



Early Childhood Learning Center

Irvine Unified School District

1 Smoketree, Irvine, CA 92604

“5 and Under” Health and Wellness Corner

Health & Wellness Newsletter:
December



Linda Scott-Katz, PNP
Michael DuBois, RN

Hello...and welcome to our monthly feature on health and wellness! Look for articles here that pertain to children through the age of five. These articles are provided by the School Readiness Program which offers help in the areas of Health, Mental Health and Education to families who have young children. We're located at the **Early Childhood Learning Center**, 1 Smoketree, Irvine, CA 92604.

Physical Activity and Holiday Gifts!

Engaging in physical activity as a family can be a fun way to get everyone moving. Studies show that kids who believe they are competent and have the skills to be physically active are more likely to be active. Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day, but it doesn't have to occur at once. It all adds up!

Give children toys that encourage physical activity like:

- balls
- bikes
- kites
- Frisbees®
- jump ropes



Limit TV time and keep the TV out of a child's bedroom. (Take that money & use it for a family adventure day.) Children love spending time playing with their parents. Give them a 'gift certificate' for a family park day, a swim day or a bike day.

The website for Mrs. Obama's Let's Move initiative has many great resources. Visit www.letsmove.gov/lets-move-outside to find ideas of local areas to explore as a family.



Helmets for the Holidays



In our previous newsletter, we spoke about Brain Development. Well, it's now time to switch gears from enhancing brain development to plain old protecting the brain. Head injuries are very serious and can be prevented by taking the simple measure of wearing a helmet. Not only is it a law for persons under the age of 18 years old to wear a helmet while on a bike but it just makes sense. With the season of gift giving in full swing we at the ECLC want to be sure that our friends that receive new skateboards, scooters and bicycles are well protected.

The helmet should be certified by the Snell Institute or ANSI. It should be properly fitted, with straps securing it under the chin. Also it needs to sit straight across the eyebrows to provide protection for the front of the head in the event of a 'face forward' type of accident. As parents we try to make things for the kids last as long as possible but in respect to protecting our children's heads we should not get helmets that they can grow into. Many helmet brands come with instructions on how to size your children for a helmet. Follow these instructions or ask for help from a knowledgeable store employee.

Getting your children to wear a helmet has its own challenges. Helmets come in a large assortment of designs and themes to please everyone. It's important to choose something that your children will like so that they make it a habit to wear it every time they ride... no matter how far they are going. If we start our children with this habit early, it becomes something they do automatically, like wearing a seatbelt. The last and probably most important way to convince your children to wear a helmet is for you to wear yours. I know all the excuses that parents have (my hair, uncomfortable, didn't as a kid, don't have one, not cool) but we're talking about trying to have your kids do the right thing, so put on your helmet!

The Early Childhood Learning Center

1 Smoketree Lane

Irvine, CA 92604

Ph: 949-936-5890

Fax: 949-936-5859

<http://www.iusd.org/eclc/>

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