

## **5-2-1-0! A Simple Formula for Healthy Kids**

by Shira Isenberg

WITH CHILDHOOD obesity rates soaring, many parents are unsure how to handle kids' weight struggles. Pediatrician Victoria Rogers, director of Kids CO-OP at the Barbara Bush Children's Hospital of Maine Medical Center, developed 5-2-1-0, a campaign to give parents control over their children's nutrition and fitness.

Here are the easy-to-remember guidelines:

### **Enjoy 5 fruits and vegetables a day.**

Packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients (plant chemicals that fight disease), fruits and vegetables fill up small tummies, helping children maintain a healthy weight.

- Keep cut-up fruits and veggies in the fridge within easy reach.
- Cut produce into fun shapes and small sizes for little mouths.
- Garden with your little ones—they're more likely to eat foods they've grown themselves.

### **Limit screen time to 2 hours per day.**

Time spent in front of a TV, computer or other electronic device is time spent less active. The Institute of Medicine found children who spent more time in front of a screen were more likely to be obese. Watching TV may also encourage snacking, especially when a child is bombarded with commercials for unhealthy treats.

- Set firm rules. Unplug the TV during off hours. Add a lock if that's not effective.
- Move TVs and screens out of children's rooms to a central location.
- Make commercial time active time: Do jumping jacks or run around the room until the show returns

### **Be active for 1 hour a day.**

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends an hour of physical activity daily for children. Regular activity helps children maintain a healthy weight, build strong bones and muscles, and sleep better, and may improve grades.

- Walk with children to or from school.
- Let kids choose activities they enjoy, whether it's swimming, skating or dance.
- Set an example by participating in regular activity yourself.

### **Drink 0 sugar-sweetened beverages.**

Limiting sugary drinks keeps calories in check and prevents kids from filling up on foods with no nutritional benefit. • Keep a water pitcher in the fridge. • Add lemon slices or mint leaves (or extract) to boost flavor. • Buy ice cube trays in fun shapes. • Let children decorate reusable water bottles

(article from [here](#))