

# Physical Fitness Guidelines

## Early Childhood (ages 1-4):

- Encourage walking, running, riding a tricycle or bike, dancing, playing with a ball, playing on playground equipment that requires balance or "Simon Says"
- Begin developmentally organized activities such as tumbling, gymnastics and dancing
- Allow children to do certain things themselves (i.e. letting them climb into the car seat)

## Middle Childhood (ages 5-10):

- Encourage activities that focus on having fun and developing motor skills rather than on competition
- Gradually increase the amount of instruction and rules for an activity as your child gets older
- Wait until your child is 6 years old before beginning organized sports. During earlier years, children are too young to understand rules and strategies and it is even more difficult for them to handle the stress involved
- Begin to incorporate activities that emphasize strategy and teamwork around age 10

## Adolescence (ages 11 on):

- Encourage your adolescent to find activities he or she enjoys and can continue into adulthood
- Discuss how adolescents can incorporate physical activities into their daily lives (i.e. taking the stairs instead of the elevator)
- Encourage non-competitive activities such as biking, rollerblading, jogging and swimming

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- Help adolescents find activities that they can participate in with friends. Exercising in groups helps motivation and can be fun

#### General Tips:

- Everyone should participate in a moderate amount of physical activity (15 minutes of running, 30 minutes of brisk walking, 45 minutes of a sport) at least three times a week if not daily
- Parents should do the same in order to be positive role models
- Reduce the television and computer time
- It is essential that our children understand the importance of physical activity. It increases muscle and bone strength, decreases body fat, enhances psychological well-being and helps reduce the risk of obesity

#### Obesity:

- Remember that we are all different. We are many shapes and sizes. Some people are genetically thin and some are genetically husky. Children develop at different rates and hit puberty at different ages. Be tolerant and understanding. If someone is husky that doesn't make them obese
- Obesity is being more than 20% above the ideal weight for your body style and level of development, as well as your height
- More importantly, we all are, in general out of shape
- Eat less, exercise more and watch less television

#### Weight Training:

- An adolescent may start light weights at puberty (when pubic hair develops)
- A good starting point to use is to take the most weight you can comfortably manage without hurting yourself and use 40% of that weight to do repetitions of 8-10 (for example: if you can bench press 150 lbs once, do reps with 60 pounds).
- never take creatine

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