FITNESS TRAINER

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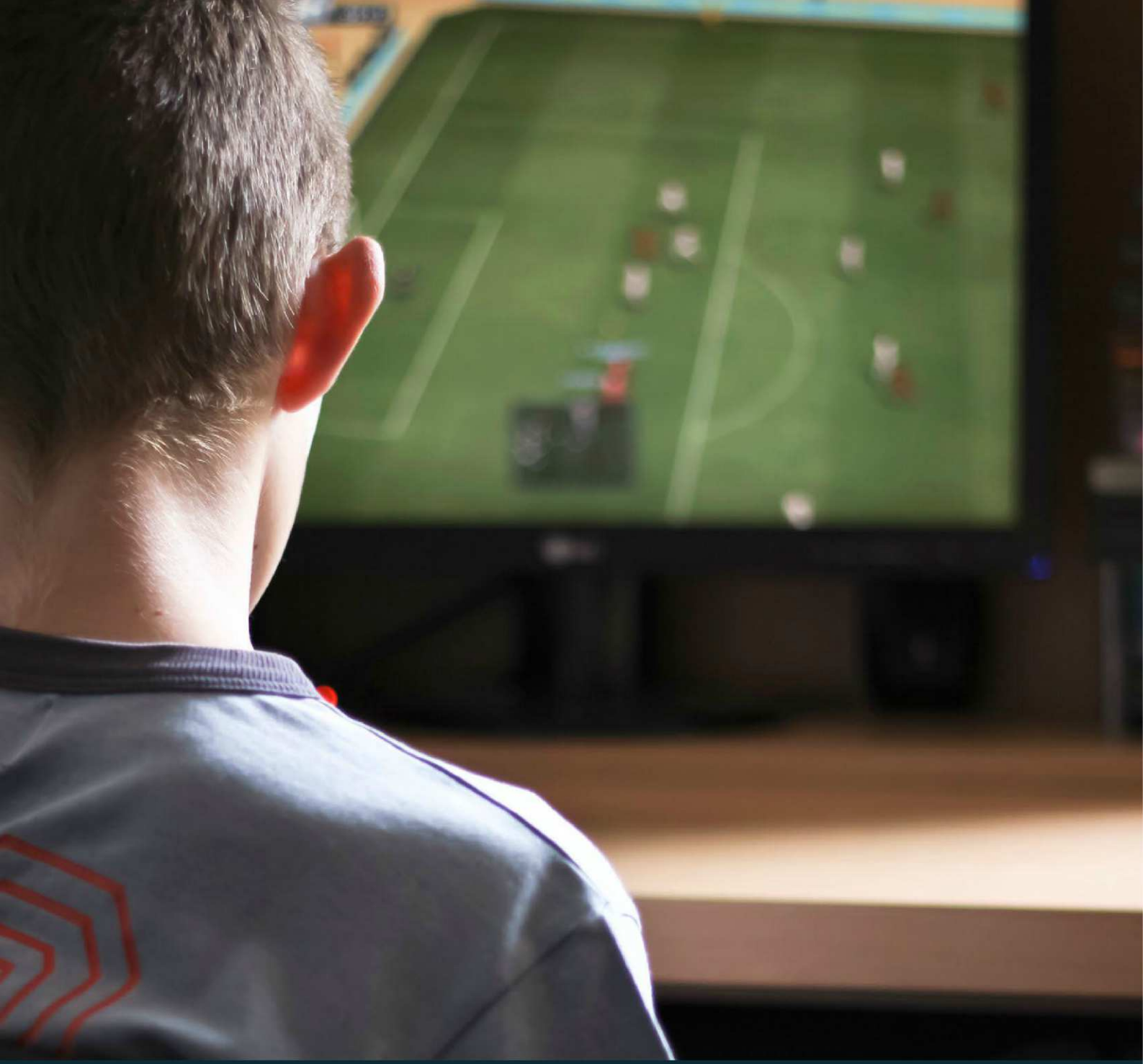
TRAINING TOTS 'N TEENS PART 1



Training Kids Struggling with Weight Issues

Five tech tools to get kids on a healthy track

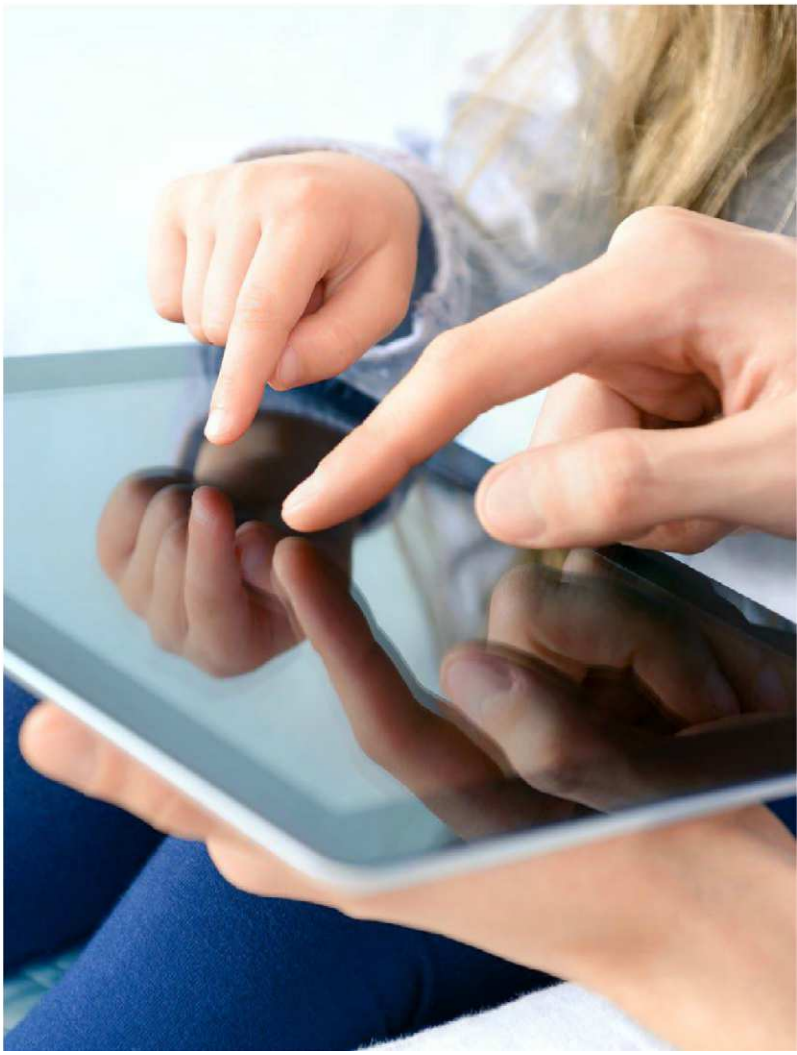
By Kelli Calabrese

In today's culture, instant gratification reigns supreme—even when it comes to the fitness, nutrition and health concerns of children. Since children respond well to "digital tools," many parents seek these kinds of resources for weight issues. With this in mind, here are five digital resources that can help promote positive lifestyle changes for children:

1. **INTERNET CALCULATORS:** Body Mass Index (BMI) is a reliable indicator of body fat levels for most children and teens and offers an inexpensive and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems. For children and teens, BMI is specific to both age and gender. A BMI Calculator for Children and Teens ages 2-19 years old is freely available at the Centers for Disease Control website. The Children's Calorie Needs Calculator, developed by Baylor College of Medicine, is another useful online tool that calculates how many calories a child needs each day, based on height/weight/physical activity level.

2. **APPS:** There are a number of apps available at iTunes to help motivate kids to live healthy. "Kids Making Healthy Choices" ($2.99/iTunes) is based on and includes both the Boy and Girl Editions of the award-winning, illustrated children's book "*Making Healthy Choices—A Story to Inspire Fit, Weight-Wise Kids.*" The app is for children who can access the story and fun activity sheets through the apps' eReader. Grown-ups can benefit as well from additional tools and information resources bundled in the app, including discussion questions, recipes and topical link lists. It's not just for children seeking to lose weight, as it promotes healthy living for all kids as well as tolerance among peers to lessen the incidence of bullying. Other notable apps include "Healthy Eating, Healthy You," featuring exclusive healthy recipes developed by chefs at MGM Resorts; "Child Obesity Guide," providing caregivers with assessment and planning tools; and "Nutrition and Healthy Eating" that provides fun, science-based learning games for preschoolers and kindergarteners.

3. **ONLINE QUIZZES:** Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic around the world. The World Health Organization estimates that 22 million kids under the age of 5 are overweight across the world. The statistics are equally frightening for adolescents, tweens and teens. Societies must get educated on the topic in order to take effective action. Learn more about childhood obesity with a quick and free quiz that's available at the Discovery Health website. Another online quiz, developed at the University of North Carolina School of Public Health, is equally helpful for keeping parents well-informed: Is Your Child at Risk of Becoming Overweight? Any of these would be great resources to suggest to parents.



4. INTERACTIVE GAMES: Online games are a fun and easy way to engage kids while also teaching them health principles. Kidnetic, produced by Kraft Foods, offers games, scavenger hunts and challenges. The CDC's BAM! Body and Mind website teaches kids about the body and mind through games.

5. VIDEOS: The Internet is rife with helpful youtube videos that pertain to childhood obesity. There are educational and informative videos that detail tactical strategies to help children get healthy, including initiatives spearheaded by First Lady Michelle Obama, as well as inspirational documentaries that showcase kids who have changed their lives for the better through good nutrition and fitness. Videos are an extremely powerful tool that can provide instant, on-the-spot motivation.

Kelli Calabrese, a leading fitness, nutrition and lifestyle coach for almost 3 decades, has owned and operated fitness centers and corporate programs, was the lead fitness expert for eDiets, and edited fitness professional magazines. She speaks internationally and is an executive with Isagenix. Kelli has a heart for helping people realize their full physical potential and live their best lives.

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SOURCE: Random telephone calls to subscribers list (ongoing)
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