

Give Your Kids the Gift of a Healthy Lifestyle

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One of the best gifts you can give your kids is the gift of a healthy lifestyle. This includes healthy eating habits, staying active, and trying new activities. It also means providing space and unstructured time to let kids be kids.

The most important thing you can do to encourage your children to be healthy is to model healthy behaviors yourself. Take a few moments to think about how you live your life. As parents, we are the primary teachers for our children. They learn by watching us and imitating us. What do your actions convey about how you live your life and how your children should live their lives?

A good place to start is to examine what you eat and your attitudes toward food. Healthy eating means choosing a balanced way of eating nutritious foods: lots of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean meat and fish, nuts, and healthy snacks. It also means having a healthy approach to junk food. An occasional fast food meal or bowl of ice cream is o.k. However, if you or your kids are constantly ingesting sugar and fat, there will be both short and long-term negative consequences such as energy swings, a challenged immune system, and a higher risk for chronic disease later in life such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease. What you teach them now about eating will have an impact for the rest of their lives, so pay attention to the message you are sending.

Another good behavior to model to children: get moving!! Make fitness a priority in your life and it may just become a priority in your kids' lives. Try taking up a new hobby together with your child(ren) such as hiking, martial arts or swimming. What do they love to do? What have you always wanted to try but were too afraid? How about trying those activities together? We have a Mom, Dad and teen who workout together in our fitness studio. Not only do they keep each other consistent, but Mom and Dad are helping to lay the foundation for their teen to incorporate healthy habits into her life. Plus, they have a great time and there is lots of laughter during their workouts!

Lastly, don't forget to allow time for kids to just be kids. Say no to over scheduling your kids in too many activities. Make sure that they do not spend too much time in front of the TV or computer. Given some time and space, their imaginations will kick in and they will think up all kinds of games. Remember, the healthy habits you teach your kids now will help lay the foundation for the rest of their lives. What a beautiful gift to give!

If you have any questions regarding this article or any other fitness questions don't hesitate to call Deb or Dave Brown at 303-816-1426 or visit at www.onthemovefitness.com.