

# ***XRKade*** Newsletter Volume 1

December 2006

Excerpts

## **Welcome to the World of Exergaming**

This newsletter celebrates the opening of the University of South Florida's  
XRKade Research Lab

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The University of South Florida's School of Physical Education, Wellness and Sport Studies in cooperation with ITECH Fitness of Denver Colorado have partnered to create the first university interactive fitness research lab for children. The purpose of the XRKade fitness lab is to investigate the growing movement related to assisting children in becoming physically active and increase fitness levels through use of technology based interactive game activities.

This movement is being called Interactive Fitness or Exergaming and is increasingly being used by public school systems, YMCA's recreational center and private fitness clubs to help children of all ages increase physical activity levels and maintain a healthy weight. Exergaming is the use of technology-based interactive activities (including video games) in order to increase physical activity levels in children.

Some of the technology driven activities included in the lab are **Dance, Dance Revolution, GameBikes and GamePads, X-Board, 3-Kick and Cybex Trazer.**

### Why Create an Interactive Fitness Lab?

One of the top reasons often given for the increase in obesity levels in children is the sedentary behavior associated with overuse of technology such as watching hours of TV or playing computer or video games. These are fun activity for kids and have become part of our American culture. Video games are not going away. The Exergaming movement suggests that children can become more physically active and reduce obesity levels and still play videogames.

Games require that children must be physically active in order for the game to work. For example, the faster the child pedals the **GameBike**, the faster the car will go on the video screen. Or, the more a child jumps while wearing the **Cybex Trazer** belt the more points he/she can score in the video game. The physical activity possibilities are endless.

Although Exergaming has increased in popularity (most all kids for example have participated in Dance, Dance Revolution) little research is available to suggest that interactive fitness is having a positive effect on fitness and activity levels. This movement is so new that the research simply has not yet been done.

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The XRKade Research lab seeks to learn more about how interactive fitness can assist in combating childhood obesity and improve the physical activity levels of American youth. What are the implications of increased use of Exergaming equipment among children? Does Exergaming really increase children's fitness levels? Are there social and academic benefits of interactive gaming activities? Are there benefits to special needs students? During the coming months and years, the XRKade lab will investigate these questions and many more.

### Interactive Fitness Activities

**GameBike** is a revolutionary "plug and play" video game controller. The **GameBike** transforms gaming into a truly interactive experience. Imagine controlling every movement on the screen with your own body movement. Control Steering, speed, turns, strategy and more! Play against the computer or connect additional **GameBikes** and compete against friends. The **GameBike** improves muscular strength and endurance in leg muscles and also improves cardiovascular endurance.