

## Developing Healthy Habits

A habit is anything you do *repetitively*. A *healthy* habit is anything you do repetitively, in order to create a well-balanced lifestyle. Don't limit the development of healthy habits to your own life; involve your entire family. When the entire family or household adopts a new routine or behavior, everyone can change together, depending on one another for support along the way.

### Getting Started

Habits can take as long as **30 days** to develop, so creating healthy habits will take time, and you are more likely to succeed if you plan for the obstacles you could face. Whether you are looking to increase physical activity, reduce TV watching, or encourage healthier eating, you can follow the steps below to develop a plan for change.

**Get motivated.** Why do you want to change? What factors motivate you and your family?

**My (Our) Goal is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Potential challenges we anticipate are:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I will use the following strategies to overcome our challenges:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ask each family member** to rate his/her confidence that he/she will succeed in changing his/her habits on a scale from 1-10, with 10 being the highest confidence in success.

Low \_\_\_\_\_ High  
1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

If anyone scores their confidence as less than 8, go back to your plan and decide how to change it so that everyone feels confident that they will succeed.

**Now stick with it!** To encourage you and your family to continue with their new lifestyle changes, consider the following tips:

- **Get your kids involved.** Ask your kids for their input on how to best achieve the goals you've made as a family. When kids are involved, they are more likely to be enthusiastic about making a change, increasing the likelihood for success.
- **Be the best role model you can be.** A simple way to teach children good habits is to model that behavior for them. Children watch and emulate the behaviors of parents and friends.
- **Start small.** It is more important to succeed at an easier goal than to set an ambitious goal that seems less achievable. Start with small, progressive steps towards your ultimate goal.
- **Write your plan down and post it where you can see it.** Once you have answered the questions above, keep this sheet in a place where everyone can see it, or list your goals on a separate sheet of paper, poster board, or white board.

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