

2012 Email Invitation

Habits for Healthy Minds & Bodies

As we prepare for our Whole School Unit on HEALTHY MINDS & BODIES, let's discuss how we can help children build healthy habits for a lifetime. CMU's 2012 slogan re: building healthy habits is "Strive to Thrive", so let's consider how we can promote our children's ability to thrive.

Please join us for a discussion of opportunities for building healthy habits at school, at home, and in the community!

**CMU Children's School
Staff / Parent Discussion**

Friday, January 27, 2012

9:30 – 11:00 AM, West Wing Lounge (the dorm between the Children's School and the track)

Preschool 4's and Kindergarten Children will be in school. Child Care will be provided for children 3 and under in the Red Room.

Because school will be in session, please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.

Come join our discussion of ways to foster young children's healthy

- body care,**
- nutrition,**
- balance of exercise and rest for our bodies and minds**
- safety and appropriate risk-taking**
- coping with emotions and managing stress,**
- connecting with people in ways that involve both giving and receiving,**
- etc.**

Please RSVP to this email, indicating how many adults will attend and the ages of children needing child care.

We look forward to our dialogue with you about healthy habits!!

Dr. Carver

Habits for Healthy Minds & Bodies

What are your family's top three priorities for your children's physical and mental health?

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What are the three biggest challenges you face with respect to building healthy habits for mental and physical health in your child(ren)?

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What suggestions can you offer to Children's School educators for the Healthy Mind & Body Unit?

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Habits for Healthy Minds & Bodies

CMU Children's School

Staff / Parent Discussion 1/27/12

According to the Scholastic Parent web site, "Teaching your child how to maintain the right balance of diet, exercise, and relaxation is the key to her well-being — for life."

<http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/staying-fit-in-mind-and-body>

The goal for families and educators is building foundations NOW for lifelong healthy habits. Meeting this goal requires consistent modeling, direct instruction, and frequent coaching and reinforcement.

During this unit, we will emphasize balanced strategies for healthy eating, exercising, sleeping, keeping ourselves clean and safe, etc.

- **Healthy Body Care** – Basic Hygiene & Safety, with Appropriate Risk Taking

<http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/all-about-my-body>

Strategies for Success

- Handwashing has a huge impact so learn it well (see procedure & song).
- Recognize the "Blessing of a Skinned Knee".
- Emphasize "Pay attention" rather than "Be careful."

- **Nutrition** – www.choosemyplate.gov

Focus on Fruits

Vary Your Veggies

Make at Least Half Your Grains Whole

Go Lean with Protein

Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods (Switch to Fat-Free or Low Fat)

Strategies for Success

- Involve children in shopping and cooking.
- Try at least one new food per week.
- Know that multiple "taste tests" might be needed to adjust to a new food.

- **Exercise** – Fitness includes endurance, strength, and flexibility.

http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_center/staying_fit/exercise.html

See attached Preschool Recommendations.

- **Rest** – For preschoolers, the recommendation is 10-12 hours per 24-hour period.

http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/sleep/sleep_preschool.html#

Sample Book highlights the key message: Sleep is for Everyone (Showers)

We will also talk about the ways we can feed, exercise and rest our minds so that we can do our best thinking and learning at home and at school. [Note that there has been much less work with preschoolers on building skills for healthy minds.]

- **Mental Nutrition**

- Positive Outlook & Humor
 - Connecting with Nature
 - Relating with People
 - Make a Difference in the World

- **Mental Exercise**

- Open-Ended Play & Imagination
 - Appropriate Challenge
 - Focus (selective and sustained attention), Memory & Inhibitory Control
 - <http://mindinthemaking.org/> (7 essential life skills)

- **Mental Rest**

- Personal Time
 - Relaxation
 - Coping with Emotions
 - Managing Stress <http://www.stressmanagementtips.com/kids.htm>

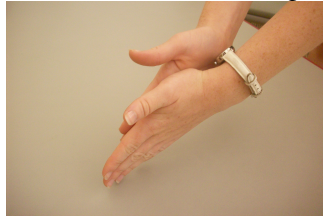
Related Parenting Resources

www.familieswithpurpose.com (helping families build their best life)
www.thesoulfulparent.com

Hand-washing Song

(sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

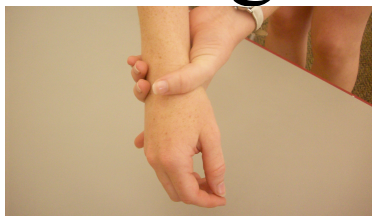
Slide, slide, slide your hands,



Make a bridge like this.



Don't forget both bracelets,



Then you have to twist!





Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children From Birth to Age 5, 2nd Edition

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalGuidelines/ActiveStart.cfm>

Guidelines for Preschoolers:

- Guideline 1.** Preschoolers should accumulate at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity each day.
- Guideline 2.** Preschoolers should engage in at least 60 minutes -- and up to several hours -- of unstructured physical activity each day, and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time, except when sleeping.
- Guideline 3.** Preschoolers should be encouraged to develop competence in fundamental motor skills that will serve as the building blocks for future motor skillfulness and physical activity.
- Guideline 4.** Preschoolers should have access to indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for performing large-muscle activities.
- Guideline 5.** Caregivers and parents in charge of preschoolers' health and well-being are responsible for understanding the importance of physical activity and for promoting movement skills by providing opportunities for structured and unstructured physical activity.

Stress Management for Kids (<http://www.stressmanagementtips.com/kids.htm>)

From the bogeyman for small children to the bogies of SATs and final exams for the college-bound, stress affects kids of all ages. The first thing a parent can do to help their child manage stress is to build a strong family unit. Include your children in family discussions and be on the lookout for stress in your kids.

Recognizing Stress in Children Especially small children with under-developed communication skills may display stress very differently than an adult does. Often kids' stress is internalized and most noticeable in physical symptoms such as frequent flu-like symptoms including headache, stomachache, and even nausea.

Children under stress may regress to behaviors like bedwetting, clinginess, and frequent crying. Behavioral symptoms may be extreme at both ends of a behavior spectrum. A normally active child becomes either listless or hyperactive, a usually docile child has fits of anger or a child that "acts out" becomes docile and introspective.

Some signs of stress in kids are easily confused with children's mental disorders. For instance, if schoolwork slides or your child's circle of friends undergoes a drastic change, it isn't a sure sign that your child is on drugs. Situations like these may simply indicate a child's inability to handle a stressful situation.

Helping Kids Reduce Stress Children primarily learn by example. The best way to teach your child how to manage stress is by using the tools and articles at Stress Management Tips to learn to effectively manage your stressors. In addition, you can develop skills and child-oriented stress management techniques to help your kids recognize and manage their stressors.

- Eat healthy. A healthy body is better able to withstand stress-induced illness. Schedule regular meals and snack times. Don't allow your child to skip meals.
- Vigorous exercise is a good stress reliever. Just like adults, kids need time to unwind. If your kids are bound to video games, television, or a computer, get them on their feet by providing and encouraging the use of active toys like balls, punch bags, and bikes. If your child presently appears to be stressed, make a point of playing with them. Time spent with your kids is a great vehicle for getting them to open up the lines of communication.
- Be clear in setting rules and consistent with discipline. Kids live in a "black and white" world. Blurred guidelines and inconsistencies are even more confusing for them than they are for adults.
- Gentle physical touch is a great healer. Sometimes a hug is worth more than a thousand words. Another physical stress reliever can be a gentle massage of your child's neck and shoulders. Like you, your kids can also get knotted up with stress!
- Learn to be a good listener. When your child wants to talk about his or her problems, don't criticize. In addition, it isn't always necessary to give advice. Sometimes kids just need to talk. Encourage them with open-ended questions like, "So what happened next?" "How do you feel about that?"
- Teach your kids that everyone (including you) makes mistakes. A good start is admitting your mistakes to your children with an "I'm sorry" or "My mistake" when you goof-up. If the situation warrants, use personal examples of stressful situations you encountered during your childhood. Even if you were unsuccessful in dealing with your situation, you'll teach your kids that you can learn from and even laugh at your own mistakes.
- Finally, teach your kids stress relieving exercises and help them find stress reducing games they can play to reduce their stress.

January 2012 Newsletter

Habits for Healthy Minds & Bodies

In preparation for our Whole School Unit exploring **Healthy Mind & Body**, we are planning a Staff / Parent Discussion on Friday, January 27th from 9:30 to 11:00am. Preschool 4's and Kindergarten children will be in school, and child care will be provided in the Red Room for 3's and younger siblings. Because school will be in session, please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.

According to the Scholastic Parent web site, "Teaching your child how to maintain the right balance of diet, exercise, and relaxation is the key to her well-being — for life."

<http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/staying-fit-in-mind-and-body>

Come join our discussion of ways to foster young children's healthy body care, nutrition, exercise, rest, mental & physical challenge, stress reduction, and giving.

Snow Day Ideas for Healthy Minds & Bodies

A little planning ahead will go a long way to helping you and your family have positive and constructive snow days this winter. Here are a few ideas for creatively using snow days to reinforce important lessons about Healthy Minds & Bodies.

- **Rest** – Let everyone sleep in, lounge in pajamas, and have a slower pace to the day.
- **Healthy Body Care** – Open a new toothbrush, practice brushing, and photograph each others' smiles, take a leisurely bath and use a washcloth to carefully clean all the body's nooks & crannies.
- **Nutrition** – Freeze leftover vegetables, rice, potatoes, etc. in advance so that you have lots of ingredients to make a warm and healthy vegetable soup to enjoy together.
- **Exercise** – Make playdough together (see recipe below) and then play with it to strengthen small muscles, use the Sound Play movements children have learned to creatively move large muscles to music, allow children to play dress up with adult clothes and shoes.
- **Mental Challenge** – Play board games together or start a family puzzle (available with 3 sizes of pieces so that family members of all ages can participate).
- **Stress Reduction** – Snuggle with a book, and practice the yoga positions children have learned.
- **Giving** – Focusing on others and the ways that we can encourage and support them helps children have a healthy perspective. Make pictures or cards for friends and family, or sort clothes, books, and toys to select ones to share with others.

Children's School Playdough (NOTE: We usually double the recipe.)

1 cup White Flour	1 cup Water
½ cup Salt	1 tablespoon Oil
2 teaspoons Cream of Tartar	1 teaspoon Food Coloring

1. Combine flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a saucepan. Mix water, oil, and food coloring in a separate bowl and stir them gradually into dry ingredients until the mixture is smooth.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until a ball forms.
3. Remove from heat and when the mixture is just cool enough to handle, knead until smooth.
4. Also, you can add vanilla, instant coffee, etc. to add aroma, or add glitter to enhance the visual sensation. Be creative!
5. Store in a ziplock bag in the refrigerator when not in use.

February 2012 Newsletter

Habits for Healthy Minds and Bodies

Thanks to the parents who participated in our Staff / Parent Discussion on Friday, January 27th in preparation for our upcoming Whole School Unit. We began by listening to each other's priorities for our children's mental and physical health and the challenges we face in reaching those goals. We agreed that both families and educators need to focus on building foundations NOW for lifelong healthy habits by consistently modeling them, teaching them directly, and frequent coaching and reinforcing children for their efforts. At the same time, we recognize the serious constraints of time, as well as the value of balance, particularly when multiple positive options exist.



The handout from the session, with multiple web references for the relevant attachments, will soon be available in the "For Parents" section of our web site. Here are some of the key recommendations:

- Frequent hand-washing, using the procedure taught at school
- Fruit, veggies, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat, calcium rich foods
- 60 min. of structured and 60 min. of unstructured physical activity per day for preschoolers
- 10-12 hours of sleep per day for preschoolers
- Mental nutrition via humor, time in nature and with people, and helping others in the world
- Mental exercise via open-ended play and appropriately challenging games
- Mental rest via personal time, relaxation activities, and learning strategies for coping with emotions & managing stress

Health & Safety Pointers



PASSENGER SAFETY: Pennsylvania's new Child Passenger Safety Law has ramifications for child passenger safety enforcement throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Learn details of the requirements at www.drivesafepa.org/Traffic-Safety-Information-Center/Child-Passenger-Safety. Concerning child seats and restraints, the updated law makes it a **primary offense** to not use a booster seat for a child 4 to 8 or not use a seatbelt for a child 8 to 18. Primary enforcement is the focus of police priority and officers can stop you and write a citation for these offenses without another offense having occurred. Also, according to child passenger safety experts, 9 out of 10 car seats are installed incorrectly. To view a video of proper installation, go to www.patechs.com.

PACIFIERS & SIPPY CUPS: During the recent speech and hearing screening, the Easter Seals professionals provided us with several handouts that review the negative aspects of prolonged use of pacifiers, bottles, and sippy cups for infants and young children. From the speech pathologists' viewpoint, the use of pacifiers and bottles increases the number of ear infections, which in turn can delay speech development, and it can lead to crooked teeth and a narrowed palate, which then impacts both swallowing and speech sound production. Similarly, by using a sippy cup rather than a

regular cup, the child continues using sucking and slurping motions instead of learning the more sophisticated tongue motions of swirling and gulping, which means that their development of clear articulation will be delayed. Using any of these items past the age of 12-18 months can also decrease the frequency of children's verbalizations simply because their mouth is otherwise occupied. Pediatric dentists also express concerns about the extended exposure to sugary liquids increasing the risk of tooth decay.