

Kids & Fitness

We at PPMG want fitness to be an important part of your child's health.

Only 1 in 3 children are physically active every day with < 50% of the time spent in sports practice, games, and physical education class involving movement enough to be considered physical activity. With children and teens spend more than 7 hours per day on average using TVs, computers, phones, and other electronic devices for entertainment, we now see a third of children either overweight or obese in the United States. These are lifelong problems as overweight teens have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

Parents can play a key role in helping their child become more physically active.

Here are some tips on how to get your child active and physical in ways that will make this a life time habit.

1. **Talk with your child's doctor.** Your child's doctor can help your child understand why physical activity is important. Your child's doctor can also suggest a sport or [activity](#) that is best for your child.
2. **Find a fun activity.** Help your child find a sport that she enjoys. The more she enjoys the activity, the more likely she will continue it. Get the entire family involved. It is a great way to spend time together.
3. **Choose an activity that is developmentally appropriate.** For example, a 7- or 8-year-old child is not ready for weight lifting or a 3-mile run, but soccer, bicycle riding, and swimming are all appropriate activities.
4. **Plan ahead.** Make sure your child has a convenient time and place to exercise.
5. **Provide a safe environment.** Make sure your child's equipment and chosen site for the sport or activity are safe. Make sure your child's clothing is comfortable and appropriate.
6. **Provide active toys.** Young children especially need easy access to balls, jump ropes, and other active toys.
7. **Be a role model.** Children who regularly see their parents enjoying sports and physical activity are more likely to do so themselves.
8. **Play with your child.** Help her learn a new sport.
9. **Turn off the TV.** Limit TV watching and computer use. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 1 to 2 hours of total screen time, including TV, videos, computers, and video games, each day. Use the free time for more physical activities.
10. **Make time for exercise.** Some children are so overscheduled with [homework](#), music lessons, and other planned activities that they do not have time for [exercise](#).
11. **Do not overdo it.** When your child is ready to start, remember to tell her to listen to her body. Exercise and physical activity should not hurt. If this occurs, your child should

slow down or try a less vigorous activity. As with any activity, it is important not to overdo it. If your child's weight drops below an average, acceptable level or if exercise starts to interfere with school or other activities, talk with your child's doctor.

Exercise along with a balanced diet provides the foundation for a healthy, active life. One of the most important things parents can do is encourage healthy habits in their children early on in life. It is not too late to start.