The Icelandic fitness champion, filmmaker and creator of LazyTown, Magnús Scheving, has convinced children around the world to pick fruit and water instead of chocolate and soda water. The recipe is the idea of LazyTown, the ingredients are a combination of play and positive stimulus.

For more than ten years, Magnús Scheving has literally jumped and hopped around in Icelandic schools, and he has made handstands and back handsprings in all the kindergartens of the country. All in order to teach Icelandic kids and their families a more healthy and active lifestyle.

Children run, they jump, they bend, and they move without thinking about it.

"It is not necessary to ask children to move, because they do it anyway. But I wanted to do something about the fact that there were no role models for children between 4 and 7 years of age", Scheving told delegates at Play the Game 2007.

Magnús Scheving created Lazy Town in response to his experiences from travelling around the world meeting kids and parents and answering the same questions about exercise and nutrition for children wherever he was.

LazyTown was to become a tool that parents could use to raise healthy kids and that would also inspire the kids themselves to make healthy choices. Founded in 1995 in Reykjavik, it started with a book, later on came a cooking book, a musical and a TV series. Today LazyTown also runs a radio station, and toys, accessories, music and DVD’s are produced in its name and sold all over the world.

The Energy Campaign Project

Obesity amongst children is an increasing health problem in the Nordic countries, and LazyTown uses entertainment as a method to encourage children in their everyday lives.

In 2003, Lazy Town launched the national Energy Campaign Project that was a forerunner for the first television episodes of Lazy Town. As a basis for the campaign, every child aged 4-7 in Iceland received a free book in which they could register activities, food and drink with the help of stickers.

The parents were invited to offer a contract to their kids and reward healthy choices of food and drinks throughout one month. In the account book, sweets and soda water were given minus points while fruit and vegetables, the so-called “SportCandies”, gave plus in the account.

The results were amazing. Families changed their food habits and sales of fruits and vegetables rose by 22 per cent. The sale of soda water on the other hand decreased by 16 per cent throughout the country. Participation rates were unbelievable, as almost a hundred per cent of the kids aged 4-7 took part in the campaign.

LazyTown teaches kids to pick FRUIT OVER CHOCOLATE

Children in more than 100 countries worldwide love Sportacus from Iceland

The TV series can be seen in more than 100 countries worldwide.

The series is produced in one of the most advanced High Definition Virtual Cinematography studios in the world, and the studio is based in Gardabaer, Iceland.

In LazyTown television can actually be turned into a part of the solution to children’s obesity and lack of physical activity, and the show has won BAFTA awards and been nominated for an EMMY. Magnús Scheving founder and creator of Lazy Town, received the Nordic Public Health Prize in 2004 for his innovative work on motivating children to lead a healthy lifestyle.

LazyTown homepage: www.lazytown.com

by Maria Suurballe