

### *Tips to develop FIT kids*

It's not easy today to help your child develop a physically fit lifestyle, maintain it from adolescence to teen, and continue it through adulthood. Think of how hard it is for you to keep up with a consistent exercise regimen. This must be a family priority or the sedentary activities will dominate your life. It's just too easy to watch a movie, play sedentary video games, go on the computer or watch TV. Families must incorporate physical activity into the kids' regular weekly schedule. The best way to do this is to start young (just because the younger kids are the easier it is to get them into establishing a good habit), but any age is a good age to begin, so it's never too late!

First thing you want to consider is finding an activity that your kids enjoy that also helps them with their physical fitness. Sports that involve getting their heart rate up at some time in the training is especially beneficial. Building strength and improving flexibility is also beneficial to kids, as they become teenagers, not to mention improving their coordination and agility. Kids who engage in sports also tend to have higher confidence than their inactive counterparts do. Organized sports activities also give a secondary purpose to showing up to practice and continuing the activity that casual activities do not have. Without the secondary purpose, there can be a tendency to become lax in continuing the activity and apathy in missing a day here or there.

If they don't enroll in organized sports activities, then there are some other things that you can do to incorporate physical activity into your child's week. Consider the following

- ❖ a walk or bike ride to or home from school
- ❖ After homework time at night, you can all walk the dog or take a walk together with your kids (it's an excellent time to ask about your child's day)
- ❖ How about some ball or Frisbee throwing at the park or a game of basketball with a friend
- ❖ Visits to the local rec center, as there are dozens of physical activities to take part in, including swimming, basketball, racquetball, exercise etc. Check out what the city has to offer.
- ❖ There are a few video games that are very physical – Dance Dance Revolution can really get your heart rate up and Wii has a few other very active games.
- ❖ Allow the kids to go roller-blading or skate boarding after homework for a bit of physical activity a few times a week.
- ❖ Other trips that might take a bit more planning include, hiking, sledding, mountain biking, skiing and trips to the lake.

Organized sports/activities are the best way to get your child to establish a lifestyle that includes physical fitness, but just making it a priority in your family's life will do a lot to steer your child towards improved health and give them increased odds of continuing that lifestyle into adulthood.