

# Helping Your Child to Be Healthy & Safe

## PARENTING GUIDE



*Helping kids make the most out of life*

[www.HLOnline.org](http://www.HLOnline.org)

We can't be with our children every moment of every day. Now, more than ever, the outside influences on children's lives are tremendous. From peer pressure to television, music, the Internet and social media, our children live in a dynamic information society that shapes their attitudes, knowledge and emotions.

It is easy to feel challenged as a parent, but the fact is you are still the most important and constant influence in your child's life. We believe this guide contains useful parenting tips to help children make positive, healthy choices.

## About Us

Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) is a nonprofit organization working to give children the knowledge and skills they need to reduce risk behaviors, including violence, substance abuse, accidental injury, poor nutrition and lack of regular physical activity. The HLC Program includes a behavioral-health curriculum in grades Pre-K to 8, a curriculum for after-school and/or summer camp programs, webisodes and many other resources.

For more information about Healthy Lifestyle Choices, visit our website at [www.HLCOnline.org](http://www.HLCOnline.org) or call 504.299.1966.





# Building and Maintaining Your Child's Positive Self-Image

Self-image is the mental picture that one has of oneself, and it can be positive or negative. This very personal perception is shaped by your child's expectations, experiences and relationships. Because of this, there is much you can do to positively influence your child's self-image. Self-image is important because it will affect how your child feels and how they respond to things that happen in their life.

In fact, you could say a good self-image starts at home. Help your child focus on things they are good at and that they like about themselves. As a family, emphasize the things about your family that are unique and special. Other things important in maintaining a positive self-image include:

- **A sense of belonging**—Your child needs to feel accepted and loved by others and this starts in the home. This support should continue in school, sports teams and community settings. It is important for all children to feel accepted.
- **Self-discipline and self-control**—Set expectations for your child and give them opportunities to act and experience consequences of their actions. Children need to test themselves, reflect and develop problem-solving skills to learn to make good choices.
- **Encouragement, support and rewards**—When children achieve, they need positive feedback and recognition to reinforce positive decision making. Encourage your child to set goals, then motivate and encourage them. Give positive feedback often to connect positive behaviors and activities to achievement.
- **It is okay to make mistakes**—Help your child understand that everyone makes mistakes and that this is a part of life-long learning. Show your child how to benefit from their mistakes. Be supportive, but give constructive feedback.



# Conflict Resolution & Violence Prevention

Everyone gets angry and everyone experiences conflict. It is **how** a person deals with conflict that makes a difference. One of the most common reasons for conflict is a breakdown in communication. That is why it is important to help your child learn to effectively communicate and positively deal with conflict. If two children are upset with each other, here are some simple steps to guide them through resolving their conflict:

- ❶ Help children to cool down if they are angry or frustrated (take deep breaths or a walk);
- ❷ Then, have each child take turns expressing their feelings without interruption;
- ❸ Next, ask each child to give an idea to solve the conflict;
- ❹ Finally, have children agree to a solution. (Children may agree to walk away and discuss the problem once they have calmed down.)

## Where does violence begin?

Children are not naturally violent. Violence is a learned behavior that can be unlearned. In most cases, children learn how to respond to conflict at home, in school, from the media and their peers.

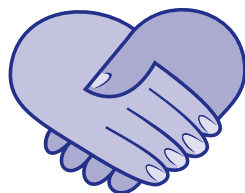
## What can **YOU** as a parent do about violence?

Talk to your child often, starting at an early age. Parents have the power to help their children become healthy, confident and secure. This is done by teaching them how to express their emotions and opinions, view things from another person's point-of-view, resolve conflict peacefully and make positive decisions.

## Controlling violence begins with discipline

Discipline is training that is expected to produce a specific pattern of behavior and produce moral and/or mental improvement. There is a dramatic difference between discipline

and punishment. Discipline is intended to teach children to understand why their behavior is unacceptable so they can make better decisions. It leads to self-control and shows that they are loved and respected.



Punishment is a penalty for wrongdoing and intended to stop an annoying behavior. It uses power to control behavior. With punishment, children become dependent on adults to control their behavior. It does not prepare children to make good decisions, but rather prepares children to obey orders.

## Positive discipline

Parenting through positive discipline takes time. From the earliest age, set clear limits of what you expect and be consistent. Expect your child to obey your rules and praise them when they do. However, when children do not follow rules, here are four positive discipline strategies recommended by the *American Academy of Pediatrics*:

- **Natural consequences**—As long as it does not place your child in danger, let them experience the natural consequences of their actions. For example, if your child throws a cookie on the floor, it goes in the trash and they no longer have a cookie.
- **Logical consequences**—There may be times when you need to give your child a consequence if they do not follow your instructions. For example, if your child does not pick up his toys, you will put them away for the rest of the day. When you establish a consequence, make sure it is reasonable and always follow through.
- **Withholding privileges**—Explain to your child if they do not follow rules they will have to give up something they like. Choose something that is related to the misbehavior, however never take away something your child needs such as a meal. Timing is also important, especially for younger children. If your child is under the age of 7, make sure the consequence is immediate (instead of, for example, taking away something that evening).

- **Time-out**—This is a strategy best used for children who are ages 2-5. Determine which 2 or 3 behaviors merit a time-out and explain this to your child often. Choose a time-out spot that is boring with no distractions, such as a chair. If your child misbehaves, first give them a warning. If they continue to misbehave, explain what they did wrong as calmly as possible and take them by the hand or carry them to the time-out spot. Never react to tears, outbursts or promises.

Length of time is an important factor with this strategy. Time-out should last 1 minute for every year of your child's age (so a 2-year-old would be in time-out for 2 minutes, a 3-year-old for 3 minutes, etc.). When time is up, help your child return to where they were playing, reminding him or her that you love them.

## **Why spanking never works**

Spanking, which is a punishment, is not an effective form of discipline for many reasons including:

- Spanking increases aggression and anger, instead of teaching responsibility.
- Spanking can get out of hand and harm the child.
- Parents who spank often regret their actions afterward.
- Spanking may seem to be effective at first, but loses its impact quickly.

In addition, studies now show that children who are spanked are more likely to become adults who are depressed, have more anger, hit their own children, hit spouses and engage in crime and violence.







## **Reduce violent reinforcements and images**

The best way to send a message that you will not tolerate violence is to control your own behavior. Children will follow your lead. Never use physical force to control behavior or resolve conflict, always use words or one of the positive discipline techniques discussed above.

Other ways to reduce your child’s exposure to violence include:

- Supervise your child’s exposure to media.
  - Monitor the video games they play. Most games are rated and many contain extreme violence.
  - Monitor what they watch on television. A TV rating system was created to help parents determine what is appropriate for children at varying ages.



 TV Y is appropriate for all children	 TV PG means there may be content not suitable for young children
 TV 7 is approved for children ages seven and older	 TV 14 is recommended only for those ages 14 or older
 TV G is for a general audience and suitable for most children	 TV MA is for mature audiences over age 17

- Monitor their music. Most teens wear headphones when they listen to music, so it is important to check the lyrics of their favorite songs. Lyrics have become explicit in regard to sex, violence and drugs and may also promote violence.
- Establish rules about the Internet. Set up your computer in a family room or other open area where you are able to monitor the Internet sites they visit. You can even block access or set parental controls to sites that are not suitable for children.
- Monitor use of social networks and blog sites. Scan content to ensure that it is appropriate. Look for signs of and talk to your child about cyberbullying (posting cruel messages or images online). Explain that cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior.
- Use parental controls on mobile phones. Set parental controls to limit the ability to download applications or visit inappropriate websites.
- Talk to your child about cliques and gangs. Children want to

feel like they belong and are seeking support. Sometimes they are accepted by groups that engage in negative, antisocial behavior. If you suspect your child is involved in a gang, talk to them directly about it.

- Know your child's friends. Meet their friends' parents. Make sure your child is supervised when visiting friends.
- Supervise your child. Know where your older child is going at all times. Never leave young children unsupervised.

## Using "I" messages when you communicate

Help your child understand that keeping sadness and anger inside can hurt them. Anger that is not expressed can become violent outbursts. Sadness that is not expressed can make children want to hurt themselves or take dangerous risks. "I" messages focus on feelings, needs and thoughts. When children and adults understand and use "I" messages, they can be aware of their own feelings and how these emotions impact their relationships with others. Help your child practice using "I" messages in this way:

"I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

**Example:** "I feel sad when you tease me about my height because it makes me feel different."

Help your child understand that they can prevent a conflict or hurt feelings by using "I" messages to express how they feel to others in a direct and positive way.

## What can you do if your child is a bully?

If your child is acting like a bully and threatening other children, you must take action! Your child must understand that there are consequences for their actions. You must make it clear that you disapprove of bullying. It is important to impose consequences in a firm but loving way.

Consequences could include time-out or taking away of privileges for younger children. For older children, you could have your



child write down what happened, how they behaved, why it was wrong and how they can do better in the future.

With the increasing technology available to us, bullying has now spread from the playground to computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. Cyber bullying is the use of electronic devices to post words or images intended to harm another person. Explain to your children that cyber bullying is very serious and considered a crime in many states.

Some children are bullies because they are bored; others do it to feel powerful; some do it to get attention or feel popular. Whatever the reason, children must learn to control their impulses and behave in socially acceptable ways. Talk to your child and try to understand why they are acting aggressively. Then, explain that there are better ways to make friends and gain acceptance.

## **How to make friends**

It can be difficult for youth to identify a good friend. Explain to your child that friends should make them feel good about themselves. Encourage your child to play with children who enjoy similar activities (play on the playground, skate, etc.). Help your child to recognize the qualities below in their friends and to practice these same qualities with others to be a good friend.

- Is a good listener
- Is honest
- Expresses their feelings
- Accepts others
- Shares
- Respects others
- Shows sympathy when needed
- Does not judge other people
- Helps another person when they are upset or in need
- Is at their best at all times
- Takes responsibility for their actions



# Substance Abuse

Parents may be surprised to hear that substance abuse can begin when children are young and often by the start of adolescence. Children may be curious and try smoking a cigarette. They may try alcohol to fit in with a group of friends or to look “cool.” Ask your child if he or she has ever heard someone use the excuse “everybody’s doing it.” Tell them that if they ever hear that everyone is smoking, drinking or using other drugs that it is not true. In fact, **MOST CHILDREN DO NOT** smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or use other drugs.

## What can **YOU** do to help your child avoid substance abuse?

First, you are the most powerful influence on your child. Children are less likely to use drugs if you do not use tobacco or alcohol yourself. Second, talk to your child about tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Talking about substance abuse with your child can be difficult, and sitting down with them once and having “the talk” about drugs is not enough. Talk with your child at an early age, and often, about drugs.



Here are some things you can discuss with your child about why people should not smoke, drink alcohol or use other drugs:

- They are addictive and it is hard to stop once you start.
- They make your clothes, your hair and skin smell.
- They can keep you from doing well in sports.
- They are unhealthy and illegal for youth.
- They may cause you to hurt yourself or others or make you sick and can even kill you.

## Other steps you can take to help your child avoid drugs:

- Enjoy activities together and keep the lines of communication open. Have regular family meetings just to talk about how

things are going. Establish family rituals, routines and celebrations.

- Use all opportunities to discuss substance use and abuse. If you see people smoking or drinking alcohol in public, a television program or a magazine ad glamorizing smoking, or if you see an article in the newspaper about substance abuse, share these observations with your child and talk about why substance use is unhealthy.
- Know your child's friends and their parents. Invite their friends over to your home, get to know them and find out their hobbies and interests.
- Set clear limits and expectations for behaviors. Make sure your child understands the reason behind your rules. Also make sure they know the consequences if they break a rule. Then, BE CONSISTENT.
- Children are most likely to experiment with drugs between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Keep them busy doing constructive activities during these hours. Find a safe place with adult supervision for young children to go after school. Encourage older children to stay at school and play a sport, try out for a school play or engage in other positive activities that they enjoy.

### **Facts you should know about alcohol use:**

- Alcohol is the oldest and most widely used drug.
- It is the #1 drug problem among youth.
- Alcohol is responsible for 32% of traffic-related deaths (CDC, 2009).
- Alcohol is absorbed into the blood stream quickly.
- Possible long-term effects of alcohol use are: blackouts and memory loss, suppression of the immune system, cirrhosis of the liver, cardiovascular disease and stroke.

### **Facts you should know about tobacco use:**

- Smoking kills more than 400,000 people each year.
- Cigarette smokers lose about 11 minutes of their lives with each cigarette.
- The average age a person begins smoking is 13-years-old.

- Cigarette smoke contains 4,000 chemicals.
- Secondhand smoke from cigarettes is harmful.
- Tobacco is a major risk factor for heart and lung disease, cancer and stroke. It is the single most preventable cause of illness, disability and death in the U.S.
- Effects of cigarette smoking include increased heart rate, higher blood pressure, dizziness, stained teeth, stained fingers and fingernails, stinky breath and clothes, and it can increase wrinkles.

## Caffeine – Yes, it is a drug

With more and more children and adolescents drinking coffee and energy drinks, they are the fastest growing age group of caffeine users. In fact, children today consume 70% more caffeine than they did 30 years ago.

Caffeine is a drug naturally produced in plants and artificially added to foods. It can be found in many items like sodas, tea, coffee, chocolate and over-the-counter medications. Most children consume caffeine from sodas and energy drinks.

Caffeine is a stimulant meaning it speeds up the heart and breathing rates and increases blood pressure, and can provide a short-term energy boost. However, regular physical activity, eating nutritious meals and getting enough rest are healthy alternatives to caffeine for providing the body with energy.

It is recommended that teens limit caffeine consumption to no more than 100 milligrams per day. Within this limit, consider caffeine contained in the following popular drinks and try to limit your child or teen's consumption of caffeine:

Energy drinks	80mg per 8-oz. serving*
Drip-brewed coffee	100mg per 8-oz. cup
Caffeinated sodas	40-50mg per 12-oz. can
Super-caffeinated colas	70mg per 12-oz. can

\*average serving, but some energy drinks can be as much as three times the daily recommended amount for teens





The number one health risk for children age 14 and under is unintentional injuries. It's called unintentional because there really is no such thing as an accident—90 percent of all injuries can be prevented with proper precautions and supervision. Examples include car accidents involving passengers or pedestrians, firearm injuries, fires, burns, suffocation, choking, drowning, poisoning and falls.

## **What can YOU as a parent do to increase your child's safety?**

It is every parent's responsibility to take precautions to ensure the safety of their children. Below are lists of other steps you can take to improve your child's safety.

### **Car Safety**



- Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death among children in the United States. It is critical that YOU wear your seatbelt EVERY TIME you drive in the car. Children will follow your example. Statistics show that almost 40% of children riding unrestrained in a car were riding with an adult who did not wear their seatbelt.
- Make sure your child is properly restrained in the car. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that ALL children under the age of 13 ride in the backseat of the car. Here are other recommendations by age:
  - Birth - 12 months: Children under age 1 should ride in a rear-facing car seat secured in the back seat.
  - Ages 1 - 3 years: Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible by following the height and weight guidelines provided by your car seat's manufacturer. When your child outgrows a rear-facing car seat, they can travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.
  - Ages 4 - 7 years: Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they reach the height and weight restrictions allowed by the manufacturer. When they

outgrow the forward-facing car seat with harness, they can graduate to a booster seat.

- Ages 8 - 12: Keep your child in a booster seat until they are big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. This means the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not across the neck or face.

**REMEMER...all children under age 13  
should sit in the back seat!**

## Bicycling



- Make sure your child has a protective helmet and that it is worn EVERY time they ride their bicycle.
- The bicycle should be in good condition, with adequate air in the tires and safety reflectors.
- Teach your child basic street safety. Review street sign and signal light meanings, and tell them to only cross the street at the corner or crosswalk by walking their bike across an intersection. (Note: Children under the age of 10 should never cross the street unsupervised.)
- Children should ride in the same direction as car traffic, not against it. If they are with a friend, they should ride single file, not side-by-side.
- Children should be seen. Dress them in bright clothing during the day. Do not let them ride after dark.

## Skates and Skateboards



- Ensure your child wears protective equipment, including wrist guards, elbow pads, knee pads and a helmet. For skateboarding, there are also padded jackets and padding for the hips.
- It is dangerous to skate in the street due to holes and rough spots. Instead, look for parks with skating trails.
- Make sure roller skates provide firm ankle support.
- Check skates periodically for wear to brakes and wheels.
- Discourage risky behavior—like stunts or skateboarding on ramps. Children should never hitch a ride from a car or bicycle.

## Playground Safety



- Most playground injuries result from falls. It is best to allow your child to play on a playground with a padded surface made with wood chip, mulch, sand or rubber.
- Make sure swings have soft seats, not metal or wood. Swings should also be far enough apart so children cannot collide into each other while swinging.
- Slides should be firmly anchored, have handrails and have traction on the steps. There should also be a bar across the top of the slide so children will have to sit to slide down.
- Check seesaws and merry-go-rounds to make sure that seesaws have a tire or other object underneath to keep the seat from hitting the ground.
- Children under age 4 should not play on climbing equipment. Older climbers should be supervised closely. Ensure handrails and steps are in good condition and make sure there is a guardrail around raised platforms.
- Remove hoods and drawstrings on clothing that could become caught at the top of the slides or in other playground equipment.

## Gun Safety



- Gun owners should always store firearms unloaded and locked up, with ammunition locked in a separate location, out of the reach of children.
- All parents should teach children never to touch a gun and to immediately tell an adult if they find a gun.

## Fire Safety



- Teach children to avoid matches, candles, lighters and lighter fluid. Keep these items out of their reach.
- Store gasoline or kerosene in a proper container away from the house in a locked area.
- Don't let papers, rubbish and oil rags collect—they can cause fire by spontaneous combustion.
- Keep children away from stoves, fireplaces or open space heaters, especially when wearing loose-fitting clothes.
- Inspect fireplaces and chimneys and keep them in good condition.

- Inspect and clean your heating system every year.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.
- Buy, maintain and keep a fire extinguisher in a handy location.
- Make a fire escape plan with your child so they know two ways to exit in case of an emergency.
- Purchase a smoke alarm and put one on each level of your home and in every sleeping area. Make sure to place it away from the cooking area, heating or air conditioning vents. Replace batteries in your smoke alarms once per year.
- If adults in the home smoke make sure they use heavy safety ashtrays and discard ashes and butts in metal containers or in the toilet.

## Water Safety



- Teach your child how to swim.
- Never allow children to swim alone. They must always be supervised.
- Have a U.S. Coast Guard approved life preserver, vest or flotation device for children who cannot swim. Inflatable toys or air mattresses are not life preservers.
- Do not allow children to run around water or push others into water.
- Do not dive or jump into a pool unless supervised.
- Never swim during storms or lightning.
- Adults supervising children while swimming should know Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- Always have a life-saving device handy, like a rope or personal flotation device.
- Do not use glass containers near a pool or at the beach.
- Pools should be enclosed with a fence or wall. Gates should have a latch above the reach of small children.

## Poisoning Prevention

### In the Bathroom/Bedroom

- Have a child-proof cabinet that locks. Even if your medicine cabinet is high up, children can climb and reach a cabinet from the toilet or sink.
- Keep medication lids closed tightly.





- Never take medication in front of your child or refer to pills as candy. Children may try to mimic you taking the medicine.
- Please tell visitors to put their medication out of a child's reach. Many people may travel with medicine in their purse or coat jacket and a curious child could find it.
- Hair spray, cologne, perfumes, nail polish remover and other astringents should be kept out of reach of children.
- Throughout the house, check windowsills, walls and older furniture for peeling paint that may contain lead.
- Some mouthwashes contain enough alcohol to poison a small child! Keep mouthwash out of reach of children.
- Some toilet bowl cleaners are very dangerous and can cause serious harm if swallowed.

### **In the Kitchen**

- Check under the sink for stored products that may be accessible to small children. This includes things such as bleach, rust removers, drain cleaners, oven cleaners, floor wax, etc. If you cannot remove the products, install a safety latch on the lower cupboards.
- Never store cleaning products and food together.
- Keep all chemicals in their original containers. You will need information from the labels on original containers in case of an emergency.
- Always keep cleaning fluids capped while in use and do not leave these chemicals unattended.

**Keep the number of your local poison control center, family doctor and emergency room near the telephone.**



# Nutrition & Exercise

One in three children and two in three adults in America are overweight or obese. Whatever the age of your child, it is important to know that what and how much they eat will contribute to their physical and mental development. The following tips are intended to help you make more nutritious choices for your child and family.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans emphasize balancing calories with physical activity and encouraging Americans to eat healthier foods such as increasing consumption of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products and seafood.

Here are some simple rules of thumb to help you make changes in your dietary habits:

- Nearly everyone can benefit by eating less and avoiding oversized portions.
- One half of your plate should contain fruits and vegetables, one quarter should be grains and one quarter should be a protein like meat, beans or fish.
- Switch to 1% or fat-free milk and use low-fat dairy products such as yogurt and cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Limit your intake of fast food, take-out food and eating out at restaurants.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- When preparing meat or fish, bake or broil instead of frying.

Foods with oils, solid fats and added sugars give your body excess energy that is stored as fat if it is not used. These foods should be eaten much less often and in smaller amounts than other foods. Foods that we should consume sparingly include butter, hydrogenated cooking oil, hot dogs, full-fat cheese and salad dressing, ice cream, sports drinks, candy and soda.

Another way to think about the foods that we should eat is to categorize them into two groups—Energy Foods and Growing Foods:

### ENERGY FOODS

(fruits, vegetables & grains)

oranges  
apples  
grapes  
pears  
bananas  
broccoli  
carrots  
spinach  
cucumbers  
whole-wheat pasta  
whole-wheat bread  
brown rice  
unsweetened cereal  
oatmeal

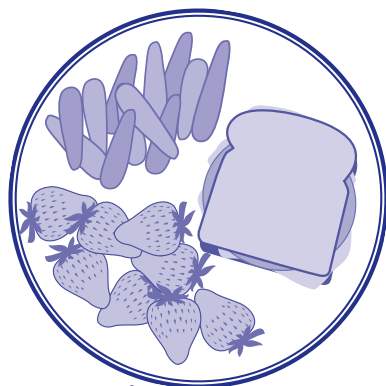
### GROWING FOODS:

(protein and dairy)

1% or fat-free milk  
tuna packed in water  
seafood  
baked turkey or chicken  
low-fat yogurt  
beans  
low-fat cheese  
broiled fish  
eggs  
lean pork or beef

## So, **HOW MUCH** should you eat each day?

Your age, sex, height, weight and activity level are important in determining how much you should eat each day, or how many calories you should consume. If you have access to a computer, go to [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) and you will find a program that will help you determine the right number of calories and the types of foods you should eat to maintain your current weight or move toward a healthier weight.



The younger and more active you are, the more calories you need. As we age and

become less active, adults need fewer and fewer calories. Generally speaking, sedentary women should consume between 1,600 and 2,000 calories per day and sedentary men between 2,000 and 2,400 calories per day. Adults who are moderately active should consume between 1,800 and 2,200 calories per day for women, and 2,200 and 2,800 calories for men. Adults who are active could consume 2,000 to 2,400 calories for women and 2,400 to 3,000 calories for men. Again, these are very general guidelines and every individual is different.

A typical child age 6 - 11 who is active (meaning they get 60 minutes of physical activity a day), should eat the following every day:

- Grains = 6 ounces
- Vegetables = 2 ½ cups
- Fruit = 1 ½ cups
- Dairy = 3 cups
- Protein = 5 ounces

## Nutrition Facts Labels

Another tool to help you pick healthier foods and control your caloric intake is the Nutrition Facts label, found on all packaged food goods. As you think about reducing the amount of food your family eats at each meal, it is important to look at the serving sizes recommended on containers. This can be found under Serving Size and Servings Per Container (❶). Next consider the calories in each serving. The

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size ½ cup (114g) ←❶

Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 90 Calories from Fat 30 ←❷

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3g	❸ → 5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate 13g	4%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 3g	

Vitamin A 80% \* Vitamin C 60%

Calcium 4% \* Iron 4%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 - Carbohydrate 4 - Protein 4

Calories (②) tell us how much energy our bodies will get from each serving of the food. The label also shows the % Daily Value (③) of nutrients our bodies need that are found in one serving of the food. As a guide, 5% or less is low, and 20% or more is high.

## Balancing what we eat with physical activity

Energy in food is measured in calories. Some foods contain more calories than others. Likewise, energy used through different activities is also measured in calories. In order to maintain a healthy weight, we must balance the calories we eat with the calories we burn through daily activities. This is referred to as energy balance.

As you plan meals for your family, remember to consider portion sizes. ONE HALF of your plate should consist of fruits and vegetables, with only ONE QUARTER grains and ONE QUARTER meat, fish or beans. As you select your foods, also consider the number of calories your child and family members are taking in each day.

Think about this...a cup of macaroni and cheese is 250 calories. In order to use just these calories, your body would have to do one or more of the activities below **for more than 30 minutes**:

<u>Activities (done for 30 minutes)</u>	<u>Calories burned</u>
Bicycling (moderate pace)	172
Basketball (non-competitive)	129
Skating	162
Dancing (actively)	119
Jumping rope	194
Running (12 min/mile)	187
Walking (24 min/mile)	65
Watching TV	22
Touch football	172
Volleyball	97
Light swimming	86

It is recommended that children get at least 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. Most of this activity should be aerobic activity that includes moderate and vigorous intensity activities such as brisk walking, running, basketball, football, soccer, skating, or bicycling at least 3 days per week. Their activity should also include things that strengthen muscles such as gymnastics, sit-ups or push-ups. Finally, they need bone-strengthening activities such as jumping rope, hopping, skipping or running as part of the activity mix.

Some of the things you can do as a family to be more physically active include:

- Going on family walks or scavenger hunts in your neighborhood
- Throwing a football or Frisbee
- Playing a game of tag
- Riding bikes together

## **Setting Goals**

Children are never too young to practice setting and achieving goals. As your child talks about wanting to do something or learn something new, challenge them to achieve it by setting a goal. Now is also a great time to set a goal for good health. Help your child learn to set goals that are realistic and achievable. Explain that often one must set several short-term goals in order to achieve a long-term goal. Model effective goal-setting, by setting a health goal for your family. Some examples could include:

- Increasing physical activity as a family
- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption
- Wearing seat belts EVERY time in a car
- Avoiding secondhand smoke



# References:

## Violence Prevention

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