

KIDZ-BOX.

25 games and tips for making exercise and healthy eating fun.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



Dear Parents,

Children naturally enjoy being active, and they need to move around. Playing, romping about, learning and growing are all closely interlinked. And they all need the right sort of energy. Plenty of physical activity and a balanced diet will keep your child in top form for kindergarten, school and playtime. The «Kidz-Box» teaching aid shows you some fun ways of keeping your child fit. Because if you don't enjoy being active and eating healthily when you're a child, you won't enjoy it in the future either.

Parents need to set an example

Apart from kindergarten, school and sports clubs, parents bear most of the responsibility for the way children develop. As the child's parents, you are the people he or she looks up to most; it's up to you to set a good example by eating well and being active. Your children will remember for their entire lives the things that they do and experience with you.



Being active together and eating and drinking healthily

- increases children's quality of life,
- makes their bodies strong and resilient,
- helps them to maintain a healthy weight,
- promotes cardiovascular health,
- strengthens muscles and safeguards the body,
- builds strong bones (reduces osteoporosis in old age),
- enhances mental performance,
- can reduce or prevent anxiety and depression.



But an active lifestyle also means that children need enough free time for recreation.

- So switch off those screens.
- If you're watching TV or playing on the computer, you're not active. If you snack or eat at the same time, you're being doubly unhealthy – because if you're not concentrating on your food, you're likely to eat too much.
- Watching TV too often and for too long, or watching programs that are not appropriate for the child's age, can make him or her aggressive. Parents need to be resolute in limiting the time their children spend in front of the TV or computer. Pre-school children shouldn't spend more than an hour a day in front of the TV or computer.

Sleep your way to health

Lack of sleep can also lead to obesity. A healthy and active body needs sleep – and plenty of it. During the night, the body recovers from the exertions of the day. This is why it is important for the child's health that he or she gets enough sleep. Not all children need the same amount of sleep, but they should sleep enough for them to stay alert throughout the day. Your child may not be getting enough sleep if he or she appears tired, sluggish, bad-tempered and/or lacks concentration over an extended period of time.



Too little physical activity, the wrong food, frequent media use and/or lack of sleep have a negative impact on children.

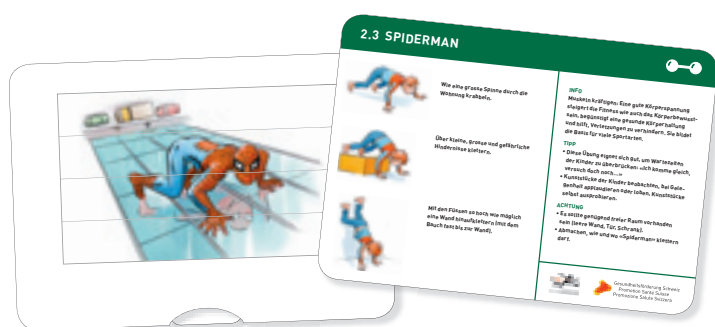
Unfortunately children have fewer and fewer opportunities for rough and tumble nowadays. An increasingly technical world and more traffic have driven play and exercise indoors. Yet the opportunities for physical activity in the home are often restricted. Passive, seated activities are becoming more common because they take up little room and don't make noise. It's also becoming more difficult to eat healthily nowadays. People are often short of time, and seductive advertising encourages children's proclivity for fast, fatty snacks and sweetened drinks. A sedentary lifestyle combined with an unhealthy diet causes the following problems even in children:

- Obesity
- A greater risk of developing cardiovascular disease (e.g. high blood pressure)
- A greater risk of developing diabetes
- Back pain and poor posture
- Lack of coordination and strength even in everyday situations (e.g. coping with traffic)
- Reduced bone formation, which can lead to more serious osteoporosis in later life
- Difficulty in concentrating and possibly impaired performance at school



Kidz-Box

Your child has brought home some colorful cards showing exciting activities and important messages for the whole family. He or she has been introduced to the cards at kindergarten through play. It is important that you, too, help your child to select activities, food and drinks intelligently. The back of the cards contains important information on how to do this.



Support your child

- Give these activities priority, because the health of your child is at stake.
- Put the card that is currently being used in a place where everyone can see it (e.g. attach it to the fridge door with magnets).
- Ask your child to show you how to do the movements.
- Join in with the activities. Everyone will have even more fun if you make physical exercise and healthy eating into activities for the whole family.

What you need in order to work with the activity cards

Only a few of the cards require special equipment, and most of the activities can easily be done at home. But it would be great if you could provide your child with the following items:

- A ball for bouncing, catching and throwing (a soft ball is OK, too)
- A small ball (e.g. a tennis ball)
- A skipping rope
- A few balloons

But what if ...

My child already gets enough exercise. That's great. Keep it up! And if he or she can do it outdoors, that's even better. A pre-school child needs to be on the go for several hours every day.

There are lots of things my child won't eat. Children are too inexperienced to know what is good for their health. This is why it's your job to point them in the right direction. Children will get used to unfamiliar foods more quickly if they are served on a daily basis and without any fuss, if it's normal for everyone in the family to try a bit of everything, and if the parents set a good example.

My child prefers to play outside. It's great that your child has the opportunity to play outdoors. But maybe the cards will still give you some fun ideas. Or you could use the cards on rainy days.

My child doesn't enjoy doing the exercises. Your child is bound to have enjoyed doing the exercises in kindergarten with his or her friends. It's a bit more difficult for him or her to find the motivation at home, on his or her own. Sometimes all it takes is for the parents to have a positive attitude and to provide some encouragement, and the child will remember how much fun the exercises are. If you don't have the time, maybe your child can do the exercises with his or her siblings or friends.

We don't like the exercises. Different people may approach the exercises very differently; they may have different opinions or interests. But there's nothing to stop you modifying the exercises or using them as a starting point for new ones. The cards can give you some ideas for getting started. The important thing is that your child discovers that being active is fun and sticks with it.

We don't have time to do the exercises with our child. There's no reason why the cards can't be used by the child's grandparents or friends, and day-care families and centers can have great fun with them, too.

