

Pointers For Parents

Good Nutrition And Physical Activity—Family Style

by Jodie Shield, R.D.

(NAPSA)—Increasingly, parents are concerned about childhood obesity. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled since 1980.



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Additionally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that approximately 25 percent of young people report no vigorous physical activity, and 14 percent report no recent vigorous or light to moderate physical activity.

As a registered dietitian and mother of three, I've developed some tips to help make physical activity and good eating habits part of your family's lifestyle.

Use the five food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, milk and meat. According to the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, children should eat at least the minimum recommended number of servings in each category: 6-11 servings of grains, 3-5 servings of vegetables,

2-4 servings of fruit, 2-3 servings of milk, and 2-3 servings of meat. Another group is fats and sweets including salad dressing, soda and candy, which should be served sparingly.

The milk group is of key concern to growing children. While children need calcium, studies show they're not meeting their two servings a day. Parents can help by serving live and active culture (LAC) yogurt. In addition to being well tolerated by lactose-sensitive children, yogurt is rich in calcium, high in protein, convenient, versatile and tasty.

Daily physical activity is also critical. Try these tips to get your kids moving:

- Turn off the TV and the computer, and turn kids on to the great outdoors;
- Bored with your backyard? Discover a new park or playground;
- Be a role model: if you're active, your child will be too.

Remember—eating right and being physically active together as a family helps children develop healthy habits for a lifetime.