

Fighting Obesity In Toddlers

(NAPSA)—With childhood obesity continuing its dramatic rise, it's clear that America's weight problem has moved beyond just affecting adults.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 14 percent of children ages 2 to 5 are overweight, putting them at increased risk of becoming obese adults.

Experts agree that the key to combating these weighty statistics is to get parents involved with their children at an early age to teach them the importance of healthy eating habits and exercise. That explains why a new project called Sprout Smart, from the folks behind the popular and well-respected PBS KIDS SPROUT television network for preschoolers, is generating such excitement.

"Kids develop healthy diet and exercise habits as preschoolers," explains Mary L. Gavin, MD, Medical Editor, KidsHealth, Nemours Center for Children's Health Media. "Parents can be both teachers and role models when it comes to eating right and being active."

That's where Sprout Smart comes in. In partnership with KidsHealth and sponsored by Mott's for Tots, Sprout Smart helps moms and dads find fun and simple ways to keep kids both active and eating healthy. Parents can visit the Web site SproutSmart.com for expert articles and related blog discussions about ways to connect with their preschoolers and watch videos about children's health. Topics include "The ABCs of Getting



Doctors say health habits learned as toddlers can carry into adulthood.

ZZZs," "Kids in the Kitchen" and "The Power of Play."

"The idea is to help parents and kids find fun ways to build healthy habits and relationships," says Dr. Gavin.

Sprout Smart offers these tips and more:

- Get preschoolers moving—and have fun doing it. Try walking like a penguin, hopping like a frog or imitating other animals' movements with your child.

- Teach kids that healthy foods taste good. Serve delicious but low-sugar juice beverages, such as Mott's for Tots, with a handful of whole-grain cereal for a tasty, nutrient-packed snack.

- Connect with your child through active play like dancing. The key is to have fun.

For more ideas and information, visit www.SproutSmart.com.