

Pointers For Parents

Helping Kids Lead A Healthy Lifestyle

(NAPSA)—According to recent studies, an estimated 13 percent of children and adolescents are overweight, a condition that places them at risk for diseases once only common in adults, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Lack of exercise and poor eating habits are the main culprits behind this epidemic. The American Council for Fitness and Nutrition reports that the risk of childhood obesity rises by 12 percent for each hour of television a young person watches per day. Additionally, the University of Minnesota School of Public Health reports that the consumption of one can of regular cola per day can add 15 pounds of body fat in one year.

Startling facts such as these have led parents to encourage their young ones to turn off the TV and undertake new habits in line with a healthier lifestyle. The Internet can be a useful resource to educate parents and children on steps they can take to make smart, health-conscious choices.

For instance, KOL—America Online's service for kids—introduced a new feature called "KOL Expeditions" that teaches kids important topics like health and nutrition in a fun and educational way. As part of the program, the KOL team visited Okinawa, Japan, an area where people are known for their unusually long lives ("blue zones"). Kids can visit <http://www.kolexpeditions.com> to learn about the secrets of living a healthy lifestyle—such as watching interactive videos of some of the most disgusting, yet healthiest foods on earth (octopus eyes, anyone?). As part of KOL Expeditions, kids can also sign up for "The Blue Zone Challenge," a program through which kids pledge to eat healthier so that they may live longer.



The Internet can help kids take steps to leading a healthier lifestyle.

Parents can also find helpful tips such as:

- **Plan For Success**—Help your child set realistic goals that call for small, but meaningful lifestyle changes. Be supportive of his or her successes and failures.

- **The Book on Weight**—Try having children record daily food choices in a log such as those found at kolexpeditions.com. Put the log on the refrigerator or some other visible place that will help your child remember to use it.

- **TV Time**—Set rules about watching TV in your home. Consider limiting the amount of time children are allowed to watch, or try establishing TV-free times each day.

- **A Stocked Fridge**—Keep fruits and vegetables readily available at home and serve them with every meal. Baby carrots, fresh berries, and apples with yogurt dip make simple, healthful snacks.

- **Plan Ahead**—Schedule fun physical activities and create healthy menus together. Try new things—new foods, new activities, alternatives to soda and sweet fruit drinks. Make healthy eating an adventure for the whole family.

For more information visit www.kolexpeditions.com.