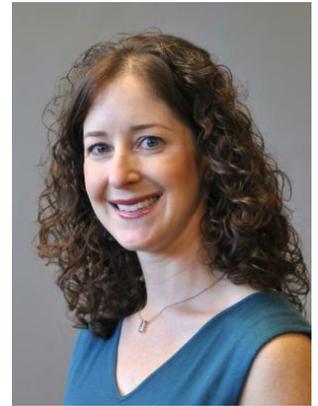


“Fit To Play and Learn”

October signals the call to parents, teachers, and students to join in the internationally-recognized awareness month to encourage communities to develop sustainable “walk to school” programs to help kids get active and walk to school safely. Encouraging walking is a great way to get patients and their families active and just another way you, as a pediatrician, can promote wellness and obesity prevention.

After observing first-hand the effects of obesity on our Nation’s youth while completing medical school and residency training from coast to coast, Drs. Corinn Cross and Tracy Zaslow became very involved in the “walk to school” campaign and were inspired to develop an Anti-Obesity curriculum called “Fit to Play and Learn” (FTPL).



Tracy Zaslow, MD, FAAP

With the support of the AAP Chapter 2, Drs. Cross and Zaslow developed a 100 page bilingual curriculum that takes a positive approach to discussing the importance of eating healthy and exercising regularly. FTPL targets the under-privileged low-income population, as sadly, this group is the hardest hit by obesity.



The shocking reality, that many of these children and their families lack the proper education to make better lifestyle choices, became obvious. Concepts that are often considered universally known, were recognized as novel to patients and their families, and thus just providing appropriate education could hugely impact these families, now and for generations to come. By working with multiple community partners, FTPL is designed to help families understand good nutrition and healthy living. In the end, the only way to create lasting generational change is to start with young children and teach them the basics of nutrition and healthy living.

Providing children with an educational foundation in nutrition enables them to develop good habits, which they will have for a lifetime.

The FTPL curriculum was developed to provide this nutrition education and includes 6 interactive learning sessions:

1. Fit to Play and Learn
2. You Are What You Eat!
3. Healthy Foods for a Healthy Life
4. Sugar Savvy: What’s in Your Drink?
5. Get Moving!
6. Parent Learning Session.

The Parent Learning Session, a family-centered approach to healthy eating and exercise, screens families for access to health insurance and medical home.

Families are given information regarding available insurance programs, enrollment instructions and how to find a community doctor. Families are encouraged to schedule a Well Child Visit to discuss their child’s BMI with their pediatrician.

In the sessions, students learn what constitutes a healthy meal and how to: make healthy food swaps, choose low-calorie snacks, read labels, avoid sugary beverages, choose water as the beverage of choice, reduce screen-time and get 1 hour of exercise a day. School liaisons are encouraged to provide an opportunity for exercise during the school day, i.e. recess walking clubs.



Corinn Cross, MD, FAAP



FTPL has ongoing interaction with participating schools and encourages schools to adopt healthy changes. School liaisons are encouraged to provide an opportunity for exercise during the school day, i.e. recess walking clubs. Nurses are also encouraged to calculate students’ BMI’s and advise families to visit their pediatricians to discuss these results.

FTPL continues to grow each year with more and more schools implementing the program. With this growth, any interested volunteers are encouraged to reach out to AAP Chapter 2 for more information about how to get involved.

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