

Swimming could be the Solution to Childhood Obesity Crisis

Wednesday 27 July, 2016

New research launched on Tuesday 26th July suggests that Britain's children are becoming increasingly sedentary. The survey found that a quarter of UK parents don't think their kids are doing enough exercise (26%) while 4 in 10 believe their children do less physical activities than they did at the same age.

Four of the top five most popular summer holiday family activities were sedentary including cinema trips, visits to theme parks, using computers or watching dvds or leaving the kids to entertain themselves. The one physical activity to buck the trend was swimming, with over half (53%) of British families stating they will be taking a trip to their local swimming pool this summer.

The findings reflect the significant growth in swimming participation growth reported by swimming pools in Better Leisure Centres - up 38 per cent since 2012.

Public leisure brand Better is now the biggest operator of swimming facilities within both the UK public and private sectors, directly managing 112 facilities with pools.

Attracting 16 million visits per year in 2015, and over 100,000 people taking swimming lessons each week on its Better swim school, the popularity of swimming is returning with these figures representing a 12% like for like increase on the previous year.

The facilities range from The London Aquatics Centre to Leisure Pools and Outdoor lidos, providing activities like Extreme Aquasplash – a Total Wipeout style inflatable assault course - to family swimming sessions inspired by Finding Dory, there is something for all ages and abilities.

There has also been an increase in the amount of people interested in acquiring a new skill this summer with intensive swimming lessons and the Tom Daley Diving Academy providing the opportunity to learn, have fun and be inspired.

Phil Lane, Head of Sports and Participation for Better, said:

"As a nation, we've got to acknowledge we have a problem with low levels of physical activity – but part of the solution lies on our doorsteps.

"At Better Leisure Centres, we're banishing boredom with affordable and fun options for parents and kids that can help them stay entertained, fit and healthy over the summer holidays."

With the Olympic Games about to start it's hoped that the success of Team GB and watching elite athletes in action will inspire a generation of children to embrace sport. In fact, 36% of parents believe the Games will encourage their children to take up more exercise this summer, with Jessica Ennis-Hill cited as Britain's most inspiring athlete.

And its not just swimming that's on offer - youngsters can also choose from supervised taster sessions for tennis, athletics, gymnastics and much more across the holidays – freeing up parents to do other things.

GLL is committed to getting more people more active this summer - kids using their local Better Leisure Centres this summer benefit from a 30% discount and free membership card – helping them emulate their heroes of track and pool.

To take advantage of this offer parents or guardians must sign their child up for a free Better Activities for Kids Card at any Better leisure centre or online at: www.better.org.uk/summer

Better are also linking up with 'I am Team GB' to create the nation's biggest sports day on August 27th to help welcome back a successful Team GB by taking part in come and try sports sessions. www.iamteamgb.com for further info

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