



Get Your Kids Off to a Good Start in Life by Teaching and Modeling Healthy Habits

At [Emeryville Martial Arts](#), we know it's never too early for parents to start teaching their kids to make good wellness choices. And since you won't always be around to tell your child what to do or not do, it's important to teach them how to weigh options and choose wisely, in diverse circumstances. Here are some of the ways you can prepare your kids to thrive now, while they are under your roof — and later, when they are young adults discovering the world.

Start them on healthy eating as early as possible.

It's much easier to stick to good eating habits if you haven't already developed a taste for unhealthy food. A child who craves sugary treats and processed foods will seek them out even though they provide poor nutrition and can leave you feeling unsatisfied or sluggish. By contrast, a child who has learned to [enjoy healthy foods](#) such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and less-processed snacks will want them when they are hungry and feel better as a result. Once you have developed a taste for good food, you may find that less nutritious or unhealthy foods don't even seem desirable.

But unhealthy food is cheaper and easier!

Here's where it can get difficult. A busy parent trying to feed their child, clean their house, and still meet deadlines will understandably find it easier to dole out pre-packaged snacks than prepare a wholesome homemade treat. And organic, all-natural snacks tend to be far more expensive. Parents, try bulk buying to reduce expenses on fruits, vegetables, and natural foods. Help your kids start gardens in plots or patio pots, so they can [learn to grow](#) their own healthy produce. And teach your kids basic cooking and meal prep, so they can help you out while acquiring valuable life skills.

Make exercise a part of daily life.

If exercise is something that only happens during gym class or sports practice, kids may end up leading sedentary lives once gym class and sports programs are no longer part of their schedule. Encourage them to pursue activities such as dance or running, that they can keep on enjoying even when they are out of school. Sign your teens up for a class at [Emeryville Martial Arts](#) so they can train in both fitness and self-defense while learning important values such as discipline and self-respect. As much as possible, [get outside with them](#) and stay active, whether you're playing tag or going for a nature walk. Kids who have acquired a taste for getting active in the fresh air are more likely to seek out opportunities to do so when they are on their own.

Instill a love of learning.

Kids who enjoy learning and know how to ask questions and seek answers are [less likely](#) to be bored and get into trouble. Help them learn more about their interests by doing safe online research. Whatever your child's interest — superheroes, dinosaurs, fashion, sports, or comics — this can provide an opening for you to teach them to take an interest in the world around them. Getting them invested in studying the outdoor world can be especially valuable. Some fun outdoor learning activities include [bird watching](#), rock collecting, and orienteering. For kids who are interested in astronomy, [check out the resources](#) at Moon and Back, and maybe even help them select a telescope they can learn to use on their own.

Keep lines of communication open.

It's important that you not only talk to your kids — you have to converse with and listen to them. Allow them to trust you with their questions and fears, so you know they feel safe coming to you if they are having trouble. Make sure they are aware of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and online safety issues. Communicate with them about how to take initiative and [evaluate risks](#), so even when you aren't there to guide them, they will be equipped with good decision-making skills.

Remember, the earlier your kids start learning healthy behavior, the more likely they are to develop good habits that will last a lifetime. Help them to find good food and exercise enjoyable, and model healthy choices for them, so that wellness is part of their routine, and not something they have to learn the hard way later in life.

[Emeryville Martial Arts](#) offers programs for preschoolers, children, and adults. To learn more about what we offer, give us a call at (501) 428-1979.

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