

PARENT TOOLKIT

LIVE



LIVE54218 TIPS AND RESOURCE GUIDE

to help make Brown County, WI the healthiest community in the nation!



A PROGRAM OF THE GREEN BAY AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

INTRODUCTION

Live54218 began as a challenge from the Green Bay Press-Gazette to its readers across Brown County - How can we **think boldly** about changing our community? The overwhelming response from the community was to address the growing childhood obesity epidemic. With the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce leading the charge, teams of community members and a broad cross-section of partners met throughout 2010 to review existing local and national programs and the evidence base to determine how to achieve our vision of making Brown County the community in which the healthiest kids in America are raised.

Recognizing that we needed to focus not only on our kids, but more so on changing our entire community, Live54218 was created around simple recommendations we can all live every day. Our mission is to create environments in the community that support and promote all residents daily in consuming **5** fruits and vegetables, drinking **4** bottles of water, having less than **2** hours of screen time, participating in at least **1** hour of physical activity, and sleeping 8 hours a night.

The purpose of this toolkit is to help all individuals and families across Brown County put these evidence-based strategies into practice, and provide them with ideas for incorporating Live54218 into their everyday lives. It was designed to inspire all those in the community to **think boldly** about how the smallest of actions can help make a large impact on the overall health of the community. We hope that all community members will take these tips and resources and use them to Live54218 every day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce for their continued support as Live54218 develops; our success would not be possible without you. Gratitude also to Gail Feldkamp, our faithful Live54218 intern, for developing the content for this toolkit. Many thanks as well to the Live54218 advisory committee for your time and talents. Most importantly, a huge THANK YOU to you, the families of Brown County, for investing in your health and happiness and promoting a healthy eating, active living lifestyle. Together, we are making Brown County, WI a healthier community!



Fruits and Vegetables.

Want your kids to eat healthfully, but feel like it's a constant battle? It's really not so hard to turn your picky eater into a healthy eater with just a little thought, planning and patience. Kids have unique preferences for food colors, textures and presentation, and if you work with those preferences you can have fun exploring new food options while setting your child up for a lifetime of healthy eating.

- 1. Start early and keep trying.** Younger children are often more open to new foods, so introduce the widest possible variety early on. And don't give up just because your child spits it out the first, second, even third time around. It can take as many as 10 exposures for a child to develop a taste for a new food.
- 2. Serve new foods with an old favorite.** Kids will be more willing to try something unfamiliar if it comes alongside the comfort of an old favorite.
- 3. Serve small portions and don't force a clean plate.** Just a bite or two of any food seems do-able, even if it's new and strange. If they like it, you can always give them more. But don't force them to eat everything on their plate – kids should learn to listen when their bodies say they're full.
- 4. Keep healthy foods available, but don't restrict certain foods.** Make sure that there are plenty of ready-to-eat fresh, frozen, dried or canned fruits and vegetables in the house that the kids can snack on any time. However, it's not necessary to completely restrict all treats since that will just cause the kids to want them more. Just make sure that the cookies and candy are occasional, small indulgences.
- 5. Offer options.** Rather than battle with your child to eat their broccoli, give them the choice between broccoli or string beans. They are more likely to eat whichever one they picked, just because they picked it.
- 6. Offer stickers for trying new fruits and vegetables.** Studies show that young children are more willing to try new foods and more likely to enjoy new foods if they are rewarded with stickers.
- 7. Get the kids involved.** Let them help with the grocery shopping. Give them the opportunity to pick out a new fruit or vegetable to try. Get them in the kitchen to help you prepare food. Praise their culinary efforts, even if all they did was sprinkle on the seasoning, and watch them gobble up whatever they just prepared!

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8. Prepare food in healthy, kid-friendly ways. Kids are very particular about texture, so avoid serving them mushy vegetables and fruits. While the texture and taste of fried foods is very appealing, you can achieve the same sensations with the healthier option of baking. Some other preparation methods that particularly appeal to kids include:

- Boil or steam veggies – kids love the crunchy texture and vibrant colors.
- Bake some crispy veggie chips.
- Roasting vegetables tends to bring out the sweetness – this may help make vegetables more palatable to children who are particularly averse to bitter tastes.
- Adding fruit to salads will make kids more likely to eat the greens.
- Kids love to dip, so provide hummus, yogurt or low-fat dressings in which to dip crunchy veggie sticks or fruit wedges.
- Use fruits and vegetables to make baked goods, pancakes, meatloaf – there are lots of places to hide them! Just be sure to let the kids know what they're eating so they get familiar with the idea of eating fruits and vegetables.

9. Presentation is important. Kids have very specific preferences about how food should be presented. For example:

- Kids like diversity; they prefer seven different items and six different colors on their plates.
- Put the food toward the front of the plate rather than in the center. Better yet, arrange it in a design or pattern.
- Create cool names, like 'broccoli trees', 'princess peas' or 'X-ray carrots' that appeal to kids' sense of humor.
- Keep each item separate if your child is sensitive to different foods touching each other. A plate divided into compartments can be even more fun.
- Have fun with food. Play games describing food by color, shape and nutrition rather than taste. Sort the groceries by color, texture, or food group. Do blindfolded taste tests. Learn where food comes from; visit a farm or vegetable garden. Read books about food together.

10. Be a role model. A recent study found 2- and 3-year-old children's food preferences are significantly related to foods their mothers liked, disliked and never tasted. So, the more excitement and enjoyment you express about fruits and vegetables, the more likely your child will want to eat them too!





Reusable Bottles of Water.

Water is vitally important to keep the body functioning properly. It transports nutrients and oxygen to cells, helps with metabolism, protects vital organs, regulates body temperature and help to protect and moisturize joints. Allowing the body to dehydrate can cause headaches, fatigue, constipation, muscle cramps, kidney problems and irregular blood pressure. Rather than have the kids suffer any of these symptoms, be sure they stay hydrated with plenty of water. Try these tips:

- 1. Give each child a water bottle.** Let your child pick out a reusable water bottle that appeals to him or her, and make sure to refill it throughout the day. Even better is to decorate and personalize each child's bottle.
- 2. Serve water with every meal.** Get rid of the soda or juices at mealtime. Drinking plain water with every meal is healthier and cheaper!
- 3. Fill juice glasses halfway with water.** Even when you offer a juice as a treat, you can make it healthier by cutting it with water.
- 4. Have the kids drink a glass of water while you prepare snacks.** Kids often think they are hungry when what they really need is more fluids. So when they come clamoring for a snack, have them drink a glass of water while you prepare something. This will not only cut down the number of calories consumed, but will also keep them occupied while waiting.
- 5. Make it a game.** Challenge the kids to see who will be the first to refill their water bottles, or compete to see who drinks the most bottles of water each day. Offer small rewards like stickers, or special privileges like picking a game to play to the winner.
- 6. Make sure they drink a glass of water after periods of physical activity.** Physical activity, especially in warm weather, really depletes the body's water. It is especially important that active kids drink plenty of water.





Hours or less of screen time.

Children spending too much time in front of a screen can have some undesirable consequences. In addition to an increased likelihood of obesity, it can lead to sleep problems, behavioral issues, impaired performance in school and less time for active play and socializing. And that screen time can add up fast when you include time spent watching TV, movies and videos, as well as playing video or computer games, or even spending time surfing the internet. Limit kids' screen time with the following suggestions:

- 1. Set specific times for the TV to be on.** Don't get in the habit of having the TV on in the background constantly. Only turn the TV on when you plan to sit down and watch something specific.
- 2. Don't eat in front of the TV.** The habit of eating in front of the TV not only encourages more screen time, but also leads to mindless eating and consumption of extra calories. Turn off the TV and spend meals in family discussion instead.
- 3. Keep TVs and computers in common areas.** Kids who have TVs and computers in their bedrooms spend more time in front of a screen than kids who don't. Keeping screens in common areas allows parents to monitor the time the kids spend in front of screens and what they are doing on those screens.
- 4. Record any shows the kids can watch.** Recording shows not only allows you to ensure the kids watch what you want, when you want, but you can edit out commercials, which further reduces screen time.
- 5. Encourage physical activity instead of screen time.** Get out and take a walk or bike ride with the kids, or offer physical challenges that kids can do around the house. Insist the kids get a minimum of daily physical activity before they can have any screen time not related to homework.
- 6. Make sure caregivers understand and follow your rules for screen time.** Talk with day care providers and babysitters to ensure they understand how much screen time you find acceptable. Don't assume the caregiver sets the same standards.





or More Hours of Physical Activity

Children are naturally physically active, but we have created an unnatural environment that tends to make them sedentary. Communities, schools and parents need to work together to provide those natural opportunities for kids to move, thus helping them to grow and develop as they should. Being physically active will keep the weight down, promote a better night's sleep, and even help to keep your child better focused on school work! All you have to do is find activities your child naturally enjoys to get him or her on the track to lifelong fitness.

- 1. Organized sports or classes teach new skills.** Let your child try soccer, karate, gymnastics, swimming or whatever they show an interest in and you can afford. Make sure they give each activity a fair trial, but don't force them to continue with something they aren't really enjoying – move on to something else until they find their niche.
- 2. Teach your child your favorite physical activity.** Love tennis, biking or softball? Share that enthusiasm with your child and you may just pass it on. And if you haven't engaged in your favorite physical activity for a while, this provides you another good reason to get back into it.
- 3. Go outside and play.** Head for the park, the trails or the backyard for unstructured play time or simple activities like jump rope or Frisbee. Let the kids romp in a neighborhood playground, climb trees or dig in the dirt - anything that moves them and gets them moving!
- 4. Encourage indoor play.** There's plenty of time for a showcase home when the kids are grown and gone, so while they're small furnish the house with soft, climbable equipment that encourages indoor activity. Large blocks, cushions and blankets encourage kids to build forts and tents. Clear enough space so hula hoops and jump ropes can be used indoors. Leave room for a 'dance floor' and turn on some bouncy music. And be sure to get in on the act yourself!
- 5. Have the kids help with chores.** Children love to help adults, so teach them how to assist with dusting, vacuuming, laundry, gardening, yard work and all those other physical household chores. Not only will this help to keep the kids physically fit, but they'll be learning good life skills as well.
- 6. Turn screen time into physical activity time.** Instead of sitting and watching TV, pop in an exercise video or an interactive video game. Use commercial time to do jumping jacks, squats or other exercises. Sit on a balance ball or stand while watching programs. Or skip the screen altogether and go out for a walk!
- 7. Give the kids physical challenges.** Get every family member a pedometer and have a daily challenge to see who takes the most steps. See who can pick up the most toys in a given amount of time. Challenge your child to count how many times he can hop on one foot while you finish a quick phone call. Get creative!

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8. Work physical activity into daily routines. There are lots of ways to work physical activity into daily activities. Keep the following tips in mind:

- Take an after-dinner walk whenever the weather allows.
- Go mall walking when the weather is bad.
- Let the kids walk the dog.
- Have your children walk in the grocery store rather than ride in the cart.
- Walk or bike instead of driving whenever possible.
- Park farther from your destination so at least you walk across the parking lot.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Do school work standing at a counter, or sit on a balance ball instead of a desk chair.
- Do calf raises while waiting in check-out lines.
- Stand or walk in place every time you take a phone call.
- Put a treadmill or stationary bike in front of the TV and use it when watching.
- Clean the house regularly.
- Have the kids put the laundry away, one piece at a time.
- Insist the kids do a set number of push-ups, sit-ups or squats for every 15 minutes spent sitting at the computer.

9. Have your kids walk or bicycle to school as often as possible.

- In winter make sure they have hats, mittens and boots.
- If they are on a bus route- have them take the bus. Heavy parent traffic around the school makes the parents of those kids that live close enough to walk and bicycle uncomfortable letting the kids walk and bicycle.
- Start a "Walking School Bus" with other parents in your neighborhood and take turns getting the kids to and from school.
- For more helpful tips go to www.walktoschool.org





Hours of Sleep

Sleep is critically important for maintaining your children's health. We recommend 8 hours of sleep, but individuals vary in how much sleep they need to function well. If your child can go to bed, fall asleep easily, wake up easily and not be tired during the day, then they're probably getting enough sleep. Whatever the duration, a good night's sleep will help lower stress, maintain a healthy weight, improve memory and attention, and repair any damage to the body. Try these tips to help your child get a good night's sleep:

- 1. Set regular sleep times.** Set bedtimes and stick to them, even on the weekends. This will get the kids' bodies used to a regular sleep schedule and avoid unnecessary arguments.
- 2. Create a relaxing bedtime routine.** Whether it's a warm bath, a light snack or a bedtime story, having a cue that bedtime is coming will help kids to unwind and sleep better.
- 3. Keep electronics out of the kids bedroom.** Keep TVs, computers and even cell phones out of the bedroom, especially when kids should be sleeping. The light, noise and stimulation from these devices will make it more difficult to fall asleep and disrupt normal sleep patterns if left on.
- 4. Keep temperature and noise at comfortable levels.** If it's too hot or too cold, sleep can be disrupted, so set the thermometer to a pleasant, cool nighttime temperature. Household noise can also travel into the kids' rooms, so be aware of the volume of adult activities and try to keep it down.
- 5. Get fun bedding or a bed tent.** Make your child's bed an inviting place and they will be more likely to want to spend time there. A bed tent is an especially good option to shut out distractions and give the child a sense of cocooning.
- 6. Keep a sleep journal.** Have your child keep a journal to 'empty' his or her mind in preparation for sleep. This is a great activity to work into the bedtime routine.



LIVE 54218 ACTION PLAN

Name: _____

Week of:	5 Fruits and Vegetables					4 Water Bottles				2 Screen Time	1 Physical Activity	8 Sleep Time			
Sunday															
Monday															
Tuesday															
Wednesday															
Thursday															
Friday															
Saturday															



Get a sticker for every fruit or vegetable you eat and every bottle you drink - **GOOD JOB!**



Get a sticker for every hour of physical activity.



Give yourself a bonus sticker if you don't have any screen time!



How many hours did you sleep? Fill in the number.

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