

It's Just A Phase . . . So Don't Miss It

To enhance the conversation, here are a few activities your family can try:

Family Kitchen – Choose a few nights a month to be “Family Kitchen” night. Using a cookbook that offers healthy recipes, take your kid(s) to the grocery store, check labels, and allow them to do as much of the “cooking” as possible. Talk about the importance of good choices and proper food preparation.

X-Ray – Grab some sheets of black construction paper and white chalk. Each of you trace your hand on a piece of paper, and draw the bones you can feel or see. Google how many bones there are in the human hand and talk about how awesome God made our hands and fingers. Talk about some of the ways you use your hands, and what are your favorite things to do with them (draw, pitch a baseball, write, grab the chin-up bar).

Simon Says, “Get Fit!” – Play a game of Simon Says, but instead of the normal commands, use fitness-related ones. For example: Shake your whole body, jump up and down, lay on your back and pedal like you’re on a bike, hop like a frog, pretend to sit in an invisible chair, etc. Ask them what are some other ways to get them moving and let them choose the activity next time.

This guide is based on research from The Phase Project, a collaborative, ongoing effort, assembling classic and innovative research with practical application. To discover more ways to help your elementary-age kid develop healthy habits, check out <http://PhaseGuides.com>.



Elementary

HEALTH

PARENT CONVERSATION GUIDE

Health. In the elementary school years, your child’s concept of their bodies and health will continue to form. Their questions won’t stop—in fact, you can expect the frequency and the depth of their inquisitions to increase. You’ll reinforce ideas you’ve already discussed and you’ll introduce other health basics that you’ll unpack over the next phases. But don’t worry—you don’t have to teach your kid everything *right now*. In the Elementary phase, your role is to . . .

Develop
POSITIVE ROUTINES



So your child will . . .
**ENJOY EATING WELL
AND EXERCISING OFTEN.**

This guide is designed to help you meet your elementary-age kid where they are now, giving you some words to say as you navigate the critical issue of health. As the conversation progresses through the phases, always keep this end goal in mind for your kids:

HEALTHY HABITS

Learning to strengthen my body through exercise, nutrition, and self-advocacy.

**TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (K-3),
SAY THINGS LIKE:**

"I love watching you run/swim/ride your bike!"

"Did you wash your hands before dinner?"

"Let's drink some more water."
(Kids need five 8oz cups a day.)

"Will you rinse the blueberries?" *(Teach cooking basics.)*

"Let's play freeze Frisbee."

**"People have different body types
like they have different eye colors."**
*(Use positive words to describe
different body types.)*

"Do you see how much sodium is in this can?" *(Read food labels
and evaluate nutrition.)*

"The mayonnaise can't sit in the sun all day." *(Teach food safety.)*

**TO ELEMENTARY-AGE KIDS (4-5),
SAY THINGS LIKE:**

"What have you heard about marijuana?" *(Begin talking about
drugs and alcohol.)*

"Almonds have healthy fat that you need." *(Talk about wise
food choices.)*

**"Sometimes I wish magazines didn't
touch up all the photos. We never see
what those people really look like."**
(Talk about body image.)

"What would you like for dinner this week?" *(Plan healthy meals.)*

JUST REMEMBER

Every phase is a timeframe in a kid's life when you can leverage distinctive opportunities to influence their future. The elementary years are the discovery years. You can provoke their discovery by encouraging their imaginations, allowing them to investigate without filling in all the blanks, and simply making yourself available for the many, many questions that will come.