

Pointers For Parents

Helping Children Stay Fit

(NAPSA)—If you're worried that your children are turning into couch potatoes, remember this tip: Keeping kids fit may have less to do with how much TV they watch than it does with how they watch it.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, American children watch an average of three to five hours of TV a day. This inactive TV watching (or "couch potatoism") has been linked to obesity. In fact, many cite it as a contributing factor towards some startling statistics: Nine million children between ages 6 and 19 are overweight and 10 percent of children between 2 and 5 are overweight. In addition, many children aren't getting their recommended 30 minutes per day of exercise. These statistics may have lasting effects.

"One of the most significant concerns from a public health perspective is that we know a lot of children who are overweight grow up to be overweight or obese adults, and thus at greater risk for some major health problems such as heart disease and diabetes," said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Dr. Julie Gerberding. "One critical answer to this problem is that we all must work together to help our children make physical activity a lifelong habit."

That's where the right kind of TV watching comes in. Parents can find fun programs that encourage children to get up and



Parents can use TV to help turn their "couch potatoes" into "jumping beans."

move. For instance, JJUMP is a series of videotapes and DVDs designed to help children increase flexibility and endurance, develop motor skills and improve coordination. Perhaps more important, though, it could help kids develop healthy habits that may last a lifetime.

The series consists of three 30-minute videos or DVDs set to music. When children watch, they're encouraged to get off the couch, dance around and have fun. The DVDs and tapes also come with a wall chart that helps kids and parents track children's JJUMPing, healthy eating and fun play. The chart can be a good way to celebrate children's health accomplishments—and help build kids' confidence.

For more information, visit www.jumptomusic.com.