



Introduction

The end of this month brings the start of spring in Oregon! The start of a new season is a great time to consider our own health and well being. When we think about healthy lifestyle choices, a few topics come to mind; physical activity, healthy eating, and stress relief. As a parent, your healthy lifestyle choices set the stage for the choices that your child will make now as well as when he/she gets older. This month, in celebration of National Nutrition Month, we focus on health and nutrition. What healthy choices will you be making this spring?

Be a Stronger, Healthier Parent for your Child

Current research suggests that child and adult obesity is a serious problem in the United States. It's scary to know that 1 in 3 children/teens are overweight or obese. Yet, as parents, there are so many demands for our time that it can seem overwhelming to carve out a few special moments to be mindfully active or to encourage your child to do the same. So, how do we work towards being stronger, healthier and more active even on those cloudy Oregon days or when it is hard to get outside and there is already so much going on? Here are a few ideas to get you started!



This series of newsletters is inspired by and created just for parents. If you have suggestions, comments, or ideas for future newsletters please email: opecc@oregonstate.edu. For additional parenting resources, like us on Facebook (Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative) and follow us on Twitter (@OPECCParentingEd)

Get Active!



Have a dance party in your living room!

We know it's dark and rainy out there, but you will stay dry inside when you turn up the music and ask your child to join you for a 10 minute dance party. If you have a younger baby or infant, set her down in a safe place and let her watch you be silly.



Try the 7-minute workout. Seven minutes of relatively intense workouts is better than zero minutes of physical activity or even 30 minutes of thinking about doing a workout.

You can modify the exercises so that your child can do some or all of them with you. And yes, there is an app for that.



Go for a family walk. It might be cold, but bundle up and get out there. Walking for thirty minutes a day can do wonders for your physical and emotional health!





Eat Healthy with Easy Recipes

Some of us parents may not enjoy adventures to the grocery store. Not to mention that half of the time we forget the grocery list or reusable bags! When you are standing in the aisle deciding between a box of pre-packaged pasta covered in gooey cheese versus that healthy meal that you pinned to your Pinterest board (with about 15 'healthy' ingredients), the choice seems easy. Research encourages us to make the healthiest choices to establish the best eating habits for our children because children who are overweight often struggle in school and socially with friends. Before heading out to the grocery store, find some healthy recipes (think lots of fruits and veggies) that have fewer ingredients. Here's a link that we love which includes healthy-eating recipes with fewer than 5 ingredients: <https://www.foodhero.org/recipes/recipe-categories/5-ingredients-or-less>. Don't forget your list!

Stress Busters!

Getting active and eating healthy are great steps towards a healthier you, but it's also important to focus on emotional health. A happier and healthier you, will naturally lead to healthier, happier parenting styles which ultimately benefits your children. Here are a few ideas to manage stress:



Tap into your artistic side. Gather some scratch paper with pens/markers or paints and get creative with drawing, coloring or painting. This is a fun activity that you can do with your child.



Start writing! If your child is old enough, set aside 15 minutes a day to journal. You can have your child do this activity with you and reflect together on what you will write about.



Practice Yoga. Find a free app or website to help guide you and your child. Here are a few yoga poses that are good for children: <http://content.jwplatform.com/previews/JSfx6ZODV6HV9Nk>

Fun With Your Kids! Making Healthy Banana Pancakes

Ingredients: 1 Medium Banana; 2 Eggs

Directions: Mash banana. Add two eggs and mix well. Spray skillet with cooking oil and heat. Add pancake mix and heat until cooked through. Add mixed berries and honey for a topping. Enjoy!

