



Image via [Pixabay](#)

# How to Encourage Your Child to Make Healthy Choices

Amanda Henderson  
[www.safechildren.info](http://www.safechildren.info)

Whether your child is 6 or 16, it's never too late to teach him or her healthy lifestyle habits. While you may struggle more to get older children on board with your new health goals, there are a few ways you can encourage them to make healthier decisions and have them convinced that it was all their idea. [Tiger-Rock Martial Arts](#) presents a guide to help you get started.

## Encourage Healthy Eating Habits

“You are what you eat” is more than just an old adage — it's [a truth](#) that describes, in the most basic sense, what becomes of your food once you consume it. The nutrients from the food you and your children eat provide the foundation for every cellular structure in your bodies, from your bones to your muscles to your immune systems.

If you regularly consume processed foods low in nutrients, your body's foundation is bound to be weak and highly susceptible to injury and illness. If you eat whole foods rich in nutrients, however, the opposite is true: You will experience better health and increased strength.

Getting children to eat healthier is easier said than done:

- Model the behavior you want your children to adopt.
- Modify your family's whole diet rather than adding in a few healthy food choices.
- Let your children shop and meal prep with you.
- Cook meals at home, and let your kids help.
- Keep plenty of healthy snacks readily available.
- [Disguise the taste](#) of healthier foods.

Also, [respect your child's](#) appetite and tastes. If you try to force your child to eat a particular food or snack, it will only increase the power struggle over food.

## **Eat Together**

Family dinners are important for so many reasons. [Science shows](#) that kids who partake in family meals get better grades, demonstrate improved mental health, are better with money, and are physically healthier. Also, when you sit down to eat together, mealtimes are about more than food—they promote family bonding time, social interaction, and learning opportunities.

## **Limit Refined Carbs and Other Mentally Draining Foods**

Certain foods and beverages can take a toll on your child's mental health, such as sweets, fried foods, and sugary snacks. Caffeine is also a no-no, as [it can trigger](#) bouts of anxiety and depression in adolescents. Try to limit your child's intake of refined carbs as much as possible and encourage the consumption of complex carbs.

## **Help Your Littles Find Healthy Hobbies They Enjoy**

Exercise is crucial for whole-body health regardless of a person's age. You may need to identify fun yet physical hobbies. Karate is a strong choice as it builds self-confidence, and as Tiger-Rock Martial Arts explains, it [teaches self-defense](#), demands discipline, and encourages physical activity all at once. Other activities kids and teens might enjoy include baseball, soccer, ballet, rock climbing, hiking, and biking.

## **Talk with Your Kids Honestly and Often**

[Open communication](#) is key to raising children who are mentally well. Talk openly about everything from the dangers of drugs and alcohol to safe sex and consent. You should also talk with your kids about their future goals and how they can pursue them. Use yourself as an example. For instance, if you have your heart set on earning your master's in information technology, [enroll in](#) an online program. This teaches your child that it is possible to pursue your dreams even though you have other responsibilities.

Healthy eating habits, exercise, and open communication are keys to raising healthy children. Use the above tips to start making changes to better your child's future today.

[Tiger-Rock Martial Arts](#) offers training programs online or in-person! If you're ready to sign up today, fill out the form (and sign the waiver) on our website!