



# How to Promote Healthy Behaviors in Your Children

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Health should be a top priority for you as you raise your children. When you start young, you can ***set your child up for a long and healthy life, just by promoting healthy behaviors now.***

### Childhood Obesity

Statistics have shown that when a child is obese, they're more likely to continue to struggle with the problem during their adult life. You can combat this by concentrating on a healthy diet and an active lifestyle for your young ones.

**Keep these items in mind as you promote healthy behaviors in your children:**

- 1. Children learn by example.** Look to your own habits first. Are they up to par? ***Your children watch every move you make*** and they're likely to repeat your behaviors. While a family pizza is a nice treat every once in awhile, if it becomes a habit, your children will continue to expect it all the time.
  - Be a model for your children by maintaining a balanced diet.
  - Show them that they must exercise by exercising yourself.
- 2. Make it fun.** If you make healthy behaviors fun, your children will look forward to engaging in them. Get excited about brushing your teeth. Play sports with your children, instead of just walking and running. ***Do what you need to do to keep the excitement alive.***
- 3. Use repetition.** Fight the urge to slip up when it comes to continuing your healthy behaviors. If you do something every day for 21 days, it becomes a habit. Healthy habits are easy to maintain once they're ingrained in your brain!

- For example, if you brush your teeth every single morning and night, your teeth will feel "dirty" if you miss a brushing session.
4. **Buy fresh healthy snacks.** Everyone enjoys a good snack. Have plenty of healthy snack options available to your children. You can put out plates of fresh fruit and veggies. When your children are hungry, they'll make do with what they have, even if it isn't their favorite.
  5. **Turn off the TV.** In this day and age, the TV plays a large role in life. If you find that your children are spending too much time in front of it, establish a no TV or video game policy during certain hours and encourage your children to go outside or read a book.
  6. **Stay involved.** Get actively involved in your child's life. If you continue to encourage them when they're doing something good, ***they'll enjoy the attention.*** Getting involved in this way will give your children the confidence to continue with their healthy habit.
  7. **Sign up for activities.** Your community likely has a variety of activities to choose from in order to remain active while having fun. Discover what your children like and sign them up for those activities.

## When Things Go Wrong

People lead busy lives and sometimes you'll realize that you've let some bad behaviors take over. In these situations, it's important to stay on top of the problem and search for a solution.

Define the problem and ***develop an action plan that will help you get back on track.*** For example, if your family has fallen into a pattern where you start to eat out too frequently, perhaps you can find some quick and healthy home recipes or search for healthier places to eat out.

Following these tips will keep you and your children on the right track and enable a healthy lifestyle for years to come.