

Let's move to help families and communities make healthier decisions for their kids. Let's move to bring together governors and mayors, doctors and nurses, businesses, community groups, educators, athletes, Moms and Dads to tackle this challenge once and for all.  
~ First Lady Michelle Obama, February 2010



## Promoting Healthy Weight

There is a relationship between healthy weight and overall health. There is also growing concern about overweight and children. To address this health issue, Mrs. Obama has announced the **Let's Move** campaign to raise a healthier generation of children.



Promoting healthy weight begins at home. The foods you serve and your eating and exercise habits influence what your children eat and how often they are physically active. Food choices and opportunities for physical activity outside the home are important too. **Let's Move** supports families, schools, communities and health providers' efforts to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Read about the campaign, and get ideas and resources about healthy choices, healthy schools, physical activity and accessible, affordable healthy food at [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).

Children with weight issues are at risk for lifelong health problems. Overweight can lead to diabetes and high blood pressure. Underweight children may be at risk for malnutrition or eating disorders. Children with unhealthy weights may be teased, bullied or have low self-esteem. Your health provider may be a good resource for information about healthy weight, good nutrition and physical activity. Learn more at the Kids Health Web site at <http://bit.ly/aWgfA1> (English *en Español*).

**Infancy:** Families may worry about how much and how often their baby should eat. In general, breastfed babies stop nursing when they are full. If your baby is bottle fed, she will stop when full or may push the bottle away. If your baby finishes the bottle and is smacking her lips or is restless, she may still be hungry. Visit the Healthy Children site (<http://bit.ly/cRrNWj>) to learn more. Babies also need to be active. Let your baby enjoy some tummy time - lie down in front of him and encourage him to lift his head and move his arms.



**Early Childhood:** One to 4 year olds enjoy family routines. Try to make healthy eating and physical activity part of daily life. And, limit "screen time"- TV, videos, and computers.



Common Sense media (<http://bit.ly/aDKBJO>) has ideas for decreasing screen time and promoting other activities. When possible eat meals as a family and entertain each other with conversation, not a TV show.

**Middle Childhood:** Five to 10 year olds may begin to pay more attention to what their friends do and say, but your opinion still counts! TV and other media also influence the foods and activities your children may want to try. From time to time, watch TV with your child. Discuss food ads they see on TV and at the store. Make time to be active. Go on family walks, and encourage active indoor and outdoor play. Need more ideas? Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at <http://bit.ly/3wnZMI>.

**Adolescence:** Many teens worry about body image. Some may try unhealthy diets that put them at risk for being too thin. Teens are also making their own choices about what they eat, and how often they exercise. Provide healthy snacks and encourage daily physical activity. Get ideas at Shape Up America (<http://bit.ly/aRFgEh>). The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has ideas for promoting healthy eating at [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) (English *en Español*).

**Special Needs:** Good nutrition and physical activity are important for children with special health needs (CSHN) too. But, it may be hard to make sure your child eats healthy food and has opportunities to be physically active. Talk with your child's health providers about suitable activities for your child. Talk to other families of CSHN. This is a good way to learn about resources and what others are doing to help their children be active and maintain healthy weight. The Maternal & Child Health Library has resources to support the nutrition and physical activity needs of CSHN at <http://bit.ly/bN2X4j>.



## Additional Ideas

- Encourage your child to drink water and low-fat milk instead of juice and soda.
- "Special family times" do not have to include food or TV.
- Try new activities as a family: roller skate, fly a kite, dance, or try yoga.
- If your health care provider says your child is under or overweight, involve the whole family in lifestyle changes to promote healthy weight and physical activity.

Note: This material is adapted from Family Voices Bright Futures: Promoting Healthy Weight.

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families raising children and youth with special health care needs and friends working to keep families at the center of children's health care. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, Family Voices works to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. **Bright Futures: Family Matters** is a publication to share with your networks. Check out our Family Voices web sites at [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org) and [www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org).

## Partners...



The National Institute for Health Care Management Research and Educational Foundation (NIHCM) conducts research about health care issues. They share their findings with the private health care industry and government agencies to promote access to health care, and improve effectiveness of health care services. Obesity is one of NIHCM's research areas.

While it's encouraging to know that many health insurers highlight health and wellness benefits, we also read stories about health insurers who have terminated coverage to individuals who are obese. NIHCM is working toward solutions. They have examined the evidence base and highlighted effective strategies health insurers can offer, such as individually adapted behavior change programs, to help members work towards achieving healthy weights. In addition, NIHCM highlights public and private partnerships for best practices that others can adopt to help decrease the incidence of childhood obesity. Learn more at [www.NIHCM.org](http://www.NIHCM.org).

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## What's New in Research?



Do the eating and exercise habits children develop affect their overall health and well-being when they become adults? Dr. Robert Kaestner of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the U of Illinois, and Dr. Xin Xu, of the UIC Institute for Health Research and Policy in Chicago, wanted to find out. In 1972, the U.S. enacted Title IX of the Education Amendments to end sex discrimination in schools and ensure women had equal opportunities. While not specific to sports, there was a 600% increase in girls' sports participation at school. Drs. Kastner and Xu examined the relationship between girls' participation in school sports and physical activity and healthy weight as adults. They studied data for 375,000 women from all 50 states and Washington D.C. to see if playing sports during their teen years affected their exercise habits and weight 20 – 25 years later. They used BMI (Body Mass Index) to classify weight as healthy or obese. Their results are encouraging. School-based programs that promote physical activity do have life-long benefits. Girls who participate in sports have more active lifestyles and are less obese as adults. Read the full article <http://erx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/1/52>. Visit [http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/weight/bmi\\_charts.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/food/weight/bmi_charts.html) to learn about BMI in kids.

## Family Resource Corner



Do you have a family member with food allergies? Is it difficult to eat out? Visit **Allergy Eats**, an on-line guide to allergy-friendly restaurants, dining tips, resources, and information at [www.allergyeats.com](http://www.allergyeats.com).

The American Academy of Pediatrics has a new **Healthy Children** Web site for families. It's a great place to get information about health and wellness through each stage of your child's development. There's also information about safety, family life, health issues and more. Visit [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org).

Pregnant women can now receive information about nutrition, immunizations, flu, mental and oral health and more, via their cell phones. Text4baby is a free messaging service that sends weekly texts to mothers-to-be. Learn more at [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).

Family Voices, in collaboration with research partners at Tufts University School of Medicine, studied health promotion for children and youth with special health needs. As part of the **Family Matters** project, they collected strategies to help families promote children's good health in the areas of healthy eating, physical activity and reducing screen time. Visit [http://familyvoices.org/pub/projects/family\\_matters\\_book.pdf](http://familyvoices.org/pub/projects/family_matters_book.pdf) to download a free copy of the Family Matters booklet.

## Tidbits for the Month



The Internet has revolutionized the way we research information, find answers to our questions, and connect with the world at large. Nevertheless, there are times we just want to ask a question and get the answer. If you want to connect with someone, but don't know who or where to call for health-related information, education and support, the **2010 Toll-Free Numbers for Health Information** can be a useful starting place. Search by topic, browse the alphabetical listings, or peruse the crisis intervention, rare disorders and professional organizations directories. Many of the numbers answer in English **en Español**. Visit [www.health.gov/nhic/pubs/2010tollfreenumbers/tollfreenumbers1.htm](http://www.health.gov/nhic/pubs/2010tollfreenumbers/tollfreenumbers1.htm).



April is National Youth Sports Safety Month. Visit [www.nyssf.org/campaign.html](http://www.nyssf.org/campaign.html) for ideas to promote youth sports safety in your community. There are also great fact sheets with tips for kids, coaches and parents.

### *Share your news with others!*

We love to hear from partner & family organizations, and invite you to share news about your organization's programs & activities. To share your tidbits and/or subscribe to this publication, email Betsy Anderson, IMPACT project director, at [banderson@familyvoices.org](mailto:banderson@familyvoices.org).

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