

# Parenting Together

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 8

August 2018

## For Health and Happiness

As a parent, what does a healthy home mean to you? Does it mean that your children are safe and happy? Does it mean that your child loves to eat fruits and veggies? Being healthy can mean different things for different families. For parents, feeling healthy can mean getting enough sleep or rest, and feeling able to manage life stressors.

### To feel 'at our best,' parents and children need to gain control of their physical, mental, and social-emotional health.

Yet, in health (and in happiness), we cannot control every aspect of our busy lives. Like the time when the unexpected bill shows up in your mailbox, or when your youngest catches a cold before the long family road trip.

Though we can't control everything, we can control how we manage the unexpected. At the end of the day, reframing how we handle some of the barriers that impact our ability to live healthy, happy lives is a great starting place on the road to establishing a healthy home.



**Oregon State  
University**



*"He who has health has hope, and he who has hope has everything." - Thomas Carlyle*

Many times when we think about health, we focus on illness (and the prevention of it!), but to be truly healthy we also need to think about eating right, being active, managing stress, getting enough sleep, and maintaining positive relationships with our family and community members. As a child's first and most important teacher, parents are tasked with the big responsibility of modeling and encouraging healthy behaviors for their children.

## Let's Talk Health!

Life happens, but it is never too late to start (or restart) healthy habits! Involve your family and young children in the process by having a family meeting to discuss health goals.

- Have a family discussion about what it means to be healthy
- Talk about individual and family health goals
- Discuss ways to encourage reaching these goals
- Write out a family health plan and stick it to the fridge

Talking about health is one way to make it a priority for your family. Even young children may enjoy an opportunity to be involved in making healthy choices. If you have infants or babies, schedule time during a nap to meet with your spouse, partner, family member, or friend to discuss health goals.

## The Book Nook

*It's Good Enough to Eat /  
Qué rico se ve, ¡a comer!*  
By Amelia Edwards

*Strawberries Are Red /  
Las fresas son rojas*  
By Petr Horacek

*Kids' Fun and Healthy Cookbook*  
By Nicola Graimes

## Physical Health

“Eat Healthy and Exercise” - a statement that you’ve likely heard many times. For a statement so simple, there is complexity in the process (especially if you are at a desk job, or caring for a young child with limited opportunities for exercise). Some of the challenges of physical health goals come when we commit to big goals too quickly.



Rather than a strict diet and workout regimen, try breaking the goal down into bite size mini goals that fit into your busy lifestyle.

- Do a family walk (or indoor dance party!) 3 times per week
- Include a fresh fruit or veggie with every meal
- Schedule check-ups with your local physician. For children, check out the recommended well-child visits here: <https://bit.ly/22k4Bgx>

## Mental Health

Parents - maintaining your mental health, is all about you! Yes, your



biggest (and most important) job in life, is taking care of your family, but in order to

do that, you have to first take care of yourself.

Self-care is key to your mental health and ability to ‘be there’ for your family and children. Here are a few ideas for self-care:

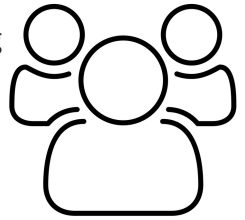
- Pick a date, and plan something fun (just for you). Anticipation of this solo moment has similar benefits as the moment itself
- Find alone time every day (even if it’s just a few minutes)
- Plan time together with your partner, or a friend
- Ask for help when you need it

## Social-Emotional Health

We thrive on human connection. At times, it can feel lonely being a parent, almost as though no one else quite understands our trials, or challenges in parenting and life.

**Finding connection with other parents, friends, or family members is important to our overall health and happiness.**

Understand that you are not alone, and if you are interested in meeting other parents, consider joining up with a local parenting education class.



For parenting education classes near you, contact your local OPEC Parenting Hub: <https://orparenting.org/parents/op-ec-parenting-hubs/>

Follow us on Facebook & Twitter @OPECParentingEd

## References

- ZERO TO THREE <https://www.zerotothree.org/espanol/physical-health>
- WASHINGTON POST [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/on-parenting/in-defense-of-a-parents-day-off/2017/01/23/270ffa6c-d8f2-11e6-b8b2-cb5164beba6b\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.43b4e2d5e7cf](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/on-parenting/in-defense-of-a-parents-day-off/2017/01/23/270ffa6c-d8f2-11e6-b8b2-cb5164beba6b_story.html?utm_term=.43b4e2d5e7cf)