

# EXERCISE

ENJOYING AN ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

For additional CHS Family Education Program materials, please call (714) 712-7888. For more information about CHS Early Learning and Education Programs, call (888) CHS-4KIDS.

Family Education Program materials and podcasts, and information on CHS programs can also be found on our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).



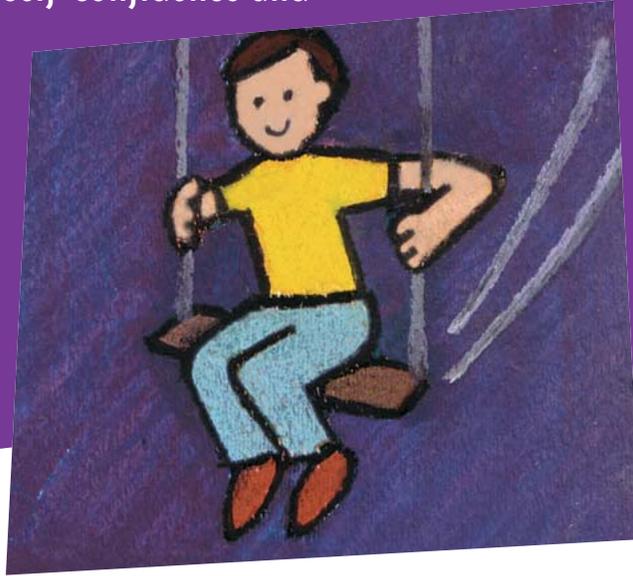
Getting enough daily exercise is one of the key factors to a child's physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Unfortunately, children are becoming less active as they spend more time watching television, playing video games, and using the Internet. However, by making smart choices you can ensure your family develops healthy habits for an active lifestyle.



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The benefits of being active last a lifetime, from building strong bones, and improving muscular strength and endurance, to maintaining a healthy weight. In addition, it helps reduce stress and increases children's self-confidence and self-esteem. The goal is to maintain fitness through a variety of activities that become a natural, fun part of a child's life. Parents can help by teaching the importance of exercise, being role models through their own active lifestyle, and by providing varied fitness opportunities.



Support your school and local community in providing more physical education, parks, and recreation centers for children.

★ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES ★

It is recommended that children two years of age and older participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate-intensity activity every day, and include 30 minutes of vigorous physical activity three to four times each week. Focus on activities that build strength, endurance, and flexibility.

CHILD'S AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL ABILITIES	SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
2-3 years	Very interested in exploring their world through active play	Unstructured play such as running, climbing, swinging, playing in a sandbox
4-5 years	Becoming more coordinated and can participate in some organized games	Can play with balls, hoops, ride a bicycle with training wheels, and enjoy dancing and gymnastics
6-12 years	Can quickly learn new skills for individual and team sports	Organized, competitive sports such as soccer, or non-competitive activities such as dancing or yoga

★ REDUCE INACTIVITY ★

Research has shown that television, video games, the Internet, and talking on the phone all reduce the time children spend in active pursuits.

★ TOO MUCH TELEVISION CAN BE HARMFUL

- Children can be inactive for hours, which can lead to obesity.
- Many programs are not suitable for children to see or hear, and can increase aggression in impressionable young viewers.
- Watching television is a passive activity, which reduces the time children spend reading or engaged in creative play.
- Children can become influenced by advertisements promoting inappropriate toys or unhealthy foods.

★ HOW TO LIMIT YOUR CHILD'S TV TIME

- Carefully choose what programs your child watches, focusing on educational television.
- Make watching television part of family time, discussing the program together.
- Keep televisions out of children's bedrooms. Instead, place the television in a common area where you can monitor its use.
- Limit television, video game, and computer time to one hour a day for children two to five years of age.

★ FUN, FREE, FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Staying fit doesn't have to cost a lot of money. To help your children build a healthy lifestyle, plan physical activities during family time. You can get the activity that you need while spending valuable time together as a family.

- Playing catch or throwing a frisbee
- Dancing to music
- Playing tag or hide-and-seek
- Joining community organizations such as Police Athletic Leagues, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCAs that offer classes, sports leagues, and activities
- Going on nature hikes
- Playing at local playgrounds and parks
- Visiting a beach, lake, or river
- Doing chores together such as raking leaves, vacuuming, or sweeping the floors
- Bike riding
- Taking the dog for walks

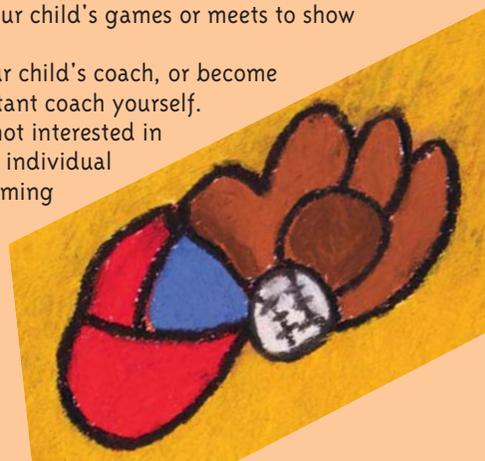
Good nutrition and daily exercise is a winning combination.



★ SPORTS

Playing sports is a great way to stay active and teach many important values. Encourage but don't force your child to participate in sports. Find out what he or she is interested in, and provide support.

- Consider your child's size, interests, and abilities.
- Expose your child to a variety of new activities and experiences.
- Don't introduce competitive sports before age six. Following rules, understanding teamwork, and losing can be very difficult for younger children.
- Make sure your child has a thorough physical exam by his or her pediatrician before beginning any sport.
- Keep realistic goals for yourself and your child. Most children don't become professional athletes.
- Try to attend your child's games or meets to show your support.
- Get to know your child's coach, or become a coach or assistant coach yourself.
- If your child is not interested in team sports, try individual sports like swimming or tennis, or experiment with non-sport activities like martial arts and dancing.



★ SAFETY

- Stretch before and after exercising to help prevent muscle strains.
- Always wear the proper equipment for an activity; for example, helmets, elbow pads, kneepads, goggles, and protective padding.
- Follow the Talk/Sing Rule: If children are breathing too heavily to be able to sing but are still able to talk, they are probably exercising at the right level of intensity.
- Teach your child to stop exercising if he or she feels pain, is faint or dizzy, or nauseous.
- Use sunscreen for your child's outdoor activities.
- Use close, constant supervision during any water activity. Young children can drown in a very small amount of water.

★ OBESITY

Being overweight is a problem for many children today and can lead to health problems in later life. Obesity is usually defined as weighing over 20% more than other children of the same age. Crash diets are not recommended, but your pediatrician can help you develop a healthy weight loss plan.

CAUSES OF OBESITY HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

Eating more calories than are being used up	After meals, offer fresh fruit rather than sugary desserts. Make plenty of fun opportunities for your children to run and have active play.
Eating too much fast food or junk food	Prepare and serve well-balanced meals and healthy snacks. Avoid sodas and high calorie foods like candy, cookies, and chips.
Eating in between meals	Put away all food between meals. Have meals and snacks at set times. Offer drinks of water.
Using food to cope instead of expressing feelings	Never use food as a reward, punishment, or bribe. Listen to and talk with your children daily. Eat together as a family.
Parents who model poor eating habits and don't exercise	Set the same food rules and exercise habits for everyone in the family. Children will copy what you do.

TO LEARN MORE

- BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**  
**THE BERENSTAIN BEARS AND TOO MUCH TV**  
 Stan & Jan Berenstain  
**TODDLEROBICS: ANIMAL FUN**  
 Zita Newcome  
**THE BUSY BODY BOOK**  
 Lizzy Rockwell  
**ORGANIZATIONS**  
**HEALTHY CHILDREN** [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)  
**KIDSHEALTH** [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)