

# Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

## Daycares and Toddler Health

**Almost 75% of children ages 2 – 5 spend at least part of their day in daycare. Fifty percent of those children are in home daycare settings. Preschools teach habits that last a lifetime. Is your daycare teaching good habits?**

Parents know that kids need free play, exercise, healthy food and positive discipline. Does your child's daycare share these ideals?

According to a University of Washington study, 70% of home-based daycares and 36% of daycare centers said kids watched TV daily. Toddlers watched TV, DVD's and videos in home daycares an average of 1.6 hours per day. In daycare centers, they watched an average of 6 minutes per day. *TV watching in preschool years is linked to language delay, aggression, attention problems and obesity.*

Toddlers must make healthy eating and activity a part of their daily routine. Today, one in 5 four-year-olds are obese. Two-thirds of Americans are obese or overweight. A lack of exercise and poor eating habits contribute to weight gain. Grade schools try to offer healthy lunches and physical activity. However, childcare specialists say this is *too late.*

Daycares should:

- Provide at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity and 60 minutes of free play daily.
- Limit a child's sitting time to just 30 minutes at a time.
- Give 1% or fat free milk to kids 2 and older.
- Serve only 6 ounces of 100% juice per day.
- Avoid sugar sweetened drinks.
- Offer healthy food at meals and snacks.

- Eliminate junk food.
- Offer no TV for kids under age 2.
- Limit TV viewing time to 1 hour per day for kids over 2.
- Turn off the TV during meals.

Childcare providers, like parents, teach through words and actions. Work together to teach healthy living before bad habits form. Share this article with your child's daycare provider. How many of these tips is she already doing? Urge her to focus on health in 2010.



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital*



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