



Dr. Dennis Perman ::

Message of The Week



Children, Fitness and The Brain

March 17, 2014

Dear Doctor:

Every day, parents come into our offices as patients, and every day, we have an opportunity to impress upon them the importance of developing good lifestyle habits with their children. A recent report inspires us to keep putting out a message of fitness, health and wellness for children, to increase their probability of becoming healthy adults.

The New York Times ran an article by Sabrina Tavernise on February 25 called "Obesity Rate for Young Children Plummets 43% in a Decade." This study focuses on kids between two and five years old, when many experts agree that the habits that follow unhealthy children into adulthood originate.

The lead author on the paper is Dr. Cynthia Ogden, a researcher for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I have called out the CDC on occasion when I differed with their positions and tactics, but here is an example of their able team of scientists publishing objective and valuable research. Dr. Ogden said this was "the first time we've seen any indication of any significant decrease in any group," calling the results "exciting."

Some may attribute the improvement to doctors of all kinds investing more time in educating patients. Some may believe it's the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, which subsidizes low-income families with wholesome food choices. Some may point to the First Lady's "Let's Move" program that targets childhood obesity.

But I think it's all these things and more, since they can only succeed as a reflection of our culture coming to self-evident conclusions about fitness, health and wellness. Parents of young children today are more likely to be exposed to the spectrum of available ideas, instead of just the mainstream drumbeat that is too often manipulated in order to gain market share.

In a related story, children's IQ has been linked to exercise, says Dr. Gwen Dewar in her "Parenting Science" blog – but she adds a twist. "It's important to find forms of aerobic exercise that your child really enjoys. Structured activities -- like team sports or dance lessons -- may be fine options. But so are nature walks, tree-climbing, roller-skating, and playing hide-and-seek. In fact, play -- like exercise -- is good for the brain."

Well-known health and wellness advocate Dr. Joseph Mercola agrees. "The evidence speaks loud and clear," he says, "that regular exercise can improve test scores, IQ levels and task efficiency." He found that elementary school students raised their IQ an average of four points with forty minutes of daily exercise, and that fit sixth graders scored thirty per cent higher than the average on standardized tests, while unfit students scored twenty percent below the average.

This is good information, but it's even more telling that scientists are finally interested in doing this kind of pro-wellness research in the first place. As science explores and uncovers the truth, chiropractic services will be more consistent with the perceived needs of the health care consumer. That's why it's essential that we be prepared, as healers, communicators, and leaders, because our time is coming. Let's make sure that we're ready, and then we can take our rightful place and help to spearhead the movement toward true health and wellness.

Dennis Perman DC,

for The Masters Circle

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