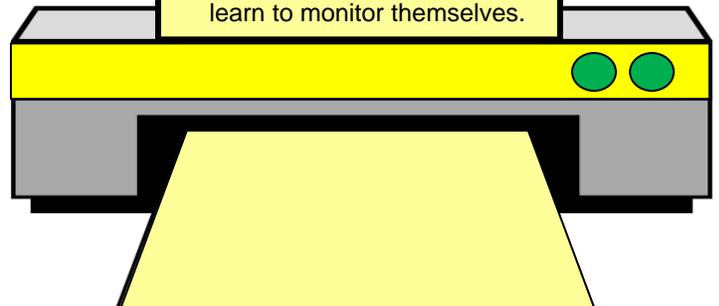
63% of 9-17 year olds would rather surf the internet than watch television. The child may ignore warning pain signals if he or she is enjoying the activity. Posture patterns begin developing at age 7. Most computer stations are designed for adults or lack the adjustability needed for children who display a wide range of body sizes and body growth rates. Children are using computers at very young ages and are not being formally taught proper positioning and computing techniques. Children have a flexibility that enables them to use technology in more non-traditional postures than adults.

### What can we do to prevent our children from feeling pain associated with musculoskeletal disorders?

- ♥ Chairs should be adjustable allowing for easy changes due to growth spurts or for a number of users varying in age and body size range.
- ♥ Feet should be fully supported on a foot rest, sturdy box, or stack of stable books with hips, knees and ankles at about 90 degrees.
- ♥ The monitor should be placed directly in front of the child at about an arms distance away to prevent eye and neck strain.
- ♥ The child should be positioned so the eyes are level with the top of the monitor.
- ♥ Type font should be large enough to be clearly visible to the child.



- ♥ The child should be taught to look away from the screen, blink rapidly, and then focus on objects in the distance after every 15 minutes of typing to ease eye strain.
- ♥ The child should not have to reach forward to either the keyboard or the mouse.
- ♥ A typing break of 5-10 minutes should be encouraged for every 30-40 minutes of typing. A time can be used to help children to learn to monitor themselves.



For more information on Kids and Computers click the link below.

<http://www.bellaonline.com/subjects/7245.asp>

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