



IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES!

Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario/YMCA Healthy Active Schools
www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca www.heartandstroke.com



Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Helping Kids Build a Strong Sense of Self

Kids who feel good about themselves and their abilities are more likely to take good care of their health. How you respond to your child greatly affects his or her identity. Love and care for your child while also giving clear boundaries that you enforce consistently. Consider trying these ideas:

- Give your child the chance to try a variety of physical activities. See which ones your child enjoys and do those on a regular basis.
- Find out how your child feels about his or her body. Does your child feel satisfied with his or her height? Weight? Fitness? If not, work together to set and meet a specific health goal.
- Visit your local **YMCA or Recreation Centre** as a family. Ask your child what he or she wants to do. Then as a family, do that together.
- Dream big about health goals. Does your child want to compete in a race? Play on a team? Learn how to ski? Talk about your health dreams and then start working toward them.
- Notice what your kids do right instead of focusing too much on what they do wrong. Point out the good choices they're making in eating healthy and being physically active.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Cook foods in healthy ways. Bake, roast, stir-fry, or steam foods instead of deep-frying or pan frying foods.
- Offer raw vegetables when your child is hungry between meals. Have cut-up carrots, celery, peppers and radishes on hand for snacking.
- Encourage family members to drink water when they're thirsty.



QUICK TIP

Help your child create an “All About Me” book. In a blank notebook or scrapbook, have your child include information about favourite healthy foods, physical activities, school activities, and their dreams and hopes for the future.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Schedule time for physical activity, just like you schedule time to eat meals together and do homework.
- Keep a jump rope and soccer ball in your car. If you need to wait for an appointment or meeting, stop at a local park and get a little physical activity.
- **Participate in the Good For Life ACTIVE FAMILY CHALLENGE throughout the month of May. For details visit www.simcoehealth.org**
- Establish family routines. For example: make every Sunday afternoon an outdoor family adventure for hiking. Discover the different parks in your community.

Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. How does eating healthy affect how you feel about yourself?
What about getting regular physical activity?
2. Which physical activities help you feel good about yourself? Why?
3. What gets you excited about healthy eating?

Build Assets Together

Kids need a positive self-esteem to feel good about themselves, but they need more than a healthy self-esteem. They also need to try activities to discover what they're talented at and what interests them. They need hopes and goals so that the future looks like an exciting place to go.

Four Developmental Assets are key positive identity assets. These include:

- #37** Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
- #38** Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.
- #39** Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
- #40** Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Learn more to eat healthy and to stay active by building these four key assets.

GOOD NEWS

72% of kids say that they have asset #40: positive view of personal future.

CHALLENGING NEWS

42% of kids say they have asset #37: personal power.