Key Steps to Prevent Overweight Kids
(For parents with children 0-4 years old)

Tips for Parents

• You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see you eating small portions of healthy foods. Your child will want to eat what you eat.

• Start with small portions and let your child ask for more if he is still hungry.

• Do not comfort your child by feeding him. Comfort your child by cuddling, walking with or singing to him.

• Make a schedule for meals and snacks and try to stick to it each day. Children like this kind of routine and will be less likely to overeat.

• Do not praise your child for finishing everything on her plate. Praise your child for trying new vegetables, fruits and other healthy foods.

• Turn off the TV during meals and eat together as a family.

Did You Know?

• Children know how much they need to eat. They do not know what kinds of food they need to eat. Parents should decide what foods to give and when.

• Children are born with the ability to know when they are full. Small children can lose that ability over time when parents encourage them to overeat.

• Small children change their minds about what they like to eat. The foods they like one day may be different the next day – it is important to keep offering healthy foods.

• It may take 10 tries or more before your child will like a healthy food.

• Children who eat more meals together with their family are more likely to eat healthy foods.
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Increase your child’s daily physical play and physical activity

Did You Know?

• Your baby’s brain grows quickly in the first year of life. Learning starts with PLAY!

• Your child needs physical play and activity EVERY DAY from the time he is born.

• Playing with your baby helps her to grow stronger, smarter, healthier and happier.

• Play and physical activity helps your child sleep better at night.

• Active children are less likely to become overweight.

• Toddlers need at least 30 minutes of structured activity (like practice walking, climbing, stretching) and one hour of supervised free play every day.

Tips for Parents

• You are the most important role model for your child. Let your child see YOU being physically active every day.

• Find ways to exercise as a family - take your child for a walk every day.

• Schedule time each day to play with your child.

• Keep it fun. Think of new play activities that you both can enjoy.

• Limit baby’s time in swing, stroller, or bouncer seat to less than thirty minutes a day.

• Try these activities

**Infants:**
- Peek-a-boo
- Hide-and-seek
- Pat-a-cake
- Baby massage and stretch

**Toddlers:**
- Dance to music
- Follow-the-Leader
- Hide-and-seek
- Make Believe

**Preschoolers:**
- Freeze Dance
- Hopscotch
- Jump rope
- Hide-and-seek
- Leap Frog
- Scavenger Hunt

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Increase YOUR daily physical activity

Did You Know?

• Exercising 30 minutes or more most days of the week will help you to:
  - Burn calories and control your weight
  - Lower your risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease
  - Feel better

• If YOU exercise, your child is more likely to.

• Children whose parents are overweight have an 80% chance of being overweight.

How to Exercise

1. Warm up for 5-10 minutes
   • If you are walking, start by slowly walking in place.
   • Now stretch your muscles. Choose stretches that use the same muscles you will use during your exercise.

2. Exercise
   • Pick an exercise that keeps you moving; like walking, running, or swimming.
   • You should be able to talk while exercising.
   • If you can sing while you exercise, work a little harder.
   • If you are out of breath, slow down a little.

3. Cool down for 5 minutes
   • Slow down little by little.
   • Stretch the muscles that you used while exercising. Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds.

Always talk to your doctor before starting to be sure your exercise program is safe for you.

Tips for Success

• Start slowly! If 30 minutes is too much, exercise 3 times per day for 10 minutes, and slowly add time to each session.

• Exercise with a friend or family member.

• Pick an exercise that you like.

• Use a calendar to schedule time for you and for your whole family to exercise together – then track the time you spend being active.

• Make exercise a part of your daily routine.

• Drink lots of water before, during, and after exercising.

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