

Children and Weight: What Families Can Do



Being overweight is a problem, especially for children. Diabetes, high blood pressure, stress on the heart and joints are health problems seen in many overweight children today. Follow these steps to help your child stay at a healthy weight:

1. Love and Accept Your Child

- Give your child love, attention, praise, support, and respect.
 - Hug your child every day.
 - Comfort with love instead of food.
 - Respect your child's feelings.
 - Plan time to talk to your child every day.
 - Encourage your child to talk about his feelings.

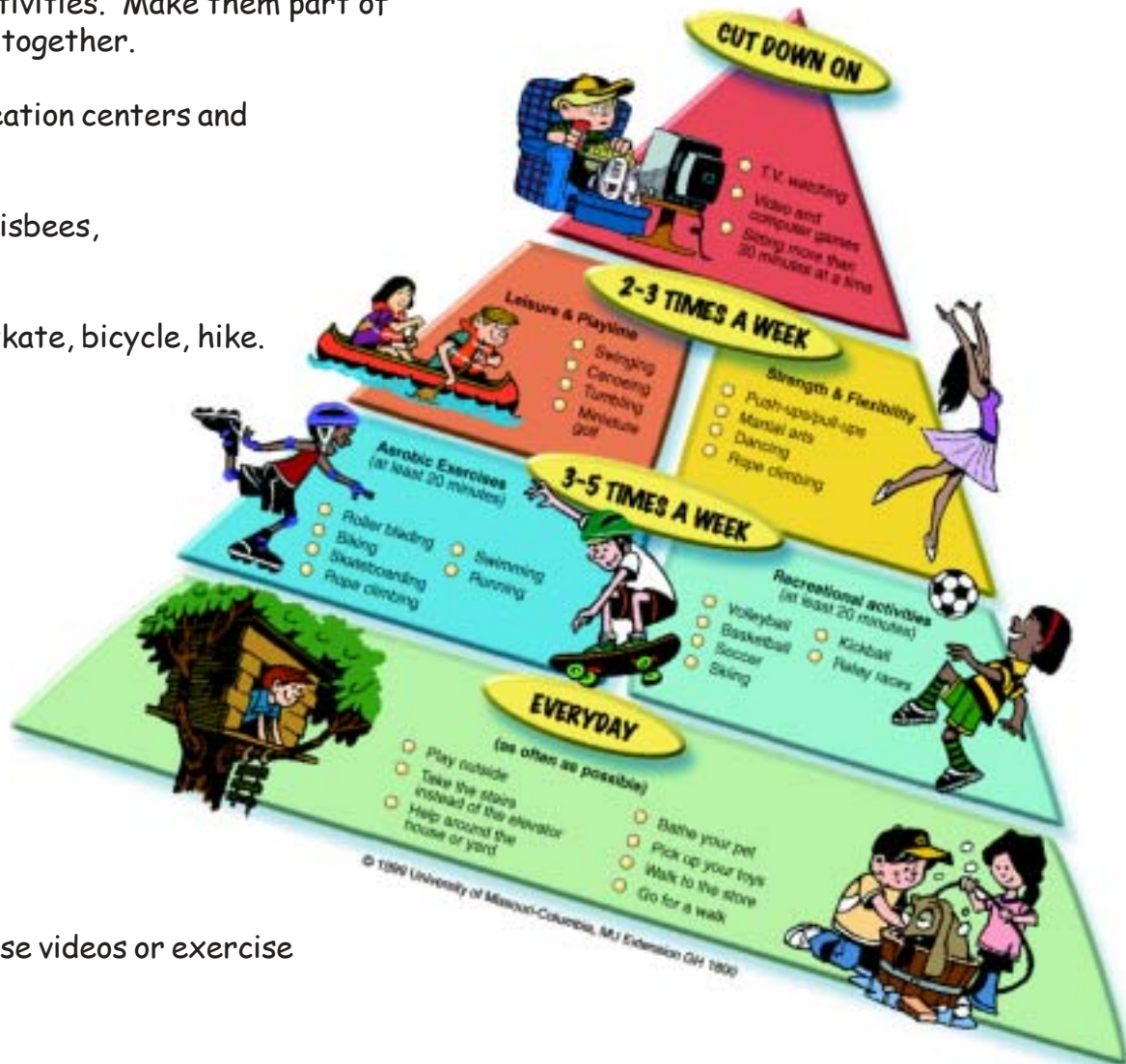
2. Enjoy Regular Meals as a Family

- Sit down at the table. Share happy events from the day with each other. Make mealtime fun.
 - Turn off the TV during mealtimes.
 - Encourage your child to eat when hungry and stop when full.
 - Serve small amounts and then let your child ask for more.
- If you eat out, choose restaurant meals carefully:
 - Have milk or juice instead of soda.
 - Choose baked or broiled meats instead of fried items.
 - Order the children's meals that have smaller portions.
 - Share a combo or "super-sized" meal.
 - Share a dessert.
- Offer healthy foods, snacks and beverages:
 - Growing children need 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks a day.
 - Plan ahead. Shop from a list of items you know are good choices for your family.
 - Cut up fruits and vegetables ahead of time for quick snacks.
 - Remember to eat 5 servings of fruits or vegetables a day.
 - Save ice cream, cookies, or candy for special times.
 - Serve water or low fat milk. Whole milk should only be served to children less than 2 years of age.



3. Get the **WHOLE** Family Moving

- Move at least 60 minutes daily.
Plan exercise or active play each day.
- Plan fun family activities. Make them part of your family's time together.
- Go to parks, recreation centers and playgrounds.
- Play with balls, Frisbees, jump ropes, kites.
- Walk, run, swim, skate, bicycle, hike.



- Go for a walk after mealtime.
- Dance, use exercise videos or exercise machines.
- Have your child:
Exercise at school and after-school.
Join sports teams, play at recess, walk to school.
- Park far away from where you and your child are going and walk.
- Walk the dog often.
- Limit TV watching and video games to 1-2 hours a day.

