

To Your Health

Parental Attitudes -help shape child's "athletic identity"

Whether in algebra or athletics, what parents think of their children's abilities tends to be identical to what children themselves think, says Dr. Cheryl Anderson, a Children's Nutrition and Research Center researcher and Baylor assistant professor of pediatrics. Children aren't born with a clear sense of who they are or what is important. Instead, their identities and values are continuously shaped by what they learn from parents and others as they grow. Help children develop a "positive athletic identity." **Make positive experiences the goal.** Show kids that what makes you proud is their effort, not whether they get a trophy. Even a child on a community team who sits on the bench most of the time can have a positive experience as long

as he or she is with friends, building skills, and having fun.

Value variety. Expose children to a variety of individual and organized activities. Each activity teaches skills that can make the next activity children try easier to learn and enjoy, which in turn builds confidence.

Focus on skills. Mastering skills helps build confidence.

Give feedback. Children want you to watch, help, and praise them.

No pressure. It takes time to build skills, so avoid criticizing or pressuring children too much. Avoid pushing your dreams on your children.

Be patient. It may take time for a child to find something he or she likes to do. Some children need more positive experiences than others before they enjoy an activity.

Source: *Nutrition & Your Child* newsletter, ARS/USDA Childrens Nutrition Research Center, Baylor College of Medicine, 2005

Food Safety Tips

- for slow cooking

Slow cookers have several advantages. It's "all-day cooking without looking." Food doesn't overcook or burn. They are economical to operate. Simmered foods taste better than boiled food. It's a great way to tenderize less expensive and tougher cuts of meat (shoulder, round and chuck).

Slow cookers are safe - if you use them correctly. Most have two settings - low and high. The low setting cooks at around 200° F and the high setting at about 300° F.

When using a slow cooker:

- Preheat the cooker by heating water in the pot.
- Make sure meat or poultry is completely thawed before putting into a slow cooker. If frozen pieces are used, they will

not reach 140° F internal temperature quick enough and could possibly result in a foodborne illness.

- Cut up roasts and chicken into smaller pieces to ensure safety.
- Fill cooker no less than half full and no more than two-thirds full.
- If possible, turn on "high" for the first hour of cooking. Then change to the lower setting called for in your recipe. This is highly recommended when cooking meat or poultry in a slow cooker.
- Do not take off the cover during cooking. The temperature drops 10-15 degrees when the lid is removed.
- Do not reheat foods in a slow cooker. However, cooked food can be reheated on the stove or in the microwave to 165° F (internal temperature) and then put into a preheated slow cooker to keep food hot until serving.

When It Comes to Treats -size matters!

You don't have to banish the family's favorite treats such as cookies, chips, ice cream, candy. Doing so might make family members want them even more. So offer them just once in awhile and in sensible portions.

- Read the Nutrition Facts label on products to see what "one serving" is.
- Buy single-serving sizes of chips and cookies (which is more expensive), or portion your own into resealable snack bags.
- When you eat out, split the fries, onion rings or dessert among the whole family.

▪ Serve beverages such as soft drinks in small glasses - such as 8 ounces vs. 12, 20, 32 or more.

▪ Let your children see you enjoying small portions.

Source: International Food Information Council, 4/2007

Play *With* the Children -the best exercise of all

Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity, preferably every day. All kinds of activities count. Encourage children to get moving by walking fast, running, dancing, jumping rope, riding bike, skating, swimming, playing soccer - even climbing stairs.

As a role model, *you* can do a lot to make physical activity a lifelong habit for children. Start by being active yourself.

Then, get active *with* your children -- or grandchildren, nieces, nephews, children next door. It gives you more quality time with them, boosts your energy, and helps you manage stress.

- Head out for a walk or bike ride after dinner.
- Go on a family outing or vacation that includes walking, hiking, swimming or biking
- Practice sports such as basketball, baseball, soccer.
- Rake leaves and play in them.
- Build activity into special gatherings. For example, hold a scavenger hunt or play volleyball at a fall family picnic.