

Happy New Year! Hopefully, by now, you have recovered from the holidays and are ready to start 2016 off with a bang! Anytime you hear about the New Year it is almost inevitable that you will hear something about New Year's resolutions. Television and magazines are full of articles and reports about losing weight, quitting smoking or having a new attitude about money. All of these things are great, but we want to encourage you to include something else this year. Make a promise to yourself to help your children establish healthy habits too. Now, your little ones may be a bit small to be making resolutions, but it is never too early to help set the standard for them.

Source: [ministrytoparents.com](http://ministrytoparents.com)

## Healthy Habits for the New Year



## Where Do We Focus?

So, how are your resolutions going? It is hard to keep new habits. We so often want to go back to our old selves. You must remember that, if you have and keep healthy habits, it will be much easier for your child to do the same. They look up to you and take their cues from you! Here are some examples and ideas that may make implementing healthy habits into your lives a bit easier.

### Healthy Diet

Childhood obesity is a very serious problem. There is a common misconception that eating healthy is harder or more expensive. Anything can be made a daily habit with the proper research and planning. Our children will only want junk food if all they eat is junk food. You are responsible for the food that is in your home. Do your best to only provide a variety of healthy choices for snacks and meals for them. This way they can try different foods and discover what they do and do not like. Help them to understand the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables. Make sure they don't skip breakfast. They need fuel to get them through their day. Allow your child to help you in the kitchen. Children are more likely to try something that they helped to make! Also, limit the amount of sweet drinks your child consumes. Make sure kids are drinking plenty of water.

### Take care of your body!

- Teach your child to cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze.
- Make sure that you teach your child the importance of washing hands. Germs are everywhere, especially this time of year. Now, we don't want you to turn into a hypochondriac, but washing your hands can ward off so many illnesses! Make sure that your child has everything they need to accomplish this task. Have a stool handy so they can reach the sink. Put fun soap in the bathroom. Make it fun for them.
- Make sure that your child knows the importance of staying safe inside the car. Always buckle your seat belt and ensure that your child is always strapped in properly.
- When playing outside, always have sunscreen available to prevent sunburns.
- Show your children the proper way to brush their teeth, and help them brush and floss. Make regular visits to the dentist a priority.
- The dentist can be intimidating for kids and adults. Find a good pediatric dentist in your area. Help children to see that always taking care of our teeth can make visits much easier!
- Get plenty of sleep. It can be very tempting to bend the bedtime rules, especially if you have a child who is reluctant to go to bed. Stand firm. They need a good night's sleep as much as you do. It's important for their growth and development. Help them to understand how sleep is important for our bodies.

### Physical Activity

Children are very busy by nature, but due to increased television and video game exposure, inactivity can become a bad habit. The American Heart Association recommends that children age two and older have at least 60 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per day. Not every child will excel at sports, so it is important to help your child find activities that they enjoy. Reports have shown that more than two hours of daily TV time can lead to impaired performance at school, behavior difficulties and obesity. Become active as a family. Find things to do together!

### Choose Joy

Sometimes children can become easily discouraged and upset. Help your child understand the importance of being resilient and staying positive. Praise your child when they are kind to others, accomplish something difficult for them or follow directions. Watch your own mood, it can rub off on your child! Encourage your children to participate in things they enjoy and introduce them to new experiences and people. This will also help them to develop social skills and make new friendships.

New Year's Resolutions may seem silly or frivolous to some, but it can be a good idea to take a look at ourselves and identify areas that may need improvement. Maybe there are some things on this list that you need to work on yourselves! Make it a family project. Choose some new habits and make them a family priority.