

READY... SET... GO PLAY!

KIDS' ACTIVITY PYRAMID



TURN OFF THE TV & GO OUTSIDE!

Playing outside is a great way to be active and have fun.

EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY

plan outings often

visit a park or playground	go ice skating or sledding
find a new trail to walk, ride or hike	visit a museum or library
visit a local farm or farmers' market	participate in family events
join a play group	check out community events

BUILD YOUR SKILLS

aim for at least 60 minutes each day

running	climbing	twisting	throwing
jumping	rolling	marching	kicking
chasing	tumbling	bending	dribbling
hopping	dancing	stretching	bouncing
crawling	balancing	catching	swinging racquets

PLAY EVERY DAY

aim for 60 minutes or more each day

go outside	rake leaves & jump in the pile
take a walk	take care of pets (walk a dog)
help around the house	pick up toys
ride your bike	help shovel snow
help in the garden	make a snow angel
make a fort to crawl in & around	invite a friend to play

READY...SET...GO PLAY! WITH THE FIT WIC ACTIVITY PYRAMID

Children learn through movement. Did you know that *you* are your child's most important teacher? The skills you help your child learn through active play are skills she can use all of her life.

Everybody needs to be active.

Physical activity adds up — play several times each day to meet the goals for your child and for yourself too. Children like to be active — keep them moving as much as possible every day.

△ Play Every Day

Your toddler or preschooler needs 60 minutes or more each day of active free playtime. Going outside every day is one of the best ways to accomplish this. If you can't be outside, active play inside is the next best thing.

△ Build Your Skills

Your toddler needs at least 30 minutes a day of planned physical activity. Your preschooler needs at least 60 minutes. Help your child practice skills like jumping, tumbling, balancing and catching every day.

△ Explore Your Community

Getting to know his neighborhood will help your child feel safe and confident. Instead of watching TV on Saturday mornings, make a play-date at the park or take the family for a walk around the block.

Infants (0–12 months old):

From birth, give your baby safe opportunities to move and explore. Babies love “floor time” where they can reach, roll and crawl. Try not to keep her in her infant seat, crib or playpen for too long at one time.

- *Games to play together* — peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake

Toddlers (1–3 years old):

Toddlers are learning to control their own bodies and develop skills like running and jumping. Active play helps your toddler tap into his creativity and imagination too.

- *Games to play together* — follow the leader, marching band, ring around the rosy, dancing to music

Preschoolers (3–5 years old):

Preschoolers are developing confidence in movement skills that will prepare them for more advanced physical activities like school sports.

- *Games to play together* — hide and seek, kickball, freeze tag, hopscotch, catch

Active play helps your child:

Feel good about himself.
Be healthier and have a lower risk for heart disease, cancer and being overweight.
Sleep better at night.
Enjoy family time.



Class Act

By Colleen Marble

It should come as no surprise that success — or failure — at school starts at home. Studies have linked poor academic performance to factors such as a lack of sleep, poor nutrition, obesity, and a lack of parental support.

The good news is that those same studies also show higher test scores for students who live in homes where healthy habits, regular routines, and good communication exist.

How can you ensure your child heads off to school this fall with the best possible foundation? Follow these 10 tips and watch your child thrive.

Enforce Healthy Habits

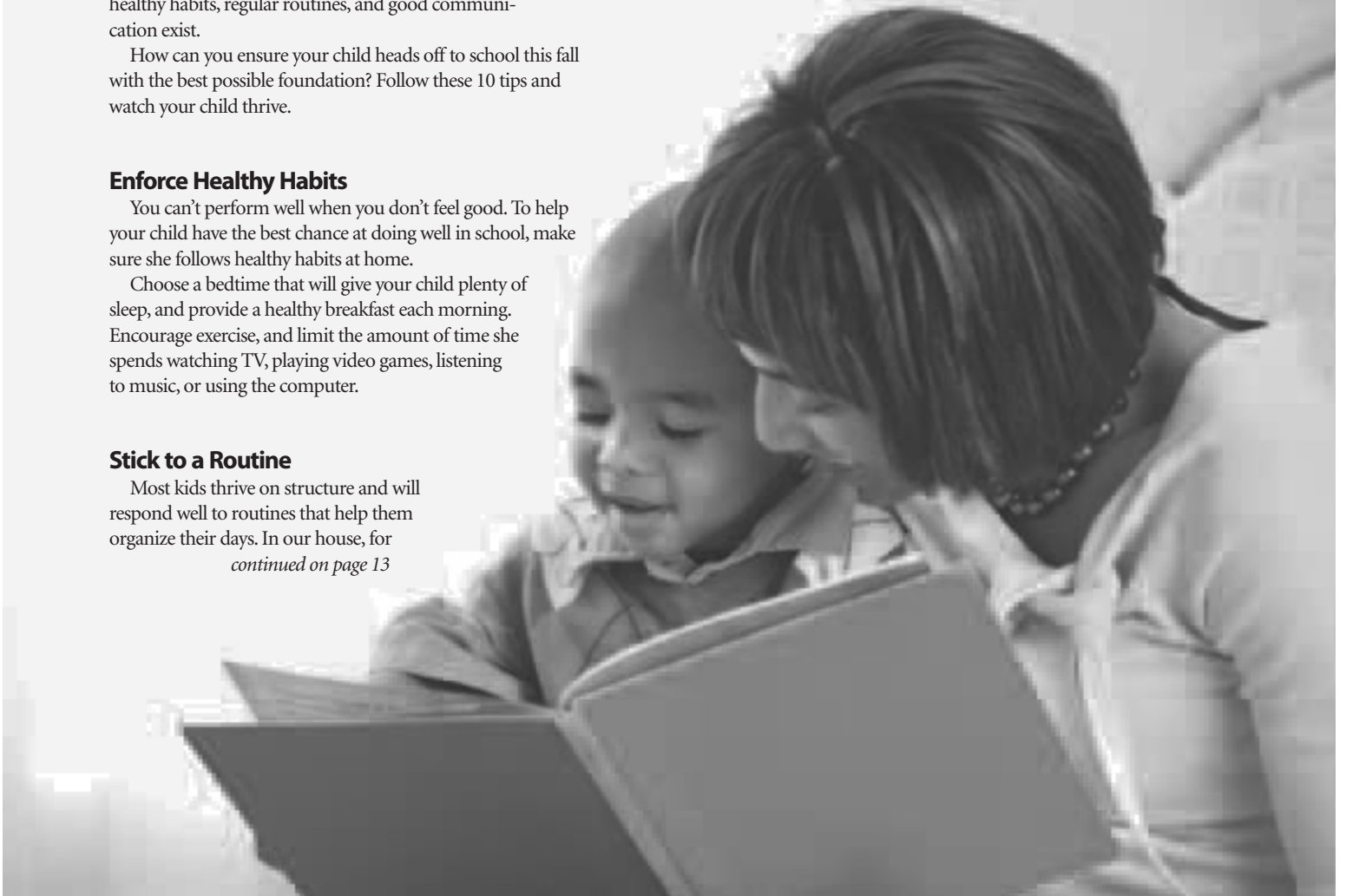
You can't perform well when you don't feel good. To help your child have the best chance at doing well in school, make sure she follows healthy habits at home.

Choose a bedtime that will give your child plenty of sleep, and provide a healthy breakfast each morning. Encourage exercise, and limit the amount of time she spends watching TV, playing video games, listening to music, or using the computer.

Stick to a Routine

Most kids thrive on structure and will respond well to routines that help them organize their days. In our house, for
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Help your child succeed in the classroom with these simple acts of support at home.



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example, my son gets dressed, makes his bed, and eats breakfast while I make his lunch and pack his school bag with completed homework and forms. When he gets home in the afternoon, I serve him a snack and he does his homework while I prepare dinner. Your routines may differ, but the key is to make it the same every day so your child knows what to expect.

Create a “Launch Pad”

Veteran parents know it’s important to have a single place to put backpacks, jackets, shoes, lunchboxes, and school projects each day. Some call it a “launch pad,” while others call it a “staging area.” Our area is a hook by the back door.

Whatever you call it, find a place where your child can keep the items he needs for school each day and keep him organized. Then you’ll know right where to find everything during the morning rush.

Designate a Space

At school your child has a desk or table where she works. There is plenty of light, lots of supplies, and enough room to work.

Why not provide her with the same type of environment for homework? A designated homework space often makes it easier and more fun for children to complete assignments at home. A desk is great, but a basket of supplies and a stretch of kitchen counter work just as well.

Read, Again and Again

It is often said that children spend the first several years learning to read, and the rest of the lives reading to learn. The written word is a gateway to all kinds of learning, and the more you read to your child, the better chance he has of becoming a proficient and eager reader.

Try to sit down with your child to read a little bit every day, give him plenty of opportunities to read out loud to you, as well, and above all have fun. While the importance of reading with your child cannot be stressed enough, it should not be the cause of stress.

Learn Always

Your child may be past the preschool years, but home education is still a critical part of his overall learning experience. “Some of the attitude recently is that it’s up to the schools and teachers to figure it all out, to make sure children are learning and healthy and safe,” says Barbara Frankowski, M.D., MPH, FAAP, and member of the AAP Council on School Health. “There’s only so much teachers can do. Parents have to fill in with good support at home.”

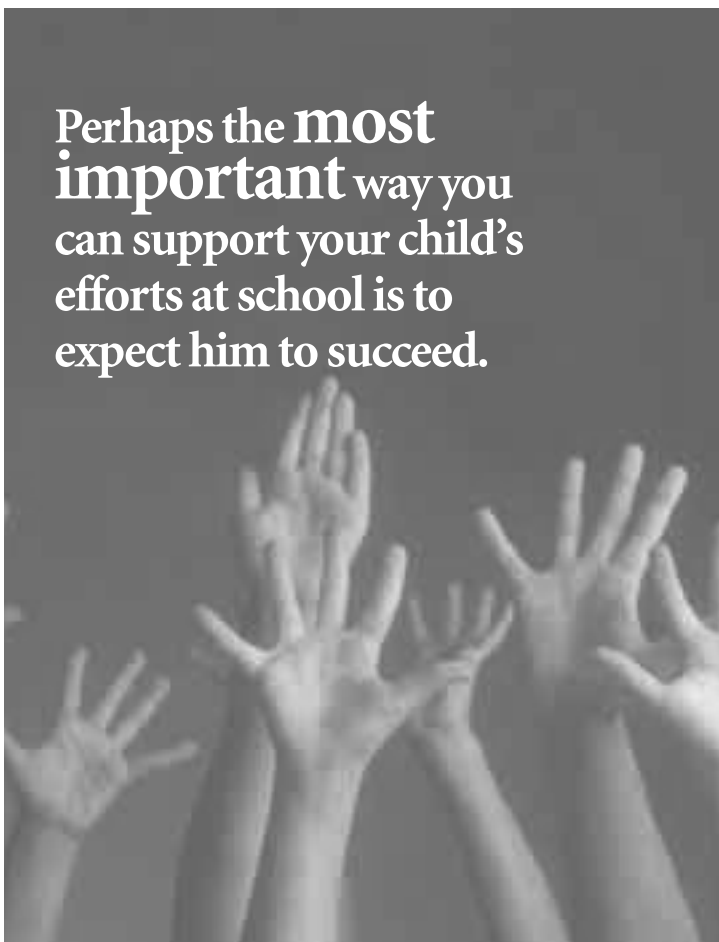
Look for ways to teach your child throughout the day. For example, cooking combines elements of math and science. Use the time when you make dinner as an opportunity to read and follow directions, to discuss fractions, to make hypotheses (“What will happen when I beat the egg whites?”), and to examine results.

Take the Lead

Children learn by example. Let your kids “catch” you reading. Take time to learn a new skill and discuss the experience with them. Sit down and pay bills or do other “homework” while your kids do their schoolwork.

If you display a strong work ethic and continually seek out learning opportunities for yourself, your kids will begin to model that same behavior in their own lives.

Perhaps the **most important** way you can support your child’s efforts at school is to **expect him to succeed.**



Talk Often

Do you know how your child feels about her classroom, her teacher, her classmates? If not, ask her. Talk with her about what she likes and doesn’t like at school. Give her a chance to express her anxieties, excitements, or disappointments about each day, and continue to support and encourage her by praising her achievements and efforts.

Show Interest

Don’t limit your support to your child; extend it to her teachers as well. Meet the teachers and stay in regular contact by phone or e-mail so that you can discuss any concerns as they arise. Not only will it pave the way for you to ask questions, but it will also make the teachers more comfortable with calling you if they have concerns about your child.

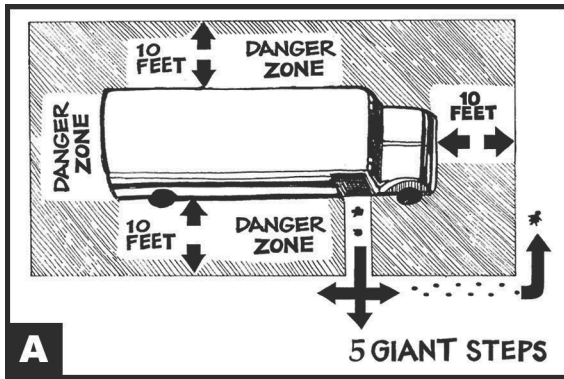
Expect Success

Perhaps the most important way you can support your child’s efforts at school is to expect him to succeed. That doesn’t mean that you demand he be the best student or the best athlete or the best artist. Rather, let him know that you expect him to do “his best” so that he’ll be proud of what he can accomplish.

If you make that expectation clear and provide a home environment that promotes learning, then your child will have a greater chance of becoming the best student he can be. ●

Colleen Marble is a freelance writer and editor, and the mother of two boys. She lives with her family near St. Louis.

TIP #10: SCHOOL BUS STOPS



The Danger Zone is the area on all sides of the bus where children are in the most danger of being hit. Children should stay ten feet away from the bus (or as far away as they can) and never go behind it. They should take five giant steps in front of the bus before crossing, so they can be seen by the driver.

SCHOOL BUSES ARE THE SAFEST WAY TO GET TO SCHOOL.

School buses are nearly 8 times safer than passenger vehicles. But children must take care when boarding or leaving the bus. While an average of 7 school-age passengers are killed in school bus crashes each year, 19 are killed getting on and off the bus.

Most of those killed are children, five to seven years old. They are hit in the danger zone around the bus (A), either by a passing vehicle or by the school bus itself. It is illegal for a vehicle to pass a bus with its red light flashing.

Young children are most likely to be hit because they:

- hurry to get on or off the bus,
- act before they think and have little experience with traffic,
- assume motorists will see them and will wait for them to cross,
- don't always stay within the bus driver's sight, or
- drop something as they get off the bus and run into the path of the bus to pick it up.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO GET ON AND OFF THE BUS SAFELY:

- When getting on the bus, stay away from the danger zone and wait for the driver's signal. Board the bus one at a time.
- When getting off the bus, look before stepping off the bus to be sure no cars are passing on the shoulder (side of the road). Move away from the bus.
- Before crossing the street, take five "giant steps" out from the front of the bus, or until the driver's face can be seen (A). Wait for the driver to signal that it's safe to cross.
- Look left-right-left when coming to the edge of the bus to make sure traffic is stopped. Keep watching traffic when crossing.

SAFETY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE:

- Supervise children to make sure they get to the stop on time, wait far away from the road, and avoid rough play.
- Teach your child to ask the driver for help if he/she drops something near the bus. If a child bends down to pick up something, the driver cannot see him/her and the child may be hit by the bus. Have your child use a backpack or book bag to keep loose items together.
- Make sure clothing and backpacks have no loose drawstrings or long straps, to get caught in the handrail or bus door.
- Encourage safe school bus loading and unloading.
- If you think a bus stop is in a dangerous place, talk with your school office or transportation director about changing the location.

LEARN AND FOLLOW SCHOOL BUS STOP LAWS:

Laws exist to protect children getting on and off the bus AND protect you from a tragedy. Check with your school or police department for more information on your state's laws. Here are some rules:

- Vehicles must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm (B). Vehicles may not pass until the flashing red lights and signals are turned off.
- Vehicles traveling in the **same** direction as the bus are always required to stop. In some states, vehicles moving in the **opposite** direction on a divided roadway are also required to stop. Check the law in your state.
- Never pass on the right side of the bus, where children enter or exit. This is illegal and can have tragic results.

Violation of these laws can result in a citation and fine. In many places, school bus drivers can report passing vehicles.



What is VITAMIN D and what does it do?

- Vitamin D is important for good health and it helps your body to absorb calcium, which helps grow strong bones and prevent osteoporosis
- Your muscles need vitamin D to move and grow
- It helps your immune system to fight off viruses and bacteria that can make you sick
- It may help prevent heart disease and depression
- It may help improve sleep

How much vitamin D do I need?

The amount of vitamin D you need varies by age. The average amounts to take by age are listed below:

Life Stage	Recommended Amount
Birth to 12 months	10 mcg (400 IU)
Children 1-13 years	15 mcg (600 IU)
Teens 14-18 years	15 mcg (600 IU)
Adults 19-70 years	15 mcg (600 IU)
Pregnant and breastfeeding teens and women	15 mcg (600 IU)

Your doctor may prescribe a different amount in specific situations.

How can I get vitamin D?

Very few foods naturally contain vitamin D but there are foods that are fortified (vitamin D is added) in most of our diets. Foods that may help you get your daily amount of vitamin D are:

- Milk and most alternatives, such as almond, soy and oat milk are fortified with vitamin D
- Most breakfast cereals, some orange juice brands and yogurts are fortified with vitamin D
- Fatty fish (trout, salmon, tuna, and mackerel) and fish oil are the best sources of vitamin D
- Beef liver, cheese, and egg yolks have small amounts of vitamin D
- Your body makes vitamin D when exposed to the sun but too much sun exposure can cause skin cancer so its important to limit the amount of time you are in direct sunlight and always wear a sun screen with at least 15 SPF.
- Vitamin D can be found in multivitamins and supplements. If taking a vitamin D supplement it is important to take it with a meal or snack that has some fat in it to help it absorb into your body.



Vitamin D Content of Selected Foods

Food	International Units (IU) per serving
Cod liver oil, 1 tablespoon	1,360
Trout (rainbow), farmed, cooked, 3 ounces	645
Salmon (sockeye), cooked, 3 ounces	570
Mushrooms, white, raw, sliced, exposed to UV light, ½ cup	366
Milk, 2% milkfat, vitamin D fortified, 1 cup	120
Soy, almond, and oat milks, vitamin D fortified, various brands, 1 cup	100-144
Ready-to-eat cereal, fortified with 10% of the DV for vitamin D, 1 serving	80
Sardines (Atlantic), canned in oil, drained, 2 sardines	46
Egg, 1 large, scrambled (vitamin D is in the yolk)	44
Liver, beef, braised, 3 ounces	42

Am I getting enough vitamin D?

You should try to get most of your vitamins and nutrients from your normal diet. Supplementing with recommended doses of vitamin D is safe for most individuals. As with all vitamins too much or too little can be harmful so please check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your vitamin D intake.

Should I have my vitamin D level tested?

In healthy growing children there is usually no reason for most people to get a vitamin D test. People who might need testing include those who:

- Have osteoporosis or other bone-health problems
- Have conditions that affect fat absorption, like celiac disease
- Take medications that interfere with vitamin D activity

How to Choose Healthy



Don't Eat This!

White Bread

White Rice

Fried Fish Sticks

Spare Ribs

Sausage

Double Cheeseburger

Pepperoni Pizza

Low in Fiber

Oily!

Lots of Fat

Full of Sugar!

Soda

Juice

Eat This!

Green Beans

Banana

Spinach

Water

Orange

Apple

Carrots

Fat-Free Milk

Full of Vitamins

Helps You Grow

1/2 vegetable

Full of Fiber

Calcium for Your Bones

1/4 starch

1/4 protein

Grilled Beef

Baked Fish

Low-fat Yogurt

Low-fat or Natural Peanut Butter

Cheese

Egg

Yams

Oatmeal

Whole Wheat Bread

Whole Wheat Veggie Pizza

Beans



Palm of Hand
Amount of Lean Meat



A Fist
Amount of Rice, Cooked Pasta or Cereal

Your hand can help you measure the right amount of food to eat.

Note to adults preparing meals for children: Use your child's hand to measure portion sizes.



A Thumb
Amount of Cheese



Thumb Tip
Amount of Peanut Butter