

The Simple Equation That Could Change Your Child's Life

By Melissa Musiker

**HEALTHY
WEIGHT
COMMITMENT**

It is one of the biggest medical stories of the decade: how much kids eat and how little exercise they get.

It's also the source of some serious concern for parents. You've probably asked yourself: "How can I encourage my school-age child to be more active? Is there a nutritious food I can put in his lunchbox that won't end up in the trash?"

When First Lady Michelle Obama launched her "Let's Move" initiative aimed at eliminating childhood obesity in a generation, she was right to call this problem "an epidemic." As a busy parent, she knows worrying about making the right choices is enough to make your head spin.

Ensuring their kids are active and healthy should not be a struggle for parents. To help consumers lead healthy lives, the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation is launching a campaign to make energy balance—calories-in balanced with calories-out—a daily habit. The campaign will encourage and educate parents of school-age children, their teachers, and their community leaders to role-model healthy living using this common-sense approach.

Families should focus on the fundamentals: that calories are the energy you get from food. If you eat more calories than you expend in a day you risk gaining weight. Modifying your lifestyle to include small 'balancing' changes will help your whole family develop life-long habits and enable them to reach and maintain a healthy weight.



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Make the Commitment

Get started today with these fun and simple ideas:

- 1 **Create a healthy chain reaction**
Close social ties play an important role in weight loss. Make one day an 'active day' with your family and watch the idea spread through other families in your circle of friends.
- 2 **Remember what's in it for your kids**
Studies show that regular physical activity can improve sleep, focus, and confidence in children.
- 3 **Make just one dietary change at a time**
Dieticians recommend making one change at a time. Try adding one serving of fruits and vegetables each week.
- 4 **Make healthy fun**
Add berries to cereal and dip fruit in flavored yogurt for dessert. Buy inexpensive pedometers and track how much each family member walks in a weekend.
- 5 **Eat—and cook—more meals as a family**
Kids who help prepare meals are more interested in eating them. Dining as a family is also a good way to model healthy habits.

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