



Wellness Report

parental tips for improving your child's body iq

Part of being “MomFIT” is leading a healthy household, especially when developing and maintaining a healthy environment for your children. The biggest difficulty in raising your child to have a healthy ‘body iq’ is finding the balance between 1) increasing his or her “health awareness” without increasing self consciousness (that may lead to poor body image) and 2) not saying anything at all, thereby risking irresponsible and unhealthy behavior.

After ‘nagging’ your children to finish their chores, get ready for soccer practice, do their homework, brush their teeth, and turn off the video games, are they really going to listen to your well intended lecture about eating their fruits and veges? The answer is yes and no, because while they may not follow your advice, or complain that you are nagging them about this potentially sensitive subject, your influence, and that of the environment you’ve created for them, can and will effect them for the rest of their lives.

This introduction to raising a child with a healthy body iq offers a few tips and ideas for improving the environment they are living in.

5 Ideas for Creating a Healthy Environment:

1. Don’t use the word “diet” around your child (if at all.) - Diets, like rules, are meant to be broken. The word “diet” carries with it a negative connotation, implying a restrictive approach to eating and living, and communicates to your child that something is wrong and needs to be fixed or changed, even if you are talking about yourself being on a diet.

2. Do not talk about carbs, starches, or other specific foods as being bad - Especially these days when carbohydrates have been deemed the enemy, we want to instead emphasize nutrient rich foods, and promote eating healthy foods instead of discussing what not to eat. No food is necessary bad for you, only the excessive eating of a particular food.

3. Instead of preaching, teaching by example is the most effective tool - Commit now to the fact that this is a family lifestyle, defined by the behaviors and environment created by both parents and all the children. Living the example minimizes the need for “preaching”, and improves the effectiveness of the talks if and when the time comes.

4. Home cooked dinners are always best - Studies show we learn portion control and balance if the majority of our meals (dinners) are home cooked and we sit down for dinner. Leave the TV off as well. Eating from smaller bowls and plates also helps to learn healthy portion sizes.

5. Make healthy snacks available - Fruit in a bowl on the counter, rinsed grapes and baby carrots in the fridge are excellent choices for snacks that are always available in a healthy eating environment.

“Even though you may not see the effects of your efforts immediately, you can take comfort from knowing you are counteracting some of the cultural influences that make children dissatisfied with their bodies and you are helping to make long-term weight regulation more likely.” - (Abramson, E.)

5 comments a parent should not make:

1. “You are just ‘big boned’ compared to the other kids.”
2. “Maybe this new diet will help.”
3. “I understand, I hated my body also when I was your age.”
4. “You look great! Have you lost weight?”
5. “You’re such a talented athlete, let’s take it to the next level.”

Works Cited: E. Abramson, Ph.D. *Body Intelligence*. McGraw-Hill. 2006.