

5 HEALTHY HABITS TO NURTURE IN CHILDREN

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO EMBRACE HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PRACTICES STRENGTHENS THEIR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

Parents are children's first and biggest influencers. Model the behaviours you want them to adopt, such as eating a balanced diet, staying active and managing stress in appropriate ways.



1 GET OUT AND PLAY

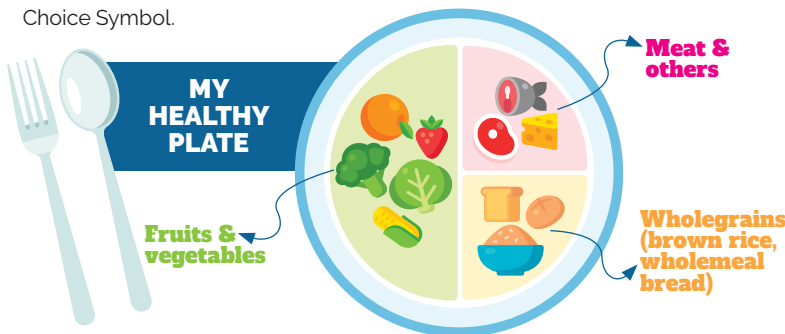
Children need regular physical activity to develop healthy bodies and minds. The "Singapore Physical Activity Guidelines" recommends that children aged three to six spend at least 180 minutes throughout the day doing a variety of physical activities, of which at least 60 minutes should be moderate-to-vigorous-intensity activity. Bring them outdoors to the playground, take a walk in the park, and participate in a sport or other active hobbies they enjoy.

3 LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Excessive screen time for young children can lead to negative effects in the long term, such as increased risk of obesity and poor social skills. Set limits according to the child's age and avoid devices 30 minutes before bedtime, as the blue light emitted can disrupt sleep cycles. Dedicate most of your child's day to screen-free activities such as play and social interactions.

2 SHAPE THEIR PALATE

Set children on the path to eating a balanced diet using "My Healthy Plate" as a guide. It helps little ones visualise how much they should eat of each food group. Take them grocery shopping and make it fun. Talk about the fresh produce and ingredients that go into their meals. Explain why you choose some products over others, such as those with the Healthier Choice Symbol.



AGE GROUP	RECOMMENDED SLEEP DURATION
0-3 months	14 to 17 hours
4-11 months	12 to 15 hours
1-2 years	11 to 14 hours
3-4 years	10 to 13 hours
5-6 years	9 to 13 hours

Source: www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/510/sleep

4 STICK TO A SLEEP SCHEDULE

Quality sleep is important for physical and emotional well-being. Establish a bedtime routine and ensure your child gets enough sleep each night. Do a relaxing wind-down activity like reading a story before bed, instead of video games or vigorous activities which may over-stimulate them.

5 ENCOURAGE GOOD HYGIENE

Good hygiene habits lower the risk of catching nasty bugs. Model for children the eight-step technique for thorough handwashing. Watch the "Washy Washy Clean" video on YouTube, which puts these steps into a catchy tune. Demonstrate the correct tooth-brushing technique on a favourite stuffed toy. Motivate Junior by brushing together, since children like to mimic their parents.



This article is contributed by the Health Promotion Board (HPB). www.healthhub.sg and www.healthhub.sg/programmes/183/parent-hub