

11 Ways to Instill Healthy Lifestyle Habits in Your Children



Children learn from the influences around them. Part of growing up is creating the habits that will follow your children throughout their lifetimes and shape them as they mature. Instilling a healthy lifestyle in your children when they are young can help build the framework for an entire lifetime of healthy habits.



Here are 10 ways lead your children toward a healthy lifestyle:

- 1. Eat at least one meal a day as a family**

Eating at least one meal a day as a family ensures that your child is making healthy choices during that time of the day. This also gives you the opportunity to lead by example and use the opportunity to teach your children about food choices and healthy portion sizes. By modeling healthy cooking habits in the home, you are helping transfer your choices into your child's lifelong habits.

- 2. Get your children outside and involved**

This is another area where you can create these healthy lifestyle habits as a family. Play games in the yard, go on hikes, and just get outside. Playing ball with your kids or involving them in sports not only helps instill a healthy lifestyle, but it also helps

them develop coordination and important social skills they can't learn by sitting in front of a television. Teaching your children the joys of sports early can help them find their talents and teach them to appreciate exercise as a form of fun, not something to be abhorred.

3. **Turn off the technology**

With technology at every turn, it's hard to pull your family away from the tube, the computer screen, the phones, the video games, the iPads, and all of the other gadgets that are such a part of everyday life. But getting your children out of their seats and aware of the world around them helps them become more self-aware in mind and body. Communicating in-person with other children and adults establishes social skills that can't be learned online and are essential for a successful future.

4. **Stack on the support**

Talking positively, encouraging your children, and rewarding them with good behavior helps reinforce good behavior and healthy habits. When your children choose to be active, learn about a topic, choose a healthy snack or get involved with others, positively reinforce these actions by supporting your child and making sure that their good choices are noticed and applauded. This helps build your child's self-confidence and can help create a strong future leader.

5. **Ask them to participate**

Teach your children healthy lifestyle habits by having them help create them in your own home. Let them help grocery shop for healthy lunches, send thank-you notes and holiday cards to friends and family, keep up the house, and make decisions. Teaching your children to make the right choices for the family can help them understand everything that goes into creating a positive atmosphere.

6. **Focus on extracurricular activities**

Extracurricular activities give your children a chance to make new friends, explore new skills and talents, and increase their self-confidence. A healthy lifestyle includes socializing, enhancing skills, learning new talents, and achieving goals. Extracurricular activities allow your child to explore these areas of healthy living in a safe and nurturing environment with children of their own age. They can also develop lasting friendships and learn from other children.

7. **Teach them responsibility**

Giving your child responsibilities is an important building block for future success. Giving your child responsibilities early teaches them ownership and how to complete tasks required of them, as well as consequences. Giving your child the responsibility of planning their snacks or lunches, or planning breakfast for the family gives them the opportunity to take ownership, and also allows you the opportunity to correct their choices along the way.

8. Never use food as a reward

With the fattening of America, it's incredibly important these days to watch how your children are relating to food. Without the built-in exercise of yesteryear and technology creating a sedentary lifestyle as the norm, making sure that you are instilling a healthy relationship with food starts with making good choices in the way you present it to your children. Using food as a reward is one way to create food motivation, which can be detrimental if your child grows up seeing food as a special reward and was not taught how to limit this reward.

9. Lead by example

One of the best ways to instill a healthy lifestyle in your children is to lead one yourself. Children are constantly picking up on our habits and behaviors, and parents are seen as role models whose habits should be taken after. Make sure that you are active, healthy, and also explore activities, socializing, and other interests outside of work.

10. Expose them to good influences

The more positive your child's environment, the more positive your child's outlook will tend to be. Exposing your child to a positive environment with positive role models, healthy food options, outside activities and intriguing mental challenges can help them become more positive individuals, which in turn will help them make choices that perpetuate a healthy outlook and a healthy lifestyle.

11. Make sure their school offers daily, quality Physical Education

Quality physical education programs are needed to increase the physical competence, health-related fitness, self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they can be physically active for a lifetime. Physical education programs can only provide these benefits if they are well-planned and well-implemented. And consistent! For more information on how to implement an evidence-based quality Physical Education program in your school visit <http://www.sparkpe.org/what-is-spark/>