

Parents Are the Number One Role Models for Their Children.

Contact: Oregon Public Health Division, Office of Family Health
(971) 673-0252
or on the web at <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/npa/index>.

Healthy habits are formed very early and it is important that parents model these habits so their children will learn.

Healthy Diet

Because their bodies and brains are growing, good nutrition is extremely important for infants and children. Highly processed foods, soda, fast food and junk food should not be a regular part of their diets. Fruits, veggies, dairy products, lean meat, beans and whole grains provide important nutrients and energy for your family. For children to adopt a healthy diet it is important for parents to adopt a healthy diet.

Family Meals

Sitting down together for meals has been shown to improve children's nutrition and help prevent risky behaviors as children get older. As soon as your infant is able to sit up at the table, it is not too early to begin the habit of enjoying mealtime together. As your child gets older, family meals will provide a great time to introduce new foods, teach manners and catch up on the day's events. During mealtime it is important to make sure the TV is off!

Physical Activity

Physical activity helps children develop strength and coordination. Activity and ability increases through infancy and early childhood. Encourage your child to be active and safe. Physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight and gives children stamina and confidence in their bodies. Planning family activities like going to the park to play, working in the garden or going on family walks is a way to get the whole family active and model a physically active lifestyle for your children.

Screen Time

Screen time refers to T.V., video, computer, and video/computer games. The more time children are spending on these activities, the more overweight they are becoming. Parents are encouraged to set limits on the amount of screen time they allow their children. Did you know that doctors recommend no screen time for children under two years old, and no more than two hours a day for children and youth older than two? Not even Baby Einstein or Sesame Street is recommended for very young children. Parents, remember to be a good role model by limiting your own screen time.