

Should You Hire a Trainer for Your Children?

Health and weight issues are running rampant in our children and adolescents. It is a confusing culture, to say the least—periodicals, tabloids and commercials either promote the consumption of very unhealthy food, or subconsciously encourage adolescents to be as thin as a rail and dress like the current pop-culture superstar. The next time you are in a mall or near a school, look around and you'll see these shocking trends. The percentage of overweight children in their pre-K years is alarmingly high and childhood obesity rates have increased by over 300% since 1980. Parents need to begin accepting responsibility for the health of their children and take action. Set boundaries, organize physical activities, encourage the idea of participating in sports, stop buying junk food, lead by example, eat right, and exercise. Many life-long habits are developed by the time children reach their teenage years and, because of this, it is vitally important for parents to spend time with their kids, promoting the development of healthy habits.

I have recently heard many discussions about hiring trainers for children. As a trainer myself, I think this is a cop out. A personal trainer will not cook for your child at home or create limits on the number of hours of television that can be watched on any given day. A trainer can only do so much. In my opinion, children should be active in some form —sports, dancing, riding a bicycle, swimming, running, or just playing catch—every day of the week. I understand that as a parent in America it is very easy to get caught up with finances, working long hours, and taking care of yourself, if you're lucky. But, spending time with our children, promoting strong habits, and leading by example is imperative.



BODY BY DAN

More than half of children who are obese by the age of six will end up being obese as an adult. Obesity will increase their chances of an early death, diabetes, heart disease and joint problems, and will significantly reduce the quality of their life. Do you really want that for your child? The time you invest with your children is invaluable. You reap what you sow, and childhood and adolescence are key transformative stages to teach your children about the importance of nutrition and exercise, and instill in them the values you want to see them uphold as adults.

Tips For Parents Who Want to Help Eliminate the Problem of Childhood Obesity and Anorexia:

- Stress the fact that you love your child and are proud of them no matter what. Build their self esteem.
- Explain the real consequences of unhealthy and sedentary lifestyles: difficulty moving, difficulty breathing, joint problems and poor quality of life.
- Every adolescent wants to be fit, their hormones are raging and they want to be noticed by the other sex. Encourage them to get in shape and take action so they can feel confident. Constantly reassure them that you know they can accomplish their fitness goals if they stay disciplined and determined. Use positive reinforcement, not negative. This will build their self-esteem and establish a sense of discipline.
- Participate in activities with them, or offer to take a group of their friends to a certain park, gym, or field where they can be active. If you really do not have the time to spend with your kids, feel free to try out hiring a trainer.
- Do not bring too much junk food into the house. Encourage them to eat fruits and vegetables.
- Give them reasonable portions.
- Communicate your concerns. Educate them, love them, and encourage them.