

Proper Nutrition, Exercise and Sleep Help Body Function at its Peak

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With school back in session, many parents may be thinking about ways to maximize their child's success during this school year. Although there are probably lots of new study methods and cutting-edge technology that may aid in this endeavor, many parents might be surprised to know that providing your child with a healthy diet, vigorous exercise and adequate sleep are some of the best ways to increase your child's academic success. A healthy diet, exercise and adequate sleep are so basic to the standard day that we sometimes take them for granted and forget the immense benefit they can have on our children, and their academic success.

We think of food as fuel for our bodies but may sometimes forget that proper nutrition allows our brains to perform at their peak. While this seems simple, the hectic routine of today's family can sometimes lead to skipped breakfast and too many fast food dinners. Skipping breakfast can have negative side effects on cognitive performance. Your child may not need to study harder to pass the test; they may simply need a healthy meal. Eating breakfast, healthy snacks and an overall balanced diet of lean meats, whole grains and fruits and vegetables can help your kids succeed at school.

Exercise is another basic building block that may be overlooked in the overall success of your kids in school. Kids have a lot of energy and need opportunities to "let off some steam" in positive ways. They are often required to spend large chunks of time sitting still in school, and many students go home to more sedentary activities like tackling homework or playing video or computer games.

Basic exercise can directly improve memory and academic performance. Keeping the body healthy allows all cylinders to fire when test time comes. One hour of physical play is recommended for every child, but since exercise offers its own benefits to the adult world, this is an area you can join your kids. Taking a walk or riding your bikes as a family can improve your child's chance for success at school and offer health benefits to the entire family as well.

Adequate sleep is the third cornerstone of the basic building blocks to your child's academic success. A child requires at least nine hours a day of healthy, restful sleep. This allows them to grow physically, retain more of what they learned, and deal with their emotions easier. What day isn't ten times worse when you're utterly exhausted?

Adequate sleep is an area where most adults find themselves coming up short too. Bed time battles can be aided with night time rituals and although it might seem impossible, getting your kids to bed early may leave you time to get a proper night's sleep too.

For optimum success at school, try sticking to the basics. Offer your child a healthy array of food choices, encourage outdoor play and have your child get nine hours of sleep per night.

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