

Dear Families,



Physical inactivity and poor nutrition have contributed to a childhood obesity problem in the United States. The percentage of American children who are obese has doubled in the past 20 years. Currently, it is estimated that one out of every five children is overweight or obese by age 6. Childhood obesity is becoming a major public health issue.

Children who are overweight or obese have a higher than normal risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, arthritis and poor overall health. Physical inactivity increases the risk of dying prematurely, dying of heart disease, and developing diabetes, colon cancer and high blood pressure. It can also have harmful psychological and social consequences such as lower self-esteem and even depression.



It is critical to understand that these diseases, when caused by obesity, usually go away when the child is no longer obese. It is important to help children maintain a healthy weight.

Families have the most important role in preventing childhood obesity. Some actions you can take to prevent obesity are:

- Provide a healthy diet including five fruits and vegetables per day, foods high in fiber and calcium, and limited sugary drinks and fast foods
- Encourage physical activity at home
- Limit time spent at the computer or watching television to less than two hours a day

- Regularly eat family meals together to model healthy eating habits
- Some studies have shown that breastfeeding infants may reduce childhood obesity. We encourage you to read the research and decide for yourself.

