



5 Digital Resources Fostering Fit Kids

– Expert cites tech tools that can help kids get on a healthy track TODAY –

By Kelli Calabrese

In today's culture, instant gratification reigns supreme. Even when it comes to the fitness, nutrition and overriding health concerns of children, parents, grandparents, teachers and other youth caregivers continually seek tools and resources that can be implemented and utilized immediately. With this in mind, here are 5 modern-day digital resources that can help promote positive lifestyle changes for children struggling with weight issues:

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 age- and sex-specific. A BMI Calculator for Children and Teens ages 2-19 years old is freely available at the Centers for Disease Control Web site. The Children's Energy (Calories) 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 sound APPs available at iTunes to help motivate kids to live healthy. One such APP titled "The Kids Making Healthy Choices" 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, which is intended to foster kids' health and impede the childhood obesity epidemic, is for children who can access the story and fun activity sheets through the APPs eReader, as well as parents, caregivers, educators and pediatricians who benefit from additional tools and information resources bundled in the APP, including discussion questions, recipes and topical link lists. Not just for obese/overweight children, this APP 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 (WHO) estimates that, globally, 22 million kids under the age of 5 are overweight, and the statistics are equally frightening for adolescents, tweens and teens. Societies must get educated on the topic in order to take effective action. While you have heard much about "childhood obesity," how much do you really know? Find out with a quick and free quiz that's available at the Discovery Health Web site another online quiz developed by Professor Diane Ward at the University Of North Carolina School Of Public Health titled "Is your child at risk of becoming overweight?" Is equally helpful for keeping parents well-informed.

4. Interactive Games: Online games are a fun and easy way to engage kids while also teaching them health principles. Kidnetic, which is produced by Kraft Foods, is one great interactive Web site featuring a myriad of cool games, scavenger hunts, challenges and even a cool "Move Mixer" dance designer. The CDC's BAM! Body and Mind Web site also offers online games that teach kids about the body and mind.

5. Videos: The Internet is rife with helpful videos that pertain to childhood obesity. There are educational and informative videos like those detailing tactical strategies to help children get healthy, including initiatives spearheaded by First Lady Michelle Obama, as well as moving and inspirational documentaries showcasing 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, on-demand 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.