

# Healthy Active Early Years

A Grant from the Coastal Bend Diabetes Initiative

March 2009

## Let's Move!

Excerpt from "Family Fitness"  
<http://bblocks.samhsa.gov>

The statistics on childhood obesity are frightening. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 have become twice as likely to be obese compared to 10 years ago, according to the Institute of Medicine's Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth.

Preparing healthy meals and snacks and watching portion size are two steps toward preventing childhood obesity. The next very important step is staying fit through physical fitness. Try these ideas from the President's Council on Fitness and Sports to help you family reap the benefits of exercise.

### **Make physical fitness part of your daily routine.**

Take a 10-minute activity break while you watch TV. Climb the stairs instead of taking the escalator or elevator. Park farther from the store and walk. If possible, walk instead of drive to the park or store or to see friends.

### **Sweat.**

Working hard and getting sweaty help your heart pump better and give you more energy. Play tag or hopscotch, jump rope, or dance for some fun aerobic exercises.

*continued on page 2*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Let's Move!
- 1 Fitness Fun
- 2 A Time for TV
- 2 "Lite" Reading
- 2 March Events & Activities Let's Move!



## Fitness Fun

Excerpt from "Making Exercise Fun"  
<http://bblocks.samhsa.gov>

Children may not want to "exercise," but everybody loves to play. And young kids want to play with *you*. Here are a few ways to make your family "workouts" fun.

### **Play Games Outside or In**

**Simon Says** is an excellent game for stretching and flexibility. Start simply and build up to longer or more repetitive commands. For example: "Simon says, stand on your toes"; then, "Simon says, stand on your toes and count to five." Or, "Simon says, jump up high"; then, "Simon says, jump up high five times."

**Follow the Leader** can help you and your child get aerobic exercise, especially if you play outside. It really doesn't matter if you get creative with your actions; it's more important to keep moving. For example: If it is too difficult climb over or under a fence, run around it. Or, if space is limited, do jumping jacks or run in place.

**Mirror Dancing** provides the benefits of exercise with the fun of music. Put on music, either slow or fast, depending on whether you want an aerobic workout or slow stretching. Have your child stand directly in front of you and mimic whatever you do. Keep the steps easy; remember, the object is to get moving in time to the music. For example: Point your right foot to the front, to the side, and to the back. Repeat with the left foot. Do several slide steps to the right, then to the left. Bend at the waist, then rise up on tiptoe, arms stretched high. Do the twist or the bunny hop. Just have fun.

**Play with friends and family.**

Plan at least one special physical activity for the family each week – such as a bike ride, a walk in the park, or a game of soccer or basketball. Plan a family hike in the park or participate in a “fun run”. Play together with all types of sports equipment: balls, hula hoops, jump ropes, scooters, and bikes. Be a “Moving Role Model”.

**Make sure your school includes physical education**

Find out what types of physical activities your child’s school provides. How often do children go outside? What types of games do they play? What kind of equipment do they use?

Parents need to make sure they and their families engage in plenty of physical activity to stay healthy.

**A Time for TV**

**Adapted from Media Education in the Practice Setting**  
by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Starting from when we are very young, we get the majority of our information from media, which includes TV, movies, magazines, the internet, video games, music, books, videos and all forms of advertising. While these media offer us many opportunities to learn and be entertained, how people interpret media images and messages also can be a contributing factor to a variety of public health concerns. Among children and adolescents, research shows that key areas of concern are:

- Aggressive behavior and violence; desensitization to violence, both public and personal
- Substance use and abuse
- Nutrition, obesity, and dieting
- Sexuality, body image, and self-concept
- Advertising, marketing and consumerism

Here are some suggestions for families:

Limit your child’s screen time (including TV, computer, video games) to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day.

Focus on positive interaction with children under age 2, rather than allowing them to watch television.

Be aware of your child’s media choices and know that it is important to have set limits.

At the beginning of the week, as a family, review your local television listings to decide which shows, if any, will be watched during the week. Choose quality, age appropriate, and educational programming. Do not allow the TV to stay on when no one is watching. Instead, listen to music, sing songs, read, play games, talk, or just have it quiet.

Watch age-appropriate television and movies with your child. Use this time to discuss the images and messages you are seeing – including commercials.

Question why people who smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs seem, for the most part, healthy and how harmful consequences of such behavior are rarely shown.

Pay attention to TV, movie and video game ratings.

Do not use media during meals.

Make a variety of activities the norm for your child. Media use should be only one of many choices.

Keep the TV and computer in a central location – NOT in the child’s room.

Do not use television, videos, video games, or the computer as a baby-sitter. If you need quiet time, encourage your child to read, play a game, work on a puzzle, draw, or build something. Positively reinforce your child’s efforts.

Know that as an adult you are a role model. Pay attention to your own media habits, particularly when children are around.

Be a media activist – get involved!

**“Lite” Reading**

Food Labeling Regulations

From: [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) by Dori Stehlin

In 1993 the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety and Inspection Service issued new regulations for labeling in order to re-establish credibility of the food label. The regulations spell out which nutrient content claims are allowed and under what circumstances they can be used.

<i><b>If you see this word...</b></i>	<i><b>It means....</b></i>
<b>Free</b>	0.5 grams or less per serving
<b>Reduced</b>	25% less than the referenced food
<b>Calorie Free</b>	Fewer than 5 calories per serving
<b>Low Sodium</b>	Less than 5 mg per serving
<b>High Fiber</b>	5 grams or more per serving
<b>Fresh</b>	Can only be used on foods that are raw, that has never been frozen or heated and contains no preservatives
<b>Healthy</b>	Must be low in fat and saturated fat and a serving does not have more than 480 mg sodium or 60 mg of cholesterol

MARCH

National Nutrition Month	National Kite Month
National Peanut Month	Music in Our Schools Month
17 <sup>th</sup> St. Patrick’s Day	26 <sup>th</sup> Make Your Own Holiday Day
28 <sup>th</sup> Children’s Picture Book	
<a href="http://www.theteacherscorner.net/calendars/">http://www.theteacherscorner.net/calendars/</a> and <i>Every Day a Holiday</i> by Silvana Clark	

Let’s Move! Gross Motor Activity

**The Parade from Wiggle Giggle & Shake** by Rae Pica

Talk to the children about parades they’ve seen.

Ask them:

Who & What was in the last parade you saw?

Were there any animals in it?

What things did you like best?

Give the children a variety of materials to create their own components of a parade. Then, encourage them to form and hold one of their own. Get marching in March!