



Ebenezer
CHILD CARE FROM THE HEART

Parenting Tip: Making Exercise Fun

Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition impacting too many of our nation's children. What can you do to make sure your family doesn't become part of this national epidemic?

According to Samantha Stern, training and development director at Ebenezer Child Care Centers with locations in Milwaukee, Greenfield, Mequon, Oak Creek, and Wauwatosa, "One of the best ways to combat obesity in your children is to improve the diet and exercise routine of your entire family. By showing your children that exercising is fun, you can easily incorporate it into their daily routine."

Fun Outdoor Activities

Stern says that spring, summer, and fall provide many opportunities for fun outdoor activities such as biking, hiking, soccer, and simply playing games in your own backyard or local park.

"The Milwaukee County Park System's Oak Leaf Trail is a true treasure for families who love to bike and hike," says Stern, "It has more than 100 miles of paved trails that run through all of the major parkways and parks in the park system. And, the fact that much of it is separated from the street makes it perfect for families to get out and explore together."

Stern adds that the Hank Aaron State Trail is also ideal for bikers and walkers or runners. It currently provides a 7-mile continuous connection on dedicated trails and marked streets between the lakefront and Milwaukee's west end. The Trail starts at Lakeshore State Park near the Henry W. Maier Festival Grounds, winds its way through the Historic Third Ward and Menomonee River Valley, past Miller Park, and ends in Doyne Park. Both ends of the Trail also link to the Oak Leaf Trail.

Free copies of Milwaukee's latest bike maps are available at all area bike shops, libraries, City Hall, County Parks, and can be downloaded at <http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/maps4460.htm>.

Organized Sports

Stern also suggests that you check with your community's Recreation Department about their planned activities for summer. Many offer

summer softball leagues, swimming lessons, and other fun fitness options for children that are all designed to get them moving. Also, the Milwaukee Kickers <http://www.mksc.org> has soccer leagues and clinics that children of all ages can participate in.

Spending Quality Time Together

Finally, Stern says to never underestimate the importance of leading by example. She suggests that families make an effort to get up and moving together.

"Instead of sitting on the couch after dinner, take a walk around the block. Buy everyone in your family a pedometer, and make it a challenge to have everyone walk a minimum of 6,000 steps a day. Or, have a contest to see who can take the most steps in a week."

"Think about playing tag, kickball, or catch together in the backyard or in your local park. Investigate family yoga classes, or put a basketball hoop up on your garage, so you can shoot hoops together. If you are spending quality time together, your children are sure to have fun and learn about the importance of exercise in the process."

Ebenezer will be hosting a **FREE Family Fun Night** on "Making Exercise Fun" on **Tuesday, May 11th**, from **4:30-6:30 p.m.** at our Downtown Center located at 340 West St. Paul Avenue, Milwaukee. Family exercise will improve the health of your loved ones, make exercise more fun, and at the same time develop stronger connections between all of you. With a little creativity, you can find a way to make it work for everyone! Activities for this Family Fun Night will include learning new jump rope games, doing an obstacle course, and playing hopscotch. In addition to the activities, you will have the opportunity to enjoy dinner on us! Registration is required. Please call 414-643-5070 to register.