

Eat Healthy...Be Active

Jump into Healthy Living

A quarterly newsletter from the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition

Summer 2007

Welcome to this issue of *Eat Healthy, Be Active*-- the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition's quarterly newsletter. Through this newsletter we hope to provide you and your family with quick, practical ideas for eating healthy and staying active. We hope you enjoy it, and please...share it with a friend



Mind-Body Fitness

At a local restaurant you overhear a dad & his two children ordering lunch. "I'll have a large coke" says the dad to the waitress. "Dad, my teacher says pop is bad for you" notes his 8 year old son Ben. The dad looks at his son & says, "You know your teacher has a point". He asks his son what he's having & his son replies..."milk". The dad then turns back to the waitress & says, "Let's change that to a milk then!"

Kids imitate the behavior of the adults in their lives. The most powerful message you can send your kids comes from modeling healthy habits—choosing healthy foods, getting enough sleep and leading an active lifestyle. By focusing your efforts on these key areas you can help your child develop healthy habits and help ensure they have a fit mind & body.

Learning Healthy Eating Habits...

As a parent you are the keeper of the kitchen. Your kids are dependent on you to make healthy choices when it comes to the family's meals & stocking the cupboards & refrigerator. Teaching kids how to make healthy choices today isn't easy as you compete with powerful media messages that are aimed at kids & often don't promote healthy eating! Fast foods and highly processed foods are often the focus of TV commercials. To combat this, send your own messages about smart food choices. Try the tips on the next page to keep your kids interested in healthier foods...



Are you a good role model?

- I drink water to quench my thirst instead of pop or sports drinks
- I limit my screen time to less than 2 hours/day
- I turn off the TV during meals
- I'm physically active everyday
- I eat fruits and /or vegetables at every meal
- I eat whole grain breads & grains everyday
- I use nonfood rewards for recognition & to celebrate my successes

- ♥ *Prepare kid friendly fare* ...Keep bite size/cut up fruits & veggies on hand for snacks...make an effort to try new foods several times each month pairing them with old favorites...carve out a snack section in your fridge & stock it with healthy grab & go items such as string cheese, 8 oz. cups of yogurt, whole wheat crackers, grapes, mini carrots, chunks of tender meats & cheese.
- ♥ *Emphasize quality*... Take your kids grocery shopping & have them choose some of the fruits & veggies for the week...grow your own veggies by planting a garden outside or in a container inside.
- ♥ *Try kid's cookbooks*...There are many to choose from—check out some from the library before buying one so you can “test drive” some of the recipes before making your purchase.



Get Moving...

We hear all the time that kids aren't as active as they once were. Research tells us that American children become less active with each year of age. That's unfortunate. Because not only does physical activity build a child's motor skills, but it also builds their confidence & brain power! Experts recommend that parents reduce their child's TV/screen time to 2 hours or less each day and that children engage in 60 minutes of active play everyday. How can you work activity into your everyday life?

- ♥ *Play outside together*...Remember...kids learn from you! Be active with your kids...take a walk after dinner, ride your bikes, go swimming or to an area park or play one of the games on the back of this newsletter!
- ♥ *Offer props*...balls, Frisbees, scarves, kites, pails & shovels, chalk...all inspire your child to move
- ♥ *Inspire movement through music*...Make 1 day of the week “dance night” and teach each other your favorite dances. The preschool set can move to Sesame Street's Zoe's Dance Moves” video, while school age kids will probably enjoy dancing to their own tunes.



Get Enough Sleep...

Like food & shelter, a child's need for sleep is basic. Their ability to learn, imagine, create & socialize are all linked to a sound night's sleep. Sleep gives the brain & the child's growing body a chance to rest & process the day's experiences. Children who are sleep deprived often have trouble handling their emotions. They may lose their temper more easily, become impatient with others or have trouble focusing in school & learning. Need some strategies to insure your kids get the sleep they need?

- ♥ *Set regular bedtimes for weeknights & weekends*...Keep your child's daily schedule consistent with fairly predictable meals & sleep times. It helps regulate their body's inner clock and gives you as a parent some time to yourself.
- ♥ *Design a pre-bedtime ritual* ...Develop a 20 minute pre-bedtime routine that helps your kids unwind. It might be listening to music, reading (together or by themselves) or spending time snuggling with a favorite blanket or pet.

Jump into an active Lifestyle this Summer with the Children's Games On the next 2 pages...



Freeze Tag

In this version of Tag, one person is still "it", but when they touch someone, that person is "frozen" in place. They cannot move and must stand with their feet apart. The only way they can become unfrozen is if a person crawls under their legs. Play continues until all the players are frozen. Then the last person to be frozen is "it" for the next game.



Ribbon Tag

This is a good game to play at a child's party. You will need: 5 different colored ribbons at least 3ft long for each child playing the game, 3 or more children, a whistle & a yard to run in

Each player tucks the end of five different colored ribbons in the back waist of their shorts. When every player has them ready, a parent blows the whistle to start the game. The players then have to chase each other and grab ribbons from other children and tuck them with their own ribbons. The first player with ten ribbons wins the game. An alternate way of winning is to get five ribbons of the same color.



Cats in the Cradle

ball
the



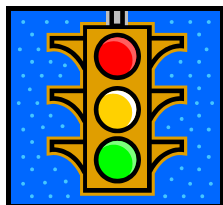
Mark off a square play area. The thrower will be in the center of square. There are safe zones at each of the corners where all the players called Cats will be. When the thrower calls "Cats In The Corner", the Cats have to run from one corner to another without getting hit by the ball. They can go any direction including diagonal as long as they do not get hit. Any player hit by the ball is out. If you have a large group you can have several balls and a couple throwers.

Kick the Can

This is an exciting combination of hide and seek and tag. One person closes his or her eyes and counts to some high number, while everyone else hides. Then, the person who counted (who has incidentally been guarding "the can") has to run around the yard or neighborhood and find everybody. The tricky part is that once a person is found, they have a race, where the person who has just been found has to try to kick the can over before the counter tags them. When that game gets boring, there seems to always be those kids who will hide in a dumb, easy to discover place, with the intent of sprinting for the can if they're caught.



Red Light/Green Light



In this game, one person plays the "stop light" and the rest try to touch him/her. At the start, all the children form a line about 15 feet away from the stoplight. The stoplight faces away from the line of kids and says "green light". At this point the kids are allowed to move towards the stoplight. At any point, the stoplight may say "red light!" and turn around. If any of the kids are caught moving after this has occurred, they are out.

Play resumes when the stoplight turns back around and says "green light". The stoplight wins if all the kids are out before anyone is able to touch him/her. Otherwise, the first player to touch the stoplight wins the game and earns the right to be "stop light" for the next game.

Foxes & Squirrels



NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 6 or more, ages 5 and up

WHAT YOU NEED: 2 small balls, such as tennis balls, and 1 soft foam ball, such as a Nerf

TO PLAY: Players stand in a circle. The foxes (the two tennis balls) are passed quickly around the circle, as in a game of hot potato. Remember, no throwing the tennis balls; foxes run, but they do not fly. Squirrels, however, are another story. They leap from tree to tree. Which means the player with the Nerf-ball squirrel gets to toss it--underhand, please--at his fellow players. As in dodge ball, you're out if the squirrel-ball tags you

CAPTURE THE FLAG



There are two teams. Team 1 has the front yard and Team 2 has the back yard, or a field can be split between the two teams. The teams are given a time period, like 5 minutes, to hide their "flag" (it can be any object) in their part of the yard.

[optional] During this period spies can be sent out to see where the flag is hidden as well as look-outs to catch the spies.

When the flag is hidden you call out that you were finished. Then you simply try to get the other team's flag. If you get caught and tagged by the opponent on their territory you had to go to jail and can only be freed by a teammate who grabs you when your opponent isn't looking.

The first team to capture the flag and bring it back to their side wins. This game is a totally different game at night!

FLASHLIGHT TAG

Played at night, this game mixes the popular games, hide and seek with tag. The person who is "it" waits at the "jail" counting to a high number while everyone else hides. Then, armed with a flashlight, this person searches for the others who may be switching hiding spots. The flashlight must remain on at all times and may not be covered. When "it" spots someone, she/he must use the flashlight to get a close enough look at the person to identify him/her and call out his/her name.



What happens when a person gets caught, gives rise to variations of this exciting game. One variation is to pass the flashlight to the caught person, so she/he becomes "it." Another version is to send each caught person to "jail" to wait until everyone is caught. The first person caught then becomes "it."

This newsletter is brought to you by the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition. Our goal is to prevent childhood overweight & obesity by encouraging healthy eating habits & an active lifestyle. Members include:

Family Resource Center
La Crosse County Health Dept.
School District of La Crosse
University of WI-Extension

Gundersen Lutheran
La Crosse Day Care Centers
School District of Onalaska
UW-La Crosse

Head Start
Viterbo University
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