

## Parenting Tips For Raising Healthy Kids

(NAPSA)—Most new parents pledge to keep their babies healthy. Years later, do parents lose sight of this commitment? Childhood obesity and undernourishment continue to impact millions of children. While many factors contribute to this epidemic, there are ways that parents—and all of us—can keep the commitment to helping our children be healthy.

One in three children and adolescents is overweight or obese, due to inactivity and indulgent, unhealthy eating. Being overweight puts strain on young bodies, increasing children's risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and sleep disorders.

Although many children eat too much food, the majority do not get enough nutritious foods. Proper nutrition has been shown to improve test scores, yet just 2 percent of children get the recommended daily amounts from all food groups.

"Parents, schools and restaurants are the usual sources of most children's food and treats," says Rob Bisceglie, executive director of Action for Healthy Kids. "It can be hard to ignore children's pleas for less nutritious foods, but consistently focusing on healthier foods teaches children how to eat right every day."

Parents also need to ensure their children keep physically active, which can improve concentration and classroom behavior. Children spend more time sitting down—in cars or buses, at their desks, at computers, in front of televisions—than ever before. More than a third of children spend five or more hours in front of the TV even on school days.

"Many parents don't realize they need to actively work to keep their



### Kids love trying new fruits and veggies at snack time or anytime.

children healthy," says Bisceglie. "Today's kids are bombarded with messages to eat unhealthy foods, fewer kids ride bikes or walk to school, recess is being cut in many schools and in some neighborhoods it is simply unsafe for kids to play outside. It is up to parents to find ways to get their children moving more and eating right."

#### **Keeping Your Child Healthy**

Fortunately, even small changes can make a big difference to a child's health.

- **Limit screen time.** Include the computer, television and handheld games.

- **Learn what your child is eating at school.** Role-play with your child so she knows how to choose the healthiest options and portion sizes. Alternatively, pack a healthful lunch.

- **View a snack as a mini-meal.** Offer only nutritious foods such as fruits, nuts, vegetables, whole-grain crackers and low-fat dairy products.

- **Move together.** Take a family walk after dinner, ride bikes to school or join a fitness center.

For more resources to help keep your family healthy, visit [www.ActionforHealthyKids.org/FamilyCorner](http://www.ActionforHealthyKids.org/FamilyCorner) or call (800) 416-5136.