



10 February 2012

Helping Your Children Stay Fit and Healthy, Part 1

"Mr., my side hurts, I can't run anymore." "Mr., I can't bend down that far." "Mr., I can't ..."

Over and over I hear these kinds of complaints from my upper school gym students. While I (at 58 years) can jog from the school to Jamaica Ave. in about five minutes, some boys take as long as 10-12 minutes to run the same distance.

The Nemours Foundation, which operates the Alfred I. DuPont Institute Hospital for Children in Wilmington, DE, reports that one out of three kids in the US is overweight or obese.¹ A rough estimate at FJS would seem to indicate that our average is close to the national average. Additionally, many who are not overweight are still very out of shape.

According to Nemours, "Many kids are spending less time exercising and more time in front of the TV, computer, or video-game console. And today's busy families have fewer free moments to prepare nutritious, home-cooked meals. From fast food to electronics, quick and easy is the reality for many people in the new millennium."¹

Kids who are overweight or out of shape have a much higher risk of high blood pressure and high cholesterol, Type 2 Diabetes, bone and joint problems, shortness of breath and asthma when exercising, difficulty sleeping, depression, and other disorders. Additionally, they may experience unkind teasing from their friends and they are likely to die younger than their peers who are their natural weight and in shape.

God's Word reminds us that our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, ... therefore glorify God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Treating God's temple well so that we can live a long life of service to him should be a priority of every follower of Jesus.

How does FJS help your children stay or become fit and healthy? From the 1st grade through high school, regular exercise is part of every phys. ed. program. Currently 1st & 2nd graders are jumping rope, a skill which both provides lots of exercise as well as body coordination and control. Mr. Nisly's room is emphasizing flexibility exercises this year after his recent experience with back pain. Jumping jacks and running burn lots of calories. The upper school is currently preparing for the MACSA Track & Field Meet on 1 May in Pennsylvania. Running, long jump, and throwing each exercise a different part of the body. Just two weeks of track with both guys and girls have demonstrated an urgent need for this kind of exercise for nearly all of the students.

Our goal is to help students understand the importance of life-long habits of healthy living and to begin to experience the benefits of regular exercise. According to the world-famous Mayo Clinic, regular exercise helps to control weight, fights sickness and disease, improves mood, boosts energy, and helps children sleep better.²

Next week, I'll discuss ways in which you can help your child at home to achieve these goals.

¹ "Overweight and Obesity," kidshealth.org/parent/general/body/overweight_obesity.html

² "Exercise: 7 Benefits of Regular Exercise," www.mayoclinic.com/health/exercise/HQ01676

Upcoming Events and Notes

- 1) **Tuesday, 14 February** – 5th-6th Grade Science Field Trip to Natural History Museum.
- 2) **Monday, 20 February** – **NO SCHOOL**. President's Day. **NOTE: FJS DOES HAVE SCHOOL the rest of the week.** We do NOT take a Winter Break in order to finish school earlier in June.
- 3) **Thursday, 23 February** – MACSA Bible Quizzing, Lancaster Co., PA.
- 4) **Friday, 2 March** – Book Character Day for Grades 1-5.
History Fair outline and sources due for grades 5-10.
- 5) **Wednesday-Friday, 7-9 March** – MACSA Bible Quiz Retreat, Black Rock Retreat, Quarryville, Lancaster Co., PA

Enjoy the snow!

James E. Gochnauer, Principal