



*the*  
**Chickasaw  
Nation**  
Department of Health

**SUPPORTING  
CHILDREN**

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**CLINICAL SERVICES FOR PEDIATRIC WELLNESS:  
SUPPORTING CHILDREN**

Helping children make healthy lifestyle choices is important for their long-term health. Caregivers are key in guiding and encouraging them through the process. Here are some ways caregivers can support their child in building healthy habits:

## WHAT CAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO FOR YOU?

- **Lead by example:** Children are more likely to adopt healthy habits if they see their caregivers doing it. Stay active, eat balanced meals and deal with stress in healthy ways.
- **Show excitement for healthy living:** If you are excited about being healthy, your child will get excited too and start thinking more positively about their health.

## KEEP THE CONVERSATION OPEN

- **Talk about health in a positive way:** Focus on the perks of healthy habits, like feeling more energetic and happier, instead of just talking about weight or looks.
- **Listen to their feelings:** Encourage your child to talk about any struggles they have with making changes and really listen to them. This helps build trust.
- **Get them involved in decisions:** Ask for their thoughts when setting goals, picking healthy meals or planning activities so they feel part of the process.

## FOCUS ON THE JOURNEY, NOT JUST THE END GOAL

- **Celebrate the effort, not just the outcome:** Recognize when your child puts in the work to make healthy choices, whether it is picking a healthy snack or sticking with an exercise routine.
- **Be patient:** Remember, lifestyle changes take time. There might be setbacks but keep encouraging them without expecting perfection.

# IDEAS

## CREATE A SUPPORTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT

- **Help them get enough sleep:** Encourage a regular bedtime and make sure they are getting enough sleep, which is key to good health.
- **Make healthy eating fun:** Involve them in cooking. It is a great way to teach life skills while making healthy eating more fun.
- **Set family goals:** Work together to set goals like eating less sugar, drinking more water or being active for 30 minutes a day, and celebrate milestones as a team.
- **Do not push too hard:** Respect your child's pace when it comes to making changes. Pushing them too much might backfire, especially with teens. Be gentle with encouragement.

## KEEP THE CONVERSATION OPEN

- **Avoid negative talk about food and body image:** Focus on health and strength, not looks or weight. Do not label foods as "good" or "bad" to prevent creating unhealthy food associations.
- **Celebrate the small wins:** Acknowledge even the little things, like choosing fruit for a snack or going for a walk, to help build their confidence and motivation.

By making the environment supportive and focusing on gradual, realistic changes, caregivers can help children develop healthy habits that last a lifetime.



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