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PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: STRENGTH TRAINING AND STRETCHING

Today, we know that children can benefit from strength training and stretching.

Strength training

A child's body is very different from an adult body. The exercises a child does should be different from adult exercise. Some fun exercises for children include:

- Jumping rope
- Jumping jacks
- Push-ups

Continued on the back →



Stretching may be uncomfortable, but it should not hurt. *If it hurts, STOP!*

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Strength training provides many benefits for your child.

- More muscle strength
- Improved motor skills
- Better performance in sports
- Less chance of injury
- Better mental health
- Positive attitude towards physical activity

If your child is in the 5th grade or higher, he or she may be able to add small amounts of weight to the exercises. Be sure to start slowly and only add a little at a time.

Fun with flexibility

If your child includes stretching with his or her daily activities, it will become a good habit!

Make sure that you and your child follow these tips for stretching:

- If you stretch before a physical activity, make sure you warm up your muscles first. You can march in place for 3-5 minutes.
- Try to stretch at least 2-3 times a week.
- Hold the stretch and keep your body still, do not bounce your body.
- Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds
- It may be uncomfortable when you stretch, but it should not hurt.
- If it hurts, STOP!



SOURCES:

- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available online at <http://fitness.gov/>
- Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. United States Department of Agriculture. Putting the Guidelines into Practice. October 2003.

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