

Building Healthy Habits

Tips for supporting your child with developing healthy habits



Encouraging Good Sleep. A key to good sleep habits is consistency. Stick to a sleep routine that is predictable, screen-free and works with your family. For example, your routine may include bath time, reading and nighttime conversation, followed by lights out. The predictability can help serve as a wind-down time and encourage your child to feel tired on their own.



Setting Screen Time Limits. It is important to set consistent limits and establish rules about screens in your household. A good rule is to ensure screen time doesn't interfere with school and home expectations. For example, set an agreement that screen time can only happen when homework is complete, family dinner is finished and chores are done. In addition, incorporate days during the week that are entirely screen-free and find other activities to participate in with your child.



Finding Balance With Scheduling. Afterschool activities are a great way to provide structure, routine and socialization, as well as build confidence in various activities. While extracurriculars offer opportunities to teach children lifelong skills, it is crucial to avoid overscheduling. Helpful questions to consider include: Can your child complete homework? Does your child have time for friends and family? Does your child get enough sleep? Check in with your child to see how they feel about their balance of activities. Most kids can find their limits and know when they are overextended.



Get outside. Spending time outdoors is necessary for your child's health and well-being. There are many positive effects from being outdoors. For instance, researchers agree that kids are happier, more attentive, less anxious and more confident when they spend time outside. In addition, being outdoors can foster creativity and imagination, provide exercise, and give kids the opportunity to learn about taking care of the living things around us.



Completing Homework. Develop clear routines and expectations around homework. Establish with your child a homework completion time and location. For older children and teens, help create a homework plan by breaking down short-term and long-term assignments in a planner, which can assist with developing organizational and planning skills.