

Preschool Fitness Tips

10 Tips to Help Preschool Children Learn Healthy Lifestyle Habits

Children as young as age two are already being affected by adult illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, obesity and stress disorders. Give them an early boost at developing healthy habits with these 10 tips.

1. Choose activities that come naturally. Abilities that come easy to your child will offer many rewards. Stay away from skills that are frustrating or that your child dislikes.
2. Make sure activities always have an element of "fun". Whether you structure the activity or a teacher, it should always leave your child wanting more. Preschoolers love acting silly and animated. If it isn't fun, they aren't going to do it.
3. Make it a habit. Strive to make exercise another healthy habit practiced daily. Just like brushing teeth, combing hair and bathing, doing something physically demanding everyday helps make exercise a routine part of life.
4. Rewards and Incentives. Offer a reward chart for a special treat (non food) when your child exercises each day for the entire month. On a daily basis, give an occasional unexpected sticker, hand stamp or hug.
5. De-emphasize weight loss benefits. Accentuate how good exercise feels and how good it is for keeping us healthy. Children do not need to be reminded that it will help them lose weight and it should never be used as a way to 'make' them lose weight. Once exercise becomes work, it stops being fun and children won't want to do it.
6. Include a healthy diet. Eating healthy foods provides energy to fuel activity. When children eat too much fat, sugar and salt, they won't feel as good. Endurance, strength, and motivation will all be affected. Don't let a poor diet sabotage a good exercise routine.
7. Try new things. Experiment with different sports, games, activities and other forms of movement. No doubt your child will find other activities he/she enjoys. Having the courage to try new things also builds confidence and self-esteem.
8. Rest is important. Your child needs at least 8 hours of sound rest each night. Lack of sleep can affect energy, levels, coordination, concentration, body weight, learning and the immune system. Keep track of sleep time and make bedtime fun.
9. Include variety. Sports skills, dancing, hiking, biking or running are all great. Encourage movement that can be done alone as well as in a group. Balance team activities with solo ones.

10. Be active with your preschool child several times each week. Nothing speaks louder than your actions or implies value more than your personal habits. Exercise daily, with and without your child.

Feel free to share this page with others to help promote preschool fitness. For more ideas on preschool exercise, free monthly activities and physical education programming for preschoolers, visit <http://www.kid-fit.com>.