



Dame Kelly Holmes
How sport will help
children learn life skills



Coping with diabetes
Providing your child
with the right support

**MEDIA
PLANET**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING

Myleene Klass:

From tantrums to
fairies, what she
learnt from having
her first child



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TIPS TO

BALANCE YOUR INSTINCTS WITH EXPERT ADVICE

PHOTO: MOTHERCARE



MACLAREN

Win the latest designer
buggy from Maclaren

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CHALLENGES

“So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man”

William Wordsworth
MY HEART LEAPS UP

Meet the challenge

This extract from a Wordsworth poem epitomises understanding of the early life origins of health and disease. In other words the foundations of susceptibility to illness are established during very early life and likely begin at conception and will be influenced by the health of the mother. Thus optimising the health, nutrition, growth, physical and psychological development of the infant and child is critical to ensure a successful and healthy life.

Over the last century, in affluent countries, we have witnessed spectacular improvements in mortality rates and health of communities particularly in the young. This has been the consequence of improved living conditions with appropriate sanitation, nutrition, education, and health promotion of which immunisation is particularly important. It is

a great sadness that this has not occurred world-wide. While malnutrition and infection remain as the threats to the survival and health of children in the developing world we have now replaced this with the consequences of obesity, indolence, and the psycho-social pressures of a modern life style.

We have increasing numbers of children and adults with allergic diseases such as asthma, eczema, food allergy and hayfever. In part this may be a consequence of decreased rates of infection (known as the hygiene hypothesis) and changes to feeding practices in infancy. In addition there are increases in autoimmune diseases such as insulin dependent diabetes (Type 1), and obesity with its long term consequences of Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

What is the solution to the malaises of the 21st century? It is clear from the lessons of the past and current re-



J. O. Warner
Professor of Paediatrics, Imperial College London

“We all have the responsibility to ensure that our children reach their optimal potential in good health”

search that optimising the health and nutrition of mothers during pregnancy is very important. For the infant “breast is undoubtedly best”. Avoidance of exposure to tobacco smoke and other pollutants will decrease the risk of a wide range of respiratory illnesses. For optimal child health a balance of appropriate nutrition and exercise will avoid obesity and its consequences. Immunisation remains the most important way of preventing serious infections and the media hype about adverse effects of immunisation have virtually always been incorrect. Finally, if problems arise in children, the earlier they are addressed the better the outcomes. This is particularly true for children with learning disabilities or other behavioural or developmental difficulties.

We all have the responsibility to ensure that our children reach their optimal potential in good health. This report will provide you with the information you need to meet the challenge.



WE RECOMMEND



Dame Kelly Holmes
Founder of the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust

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‘Without exercise in your life, everything is much more of a struggle’

Eye tests

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Dr Mitzi Waltz

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2. Talks professionally and personally about dealing with autism

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We make our readers succeed!

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Managing Director: Willem De Geer
Editorial Manager: Katherine Woodley

Sales Manager: Simon Kenneally

Project Manager: Faye Godfrey
Phone: 0207 665 4410

E-mail: faye.godfrey@mediaplanet.com

Distributed with: The Independent
Print: The Independent

Mediaplanet contact information:
Phone: 0207 665 4400
Fax: 0207 665 4419
E-mail: info.uk@mediaplanet.com

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FIGHTING IGNORANCE WITH INSPIRATION

ALTHOUGH FIRST DIAGNOSED IN 1943, AUTISM IS STILL RELATIVELY UNKNOWN. YET AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CONDITIONS ARE ESTIMATED TO TOUCH THE LIVES OF OVER 500,000 FAMILIES THROUGHOUT THE UK



Anna receiving Special Chairman's Award at Institute of Directors (IOD) Director of the Year with Emma Crosby GMTV presenter and Chairman Roger Broad,

As a determined and passionate mother of two children with an autism spectrum condition Anna Kennedy has led the way in transforming the education and lives of those who suffer from this hugely challenging and frustrating condition.

In 1999 Anna Kennedy, as the mother of two boys, Patrick and Angelo, one with Autism and the other Asperger syndrome, simply wanted the best education for her sons, but after being refused entry by a staggering 26 special needs schools she decided to take matters into her own hands and started her own very special place of education.

Ten years on she has transformed the lives of literally hundreds of children with Autism and Asperger syndrome by setting a new course in education and support for those with these special needs.

In 1999 she and her husband felt so passionately about providing better education for children with Autism and Asperger that they remortgaged their home and transformed a derelict council building in Middlesex, West London into Hillingdon Manor School. The school, which is now a centre of excellence, has earned considerable recognition for its outstanding work, and caught the imagination of Esther Rantzen who is now its patron.

A DECADE OF SUCCESS

Over the last decade Hillingdon Manor has thrived and in 2010 will educate 150 children from 3 to 19 years with plans to expand to accommodate an increasing number of parents who are looking for a positive and supportive environment for their intelligent but different offspring. Hillingdon Manor has gone from strength to strength and is now the largest school of its kind in the UK.

Since 1999 Anna's work has expanded considerably and she has opened a number of new facilities. In 2008 she merged her school with Hillcrest Autism Services to gain access to greater resources to continue her work. She and Hillcrest have also expanded their work to provide education for adults with Autism and Asperger syndrome and opened the West London Community College, which also has a residential home attached for students attending the educational establishment.

OFFERING HOPE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN KENT AND GREATER LONDON

This year Anna is delighted to be opening Baston House School in Bromley, Kent which is working towards accommodating 150 children from 3 to 19 years of age. Formerly an independent girls school, the new special needs unit will provide a centre of excellence in education and development for children who have been diagnosed with autism. The new school is expected to be very popular from Day One as there are few resources in the South East that can cope with the special education needs of Autism and Asperger Syndrome. For parents of children with these conditions life can be a constant struggle to try and get their sons and daughters to live normal lives or communicate and integrate with family and friends.

Baston House School will provide welcome relief and a real breakthrough for these children and help them to lead more fulfilled and productive lives. The school will be a unique provision for children on the Autism Spectrum and will offer an eclectic approach to a number of strategies, taking the best of a myriad of techniques and resources that have been developed worldwide over many years. All of the schools under the Hillcrest approach are able to offer personalised teaching and learning within an Autistic-specific environment, so that pupils' individual needs can be addressed in full, and their capabilities

fully realised. As a result the children can develop into independent, participative and contributing members of society.

PERSEVERANCE PAYS OFF

The results of the education provided at Anna Kennedy's schools are impressive as one parent of a child at Hillingdon Manor School put it.

"I must say that being around my son is becoming more and more of a pleasure and less and less like a task since he has been attending Hillingdon Manor! My thanks to you all, please keep up the good work."

Working closely with highly dedicated teachers and specialists from Hillcrest and other organisations Anna Kennedy is still breaking new ground and every year she and her colleagues are finding new ways and techniques to help children with Autism to maximise their potential. When describing her work and that of Hillcrest she is full of praise for those around her. "I work with a truly great team of hugely talented and committed people who care deeply about positively improving the lives of those with Autism Spectrum disorders. Everyone involved from school and college principals to specialist teachers, support workers and classroom assistants all work together to improve the education and living experience of the pupils at our centres. It is so gratifying and uplifting to see the results and the positive changes that are made for individuals and their families."

NOT STUPID

In 2008 Anna co-authored her best selling biography "Not Stupid" which poignantly portrayed her struggle to find appropriate provision for her boys – a story which will be familiar to many parents who feel they could not get what they felt their children needed from the local education authority.

Anna's story appeared as an hour long BBC 'pick of the day' Video Diary documentary and her story has been featured in numerous magazines and newspapers, including the Times Educational Supplement, The Times, The Observer, The Guardian, The Daily Mirror and The Daily Mail.

In 2009 she won 'Woman of the Year', an award run in conjunction with The Observer newspaper and Smooth Radio and earlier this year was the recipient of the coveted Institute of Directors (IOD) Chairman's special award

Anna certainly caught the imagination of Esther Rantzen who was so impressed that she became Patron of Hillingdon Manor School and now Baston House School. Esther sums up the essence of Anna Kennedy's work and the schools she set up.

"Over the years special needs schools have been brutally phased out, instead of being expanded and developed, and, in many places, as the Children's Commissioner has pointed out, for children affected by autism, simply don't exist.

The new school, its facilities and potential to help youngsters diagnosed with an autism spectrum condition is a credit to what Anna Kennedy and her dedicated team have achieved over the years.

Baston House is a wonderful facility that is so desperately needed in our country and I am delighted to be associated with helping children with autism achieve their full potential".

With the instance of Autism growing alarmingly in Britain the special schools provided by Anna Kennedy and Hillcrest have never been so much needed and it should be hoped that more and more of these facilities are made available to children and their families to help them fulfil their potential. Of course the educational and life supporting needs don't stop at school leaving age and Anna Kennedy and Hillcrest are now leading the way in providing lifelong support for those with Autism and Asperger syndrome.

If you would like to find out more about Anna Kennedy or any of the Hillcrest special schools please telephone: 02392 492165 or contact anna@annakennedyonline.com



Esther Rantzen
Patron of Hillingdon Manor school.

INSPIRATION

Question: As the mother of a three-year-old, what has Myleene Klass learnt about motherhood and her daughter's early years?

Answer: The first 12 months were particularly challenging, but the fun and surprises made the fatigue worthwhile

The secrets of my success

CHANGE

"I think any first-time parent will tell you that no matter how prepared you believe yourself to be, absolutely nothing really prepares you for the life change that having a baby brings," says Myleene Klass, whose daughter Ava has just turned three. "I thought that the physical side — from painting the nursery to buying nappies — and the mental preparation — well you do get nine months to get accustomed to the whole idea! — would be sufficient. But it's the things you don't expect that rock your world, although I'd like to add that's for the good!"

Everyone tries to prepare you for the sleep deprivation - but nothing can quite prepare you, Myleene says. "It almost engulfs you. My partner and I both work in the entertainment industry and have been known to work 20-hour days - but with this in mind, I was not at all prepared for the effects lack of sleep brought upon the household! In his sleepy state, my partner left the memory card of my labour photos in a machine such as his

tiredness and I often felt I was floating with the sheer tiredness."

But there is the up side: "You don't also expect, however, how much you'll get to view the world with fresh eyes. The other day I was plumping the pillows and as the dust (I'm not the greatest housekeeper) flew up in the air, Ava exclaimed, "mama, fairies" We ran around the room trying to catch them."

You find solace in other mothers going through the same experience, Myleene points out. "I was told by one "that in the same way that trimesters work when you're pregnant, it's the same "three monthly hurdles" that act as markers when your little one comes along" and she was right - as each three months came and went, I could see definitive changes and achievements in not only Ava but how we as a family were progressing and finding our footing and confidence." The key is time, says Myleene. "You'll find that you know your little one better than anyone and get a feel for it. For example, I had to insist Ava was jaundiced and had an eye infection when she



'You don't also expect, however, how much you'll get to view the world with fresh eyes'

Myleene Klass
TV presenter

was born although everyone tried to convince me otherwise - and I turned out to be right.

"I knew the birth of my first child would change a lot but I was not prepared for the paperwork, the continuous jabs and the pure uncertainty of what I was meant to be doing next!" laughs Myleene.

And as for tantrums: "I try to stay calm and hold firm. There have been times when we've been out shopping and Ava has wanted something and then thrown an almighty tantrum at my refusal of said object. On one occasion, a stranger remarked on it - I had to just brazen it out until Ava calmed down. I have found the more I try to hide or shuffle out of such tantrums, the more effective Ava realises them to be. Subsequently (fingers crossed) we haven't had that many - although maybe she's saving them for the terrible threes instead!"

Ask for advice if you need it - but don't feel you have to follow it either, says Myleene. "People kind enough to help should still respect this is a special time and you and your partner will

make mistakes but you also have to learn for yourselves.

"You will know what's best. I was told not to take Ava on planes as children should stay in a routine at home - her routine is with me and she has a routine of her own but that doesn't stop us travelling the world together. She's been to 52 countries and has had countless adventures which have fired her imagination, from dancing to the jungle drums in Australia to spotting monkeys in Costa Rica and listening to the bells in Berlin. She also learnt to swim without bands at eight months old when we were in a rainforest for six weeks in Costa Rica and in LA. I'm glad I never listened - I can see how much my daughter has greatly benefited from travelling and always being with her mother."

Myleene has her own range of baby clothes and toys, Baby K, available exclusively at Mothercare

EMILY DAVIES

info.uk@mediaplanet.com



www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk

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Registered charity number 288018





TRUST YOURSELF
 'You will know what's best' so go with your instincts when it comes to your child
 PHOTO: MOTHERCARE

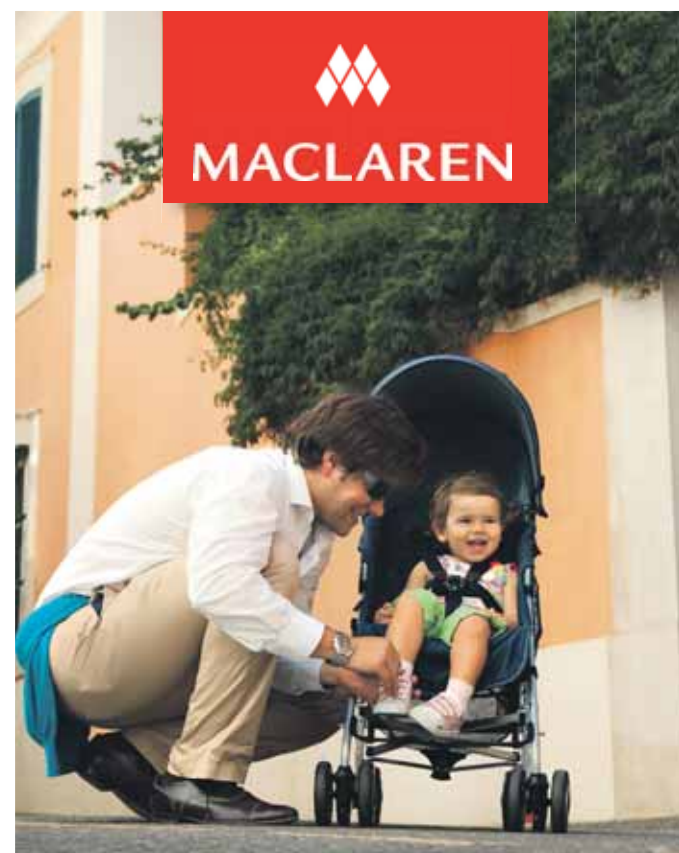


BREAST-FEEDING TIPS

- Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby
- Breast milk is tailored to meet your baby's needs, providing antibodies, growth factors, enzymes and hormones. There are health benefits for the mother too, reducing the risk of ovarian and breast cancer and weaker bones later in life
- Breast-feeding shouldn't hurt. In the early days, letting your baby come to the breast as often as possible will ensure a good milk supply
- The new Equality Act means that mothers cannot be discriminated against or asked to leave a venue because they are breast-feeding
- Support is available from NCT's breast-feeding line, 0300 330 0771
- As a new mum, it's good to get out and meet others through classes, coffee mornings or babies and toddler groups. Problems with baby routines, sleepless nights or body image can be helped by calling NCT's postnatal helpline: 0300 330 0773, Monday - Friday 9am-1pm

JULES JONES

Breast-feeding counsellor at the parenting charity NCT



Style never goes out of fashion...
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New for Autumn/Winter 2010 the Maclaren Denim Buggy certainly won't go out of fashion! Based on the best selling and award winning Maclaren Quest, the Denim buggy is suitable for babies from 3 months, and is lightweight and compact folding, perfect for parents on the go.

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Competition closes on October 20th 2010. One winner will be picked at random and notified by email after this date. The competition is open to all readers resident in the UK, except employees and associates of Maclaren, The Independent, Media Planet and other companies involved in running the competition. No cash alternative to the prize is offered and we reserve the right to offer an alternative prize where necessary. Maclaren with use your details to contact you about news and offers, if you do not want us to contact you please state so in your entry. Maclaren will not pass on your information to any third parties. For details of Maclaren's privacy policy visit maclarenbaby.com.

INSPIRATION

TIP

1

UNDERSTAND
ALLERGIES

RISE IN ALLERGIES

In the past two to three decades there has been a rise in the number of diagnosed allergies

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

9

TIPS: MANAGING ALLERGIES

Add a bit of water

1 Damp dusting: this will help remove allergens from surfaces and prevent the allergen from becoming airborne

Use a HEPA

2 Vacuuming with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter: again this prevents allergens from blowing out of the back of the vacuum

Get the right kit

3 The use of anti-allergen bedding on your mattress, pillows and duvets will all help to reduce allergen exposure from one of the main sources of house dust mites

Ventilate well

4 Rooms should be well-ventilated and not kept too warm, as this encourages the house dust mites and moulds to thrive

Leave beds to air

5 Beds should be left to air during the day rather than making in the morning, as the house dust mite needs warmth and moisture to survive

Hot wash

6 Washing bedding at 60 degrees or above will destroy allergens in bedding

Don't be a softie

7 In a child's room try to minimise the number of soft toys as these will also attract house dust mites. Wash regularly and if they are not suitable to be washed at high temperatures, pop them in the freezer overnight and then wash at the recommended temperature

Think furnishings

8 Hard flooring and blinds rather than soft furnishings will also make rooms easier to clean

Use a purifier

9 An air purifier that removes airborne allergens may help in the overall management of house dust mite, mould, or pet allergy

ALLERGY UK HAS A WIDE RANGE OF FACTSHEETS ON ALLERGIES AND A HELPLINE WHERE YOU CAN SPEAK TO A TRAINED ADVISOR IN ALLERGIES 01322 619898 AND A LIST OF ENDORSED PRODUCTS THAT ARE PROVEN TO REDUCE OR REMOVE ALLERGENS IN THE HOME. WWW.ALLERGYUK.ORG



The power of knowledge

One of only a handful of paediatric allergists in the UK, Dr Adam Fox works from the largest centre in the country dedicated to the treatment of children suffering from allergies, based at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals, London



'Given the increase in allergy rates that we've seen recently, there are clearly other factors involved'

Dr Adam Fox
Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals, London

can do to prevent their child developing asthma: the answer, he says, is to desensitise.

Much hope for the treatment of allergies is currently pinned to immunotherapy treatment, or desensitization. Immunotherapy is not a new idea but is back in favour as a treatment for allergy with new, more refined methods of delivery, says Dr Fox.

Access to specialist advice and treatment should be vastly improved says Dr Fox - so many children are still suffering unnecessarily: "The disease burden for children with allergies is not only physical - it's also about the anxiety it causes, to the child and their whole family, and the impact this has on their quality of life. This level of treatment, and the greater access that's needed, is for those children with severe, life-threatening allergies, whether hayfever, rhinitis or food allergies."

Allergen avoidance in the home is important when there is a child in the family with any allergy. It is important to know what you are allergic to before developing a good allergy management strategy - so having your allergies confirmed by an allergy specialist should always be the first step.

EMILY DAVIES

info.uk@mediaplanet.com

HOW WE MADE IT

"About 40 per cent of children in the UK have a diagnosed allergy, whether that's a food allergy, hay fever, asthma or eczema, and in the past two to three decades we've seen a huge increase in incidences of paediatric allergy," says Dr Fox. Every year, the Guy's and St Thomas' paediatric allergy clinic has 6,000 visits.

The clinic sees children with multiple allergic disease - and they rarely see a single allergy in isolation, explains Dr Fox. "Once we've seen a child with one allergy, we expect their return with another allergy, after the first has receded - it's known as the allergic, or atopic, march. It starts with eczema, followed by food allergies, then asthma, rhinitis or another respiratory allergy - which makes understanding the cause, and how to treat it, absolutely vital."

The genetic component of allergies is very important, says Dr Fox - but points out that that does not ex-

plain entirely the rise in allergies in recent years. "Given the increase in allergy rates that we've seen recently, there are clearly other factors involved, too."

The most common reason for referral is food allergy, principally milk, eggs or peanuts - 6-8 per cent of children in the UK have a diagnosed food allergy. It's crucial to distinguish between food allergy and food intolerance,

points out Dr Fox: "Allergy is a reaction where the immune system is involved, which makes it potentially very serious - intolerance is a reaction where the immune system is not involved."

The close link between asthma and allergies - a child with hayfever is seven times more likely to develop asthma, says Dr Fox - leads many parents desperate to know what they

FACTS ON ALLERGY

■ **The term allergy** is used to describe a response, within the body, to a substance, which is not necessarily harmful in itself, but results in an immune response and a reaction that causes symptoms and disease in a predisposed person.

■ **An allergy is** everything from a runny nose, itchy eyes and palate to skin rash. It aggravates the sense of smell, sight, tastes and touch caus-

ing irritation, extreme disability and sometimes fatality. It occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to normally harmless substances.

■ **Allergy is widespread** and affects approximately one in four of the population in the UK at some time in their lives. Each year the numbers are increasing by 5 per cent with as many as half of all those affected being children.

SOURCE: ALLERGY UK



The ABCs of breathing with confidence

Did you know that...?



- Over 6 million children are now suffering from allergies in the UK**?
- Our country has one of the highest rates of asthma in children worldwide with over 1.1 million children suffering from it**?
- People spend approximately 90% of their time indoors**?
- Indoor air can be 5 - 100 times more polluted than outdoor air even in the world's largest and most heavily industrialized cities***

Many people believe that because their homes are clean, their indoor air is clean too. The truth is that airborne particulates such as dust, smoke, mold spores and pet dander can be widespread in even the cleanest homes. While poor indoor air poses particular risks for children, and in particular those affected by asthma and allergies, everyone's health can suffer by breathing polluted air. Effects from exposure to poor indoor air may include irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, headaches, dizziness and fatigue.

Part of the reason why people don't take action against indoor air pollution is that they don't believe anything can be done to help prevent or improve indoor air quality problems. The truth is that effective, affordable portable air purifiers, such as Honeywell air purifiers, eliminate up to 99.97% of microscopic airborne pollutants that pass through their filters (microscopic particles 0.3 microns or larger).

The European Centre for Allergy Research Foundation – ECARF, founded in 2003, awards its Seal of Quality to allergy-friendly products and services Europe wide. According to their motto “For a better life with allergies”, the quality seal has been created to help those suffering from allergies to select appropriate goods and services.

The HEPA Allergen Remover by Honeywell has been awarded the ECARF Seal of Quality which indicates the suitability of the product for allergy sufferers including those who suffer from asthma.

The use of the HEPA Allergen Remover air purifier can provide you with cleaner and fresher air.

- True Hepa filters are the filters most often recommended by doctors for asthma sufferers
- Filters 99.97% of the particles from the air that passes through the filter
- A patented design to maximize air intake and minimize air leaks
- Specially designed fan blades minimize noise
- Activated carbon pre-filter helps to reduce odours
- No ozone emission from the filtration process

Honeywell air purifier products, manufactured by Kaz Europe SA, are available at major UK retailers. For more information, refer to: www.kaz-europe.com



NEWS

THE POWERFUL EFFECT OF SPORT

Question: Why should children and young people be as active as possible?

Answer: Dame Kelly Holmes has founded the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust to inspire young people through sport and exercise - and prove the benefits of exercise for body and mind

For any young person, exercise has many health benefits - from basic co-ordination to sustaining balance and flexibility, and maintaining muscular strength as you grow, says Dame Kelly. "We already know that obesity rates are getting worse - and it has such a detrimental effect on health, from allergy problems to respiratory problems."

The more normal exercise and activity are for children and young adults, the better, points out Dame Kelly. "For children of primary school age, hurtling around and being highly active are mostly standard - and fun, whether they are at a park or a swimming club." The crucial concern for many parents is how to sustain that activity in later years. Making it fun still remains key: "at any age, it helps to not realise you are exercising, whether that's playing with a kite or playing football."

The camps set up by Dame Kelly

also emphasise the social aspect of fitness - which is, she says, crucial to its effect. "Meeting people, taking part, learning about confidence and building self-esteem by working together in a team environment are all key skills for life. Fitness as a whole has real core values and principles that take you forward later in life - and which can be put to use in all walks of life, whoever you become or what you decide to do."

At the Trust she founded, Dame Kelly works with "inspirational" different people from different backgrounds to help motivate young people. "We use sport and activity to help them not just with sport but with other aspects of their life - such as work. If children can take responsibility for their wellbeing and actually be part of



EMILY DAVIES info.uk@mediaplanet.com

the solution, it makes them much happier."

The transforming effects of exercise on the body are a great motivating force, as Dame Kelly highlights - and the cycle of a lack of fitness horribly insidious. "I see teenage girls who don't exercise, mostly because they are not happy with how they look. Instead, they choose to eat less - which is neither healthy nor effective."

"You move forward in life propelled by how you feel - and I think that people need to realise that the body and the mind are one package. Without exercise in your life, everything is much more of a struggle - you have no energy, and the more you do, the easier it becomes. It teaches valuable life lessons - sport is not just about sport."

TIP 2 KEEP YOUR CHILD ACTIVE



ENJOYING SPORT Keeping children interested in sport can help keep to them healthy and teach important life skills too PHOTO: DAME KELLY HOLMES TRUST

A good start

Question: Just how important is food and nutrition in childhood?
Answer: Knowing how to eat well begins young - learning good habits early gives a child many advantages later in life

BACKGROUND

Food habits or patterns in childhood set the scene for dietary preferences and eating behaviour in adult life, says Dr Emma Williams, senior nutritionist at the British Nutrition Foundation.

Poor dietary patterns also increase the risk of health problems in later life, such as heart disease, obesity, type-2 diabetes and some cancers. For this reason, encouraging healthy eating from an early age can make children more likely to adopt a healthy lifestyle as they get older. Health enhancing strategies such as sensible eating alongside an active lifestyle in childhood is the key towards a longer and healthier life.

"A healthy life begins with a healthy diet", points out Dr Williams. "A healthy diet should be part of a life-long approach to health, commencing in early life. The foundation for a healthy balanced diet should start at home whereby parents lead by example - if children are taught the need for a healthy balanced diet, understand where their food comes from and are equipped with the knowledge

to prepare food then they can go on to make informed decisions regarding their diet. This will give them the best possible start in life and help them to grow into healthy adults.

"Good nutrition is essential for growth, development and well-being - inadequate nutrient intake in childhood can be reflected by slower growth rates, delayed puberty, inadequate bone mass and low levels of essential micronutrients leading to problems such as the iron deficiency anaemia," says Dr Williams.

Parents play a key role in shaping the food habits of children. They can influence food choice by controlling which foods are available, making the food environment conducive to healthy eating, and by behaving as role models. Parents can try to consume a healthy varied diet themselves; eat meals together without distraction; persist with encouraging children to try new foods, even if they are not liked the first time; don't force children to finish their food if they are full; encourage healthy snacking and involve children in food shopping and preparation.

Ensure meals outside the home are balanced, says Dr Williams - and encourage children to be physically active and restrict time on sedentary activities like watching TV or playing computer games.

EMILY DAVIES info.uk@mediaplanet.com



TIPS FROM ANNABEL KARMEL, CHILDREN'S NUTRITION EXPERT

➔ Eating with the whole family whenever possible can really make a difference. Personally, I think that taking the focus off your child's eating and having lots of social chat at the table is helpful

➔ Avoid using mealtimes to assert your authority. If there is a lecture to give choose another time

➔ If your child refuses to eat anything other than junk food, chill out. They will soon find there's not much point making a fuss if you don't react

➔ Try and make mealtimes a really positive experience. One of the most important things is to really try and hide your frustration. Praise your child excessively when he eats well or tries something new. You may need to ignore some bad eating behaviour to refocus attention on good behaviour. This may make mealtimes less stressful for you too

➔ Make food look fun - consider how you serve it. Cut fruit into bite-sized pieces and thread it onto a skewer or straw

We all know how children love to get involved in the kitchen and how they gain valuable life skills in the process, but we are equally concerned about their safety at the same time.
The Learning Tower™ brings your child up to the correct and safe working height through its unique self locking and adjustable platform whilst the sides prevent them falling over or reaching places that present a danger. Designed to allow the child to access the platform area themselves, thus reducing the need to lift them in and out, **The Learning Tower™** becomes their own special place.
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Always wear appropriate footwear when exercising



Stroll back to Shape with Maclaren

Getting back in shape after having a baby can be a challenge, how will you find the time to exercise and who will look after baby? You're so busy yet you are really keen to get your pre-baby body back. So what to do?

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Taking your new baby out for a walk is one of the many joys of motherhood and with 'Stroll

Back to Shape' it's easy to combine this with your exercise routine. There are six free, fun and effective 'buggy workouts' and all are available online through strollbacktoshape.com

Maclaren's new GT LX travel system is the perfect companion for strolling back to shape, with its dashboard console featuring clock, thermometer and strollometer! Plus it's suitable from birth so can be used as soon as you feel ready.

strollbacktoshape.com

NEWS

TIP

3

BOOK AN
EYE TEST

Keep an eye on their sight

■ **Question:** Just how important is a child's eye health – both in early years and in the future?

■ **Answer:** A child's eyesight is precious – not only can undetected problems seriously damage their eye health, it can also affect social and academic development and lead to permanent visual problems in later life

The earlier that common childhood conditions, such as squint, amblyopia (lazy eye) and myopia (short-sightedness) are detected, the greater the chance of managing or treating it successfully, says Dharmesh Patel, chairman of the Eyecare Trust.

As children's vision continues to develop until at least the age of eight, it is crucial that eye examinations are carried out annually between the ages of three and eight, and at least once every two years, thereafter, he points out.

All babies are born with long-sighted vision and the ability to focus on fine detail is acquired during early months. The eyes are not fully developed at birth and vision needs to be stimulated in order for it to develop correctly – high-contrast toys, mirrors and peekaboo games can help stimulate a baby's vision.

It's quite common for babies eyes to seem a little clumsy in the first few weeks as visual co-ordination begins to develop – and it's never too early



DHARMESH PATEL, chairman of the Eyecare Trust recommends getting your child's eyesight tested

PHOTO: EYECARE TRUST

to take your baby for an eye examination, says Dharmesh. A number of special tests have now been devised for optometrists to examine very young children.

It's often difficult to tell if a child is having problems with their eyes but some telltale signs that there could be something wrong include struggling to recognise colours and

shapes; not showing any interest in learning to read; complaining about headaches and sitting very close to the TV. If you recognise any of these symptoms you should arrange for your child to have an eye examination, cautions Dharmesh.

Many parents are unaware that they can no longer rely on their children's sight being checked at school – however, eye examinations for all children up to the age of 16, and up to the age of 19 if they are in full-time education are available free on the NHS. Your local optometrist can advise.

Parents are also entitled to a voucher towards the cost of any glasses or contact lenses prescribed for their child. Many eyesight defects, such as long- or short-sight, astigmatism or squint can be inherited, so if there is a history of poor vision or eye disease in your family, bear it in mind.

There are some surprising eyecare solutions, too. Computer and 3D games can help improve a child's vision, says Dharmesh – electronic games encourage repetitive eye movements that help train the eye to focus, while viewing 3D media can also help improve binocular vision by encouraging the eyes to work as a team.

For more advice about caring for your child's eyes, visit www.eyecaretrust.org.uk

EMILY DAVIES

info.uk@mediaplanet.com

QUESTION AND ANSWER
WITH DHARMESH PATEL

■ **What advances have been made that enable a visually-impaired child to live a fuller life than ever before?**

- High index lenses mean more children can wear spectacles of even higher refractive error (i.e. prescription) to correct their sight than previously possible. For children with chronic low vision most local authorities provide a wide range of services including some free vision aids.

- High-tech devices such as screen magnifiers and reader software aid classroom learning and provide access to TV, internet and electronic games.

- Smartphone apps and AMOLED display screens provide improved vision on the move.

- Many books are available in audio format or large print.

■ **For children who are blind, what can be done to maximise their quality of life?**

From intuitive smartphone applications to innovative Braille displays, new technological advances are helping improve the lives of blind children. Charities such as Action for Blind People offer great support and activities for blind children of all ages.

DHARMESH PATEL'S TOP TIPS

Take your child for regular sight tests with a registered professional.

■ **Provide plenty of visual stimulation** for the under-8s to help encourage their eyes to focus and work together as a team.

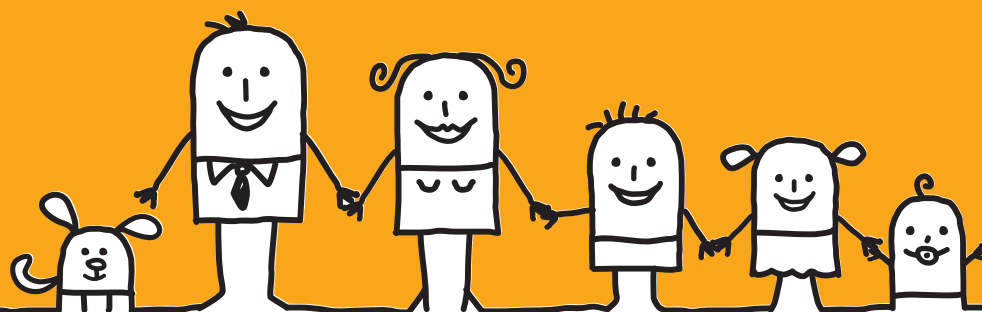
■ **Quit smoking.** Smoking during pregnancy and around children can increase the risk of vision problems in infants.

■ **Wear sunglasses.** Children are at greatest risk of UV damage as they have bigger pupils and clearer lenses which allow up to 70 per cent more UV light to reach the retina than in an adult's eye.

■ **Prevent eye injuries.** Remove potential hazards from in and around the home (keep chemicals, sprays and sharp objects out of reach); supervise playtime and provide protective eye-wear for dangerous sports.

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Food Standards Agency (FSA) advice

The UK FSA advises that babies over six months should be given additional infant vitamins A, C and D. For more information visit: www.eatwell.gov.uk

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VITABIOTICS
WHERE NATURE MEETS SCIENCE

NEWS

TIP

4

LOOK FOR
SYMPTOMS

INCREASING NUMBERS
20,000 children under
the age of 15 have
type 1 diabetes in the
UK. Another 2,000 are
diagnosed every year
PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Know the signs

Question: What was the experience of one mother when her son suddenly became ill with type 1 diabetes?

Answer: The initial shock and surprise were challenging, but now the main concern is to raise awareness among other parents about the condition, and its quick onset

Finley was 13 days past his fifth birthday when he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, explains his mother, Stevie. "He'd been noticeably unwell at his birthday party, needing to be carried around and unable to play with his friends. He then caught a tummy bug and became incredibly thirsty, wetting himself at night and during the day."

Finley quickly deteriorated. "Finley lost so much weight he was skin and bones - I booked an appointment at our GP for the following Monday. That Friday night, however, he began to have severe breathing problems. The out-of-hours doctor tested Finley's urine and sent us straight to hospital."

In hospital, they discovered that Finley had a blood glucose reading too high to measure - and was extremely ill. "I was horrified when the nurse told me that, if we'd waited until Monday, he might have died," recalls Stevie. "Finley stayed in hospital for five days and we began the terrible task of learning how to be his medical team: to inject him with lifesaving insulin four times a day and to prick his little fingers to check his blood glucose levels."

Type 1 diabetes can develop at any age but usually appears before the age of 40, and especially in childhood, according to Diabetes UK; type 1 diabetes accounts for between 5 and 15 per cent of all people with diabetes.

The worst thing about living with type 1 diabetes is "causing Finley pain, every single day, just to keep him alive," says Stevie. For Finley, even childhood bugs can mean a hospital stay or blood glucose tests throughout the night: "On those nights I'm too scared to sleep in case his blood glucose drops and he ends up unconscious or worse." Stevie is adamant that other parents know the dangers and implications of type 1 diabetes, and about its rapid onset. "I want people to know about type 1 diabetes so that they seek early treatment," she says.

CASE STUDY PROVIDED BY THE JDRF

Be aware of the signs

Question: What is diabetes, and how can it affect your child?

Answer: There are thousands of children with diabetes in the UK - with potential complications including heart and kidney disease, so good management is vital

SHOWCASE

There are 20,000 children under the age of 15 with type 1 diabetes in the UK, with another 2,000 children diagnosed every year, according to the health charity Diabetes UK. Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented and is always treated with insulin - either by injection or insulin pump.

It's also estimated that as many as 1,400 children may have type 2 diabetes - a condition that in the past only affected adults. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body can still make some insulin, but not enough, or when the insulin that is produced does not work properly (known as insulin resistance).

Libby Dowling, care advisor at Diabetes UK, says that parents should look out for the following symptoms: passing urine more often (especially at night), increased thirst,



"We must provide children and young people who have diabetes with all the necessary help and support"

Libby Dowling
care advisor, Diabetes UK

extreme tiredness, unexplained weight loss, thrush or genital itching and blurred vision. With type 1 diabetes, the signs and symptoms are usually obvious and develop quickly, typically over a few weeks - though

the symptoms are quickly relieved once the diabetes is under control.

The management of diabetes in children and young people can be particularly complex, says Libby. "Adolescence is a notoriously diffi-

cult time to achieve good diabetes control as hormonal changes can affect blood glucose levels," she points out. "And yet it's especially crucial, because poor diabetes control at a young age increases the risk of developing the serious complications of diabetes such as amputation and stroke later in life."

Many diabetes campaigners believe that there are unacceptable variations in the level of support to help children and young people manage their diabetes at school and in their access to vital healthcare - the Diabetes UK Children's Charter aims to change this.

"Coping with a condition like diabetes as a child or a young person is a great challenge and many struggle with their diabetes management," says Dowling. "We must provide children and young people who have diabetes with all the necessary help and support so they can manage their condition effectively and avoid developing the serious complications of diabetes in the future."

EMILY DAVIES

info.uk@mediaplanet.com

FACTS ABOUT JUVENILE DIABETES

Type 1 diabetes occurs when no insulin is produced by the body because the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas have been destroyed. Nobody knows for sure why these cells have been damaged but the most likely cause is the body having an abnormal reaction to the insulin-producing cells, meaning that the body cannot regulate blood-glucose levels on its own

When blood-glucose levels are too high the body will attempt to remove the excess glucose from the blood in any way it can.

The common symptoms are:

- More frequent urination
- Thirst
- Tiredness
- Weight loss
- Ketones

SOURCE: JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION/
DIABETES UK



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The EarlyBird Diabetes Study – pioneering UK research.

Diabetes is often divided into childhood type (rare) and adult types (more common). Some years ago, however, the author proposed that, rather than type 1 and type 2, diabetes might in fact be one and the same. The only difference, so the 'accelerator hypothesis' argues (Google it for more detail), is tempo – the process goes faster for genetic reasons in some people, and ends up with diabetes in childhood, while in others it goes more slowly so that diabetes only emerges in adulthood. 'Fast' and 'slow' diabetes might be better terms.

The concept is important, because in just one generation some remarkable changes have occurred. Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes are now three to four times more common than they were, and type 2 diabetes – thought of a short time ago as a disease of middle life and beyond, is now presenting in children. Type 1, meanwhile, is most common in the under 5's where it used to be a disorder of puberty. Why?

The EarlyBird study was set up 10 years ago to monitor the childhoods of 300 healthy children to help find out why. The most likely driver for both kinds of diabetes, it seems, is weight gain, and there are now a lot of research studies in children with diabetes that now corroborate the claim. The important questions relate to the weight gain – who, when and why?

EarlyBird has turned up a lot of novel evidence that challenges some of the beliefs and assumptions that are deeply engrained in the public mind. As a result, focus is switching from under-activity in school children to over-consumption in infants. The problem appears to be largely confined to the same sex offspring of obese parents, and physical activity appears to be neither cause nor cure. The whole story is told in lay language on the trust's website – www.earlybirddiabetes.org, where more information on diabetes, and how you can help the research effort, can be found.

What we don't want to tell Finley
or the other 25,000 children in the UK who have type 1 diabetes.



Finley's intensive regime of multiple daily insulin injections and finger-prick blood tests keeps him alive.

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Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation funds research to cure, treat and prevent type 1 diabetes and its complications. It's just a matter of time and money.

Children who grow up with type 1 diabetes can go on to develop problems with their heart and kidneys. They could even go blind or have to have limbs amputated.

You can help by making a donation today. Just £10 will help fund 10 minutes of vital research. £60 will help fund an hour.

Type 1 diabetes reduces life expectancy by about 20 years. And sadly there is currently no cure for the condition.

To donate now visit www.jdrf.org.uk/finley

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PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT

Dr Mitzi Waltz is the author of several books on autism and other neuropsychiatric conditions, and she is also the parent of a young adult with autism. She explains how she meets the different and wide-ranging challenges, both professionally and personally

The secret of progress

As the parent of a young adult with autism, my experiences have probably influenced my approach to working with autism professionals and doing research.

I made all of the usual mistakes, and experienced a near-total lack of support for most of my son's life, so I have a deep, personal understanding of why a different approach is so needed by parents, carers, and teachers.

Through my work I have also had the opportunity to learn from students and colleagues who are themselves on the autism spectrum. The needs of parents, carers and teachers and those of people with autism are sometimes in conflict, so their perspective is invaluable.

There's no one right solution, but the one that's right for you needs to start with accepting the child as a whole, unique person.

Probably the biggest mistake we tend to make is to constantly measure the child with a disability or difference against some mythical ideal. We should, of course, retain high expectations and set goals that help

us to meet them, but when it comes to teaching, behaviour management and communication, we need to use very different methods to support the child to reach these.

Some challenges can be anticipated, although there are always those little unwanted surprises, like additional health difficulties, that may complicate things further. To do a good job of planning for the things that can be expected - such as difficulties with transitioning to school, between schools and to adult life - families need training and support from professionals who understand person-centred planning and have knowledge of the child's condition. We also need access to services that help us minimise and get through challenging times, such as sufficient respite care and training on how to handle behavioural difficulties properly.

There has been a great deal of progress in how we work with both groups during my lifetime. We have developed much better ways to evaluate and teach children. We have developed alternative communication systems for children who are non-verbal, which is an essential step for mutual understanding. There is

PROGRESS

'We have developed much better ways to evaluate and teach children'



Dr Mitzi Waltz
Author

a lot more information about how to manage challenging behaviour available today too, which means that today there is no reason for disabled children to have the experiences of restraint and force that were so common not that long ago (although unfortunately training is not universally available, so incidents still occur). We also have much greater understanding of the sensory and perceptual differences that affect children with autism.

The methods that are successful for working with children who have autism are generally also helpful with children who have learning disabilities - neither label should ever be seen as a diagnosis of hopelessness.

The experience of parents who have a child with a disability can be very isolating. Families would be so much happier if their friends and neighbours knew how they could help, even if it's just taking the time to ask about how they work with their child or assisting with a small practical task such as volunteering to babysit for an hour. All too often, the only people you feel you can ask for help are busy professionals. Awareness is important, but acceptance may be more so.

3

DR MITZI WALTZ'S TIPS

Learn as much as you can about your child

1 Never assume that general descriptions of children with the same label will give you understanding. You have to really enter into your child's world, find out what makes him or her tick, and think through how you can use this information to help your child develop.

Seek out allies

2 Don't be embarrassed to ask friends, relatives, neighbours and people in the community to understand and to help. Another thing that's very helpful is meeting adults who are living with the same condition. This can help you let go of some of the fear about what will become of your child. Often people have outdated assumptions - I still see references to autistic children being institutionalised and 'rocking in the corner of some back ward', when this is not how even the most severely autistic adults live in Britain today.

Take a look around

3 Visit the places where adults who were once similar to your child live, work and socialise. You may be pleasantly surprised! If you don't like some of what you see, consider how things you can do now might ensure a better life for your child when they reach adulthood.

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- Inclusion and Special Education Needs Pathway

If you are a special educational needs co-ordinator or a classroom teacher working with children with special educational needs and disabilities, this course will enable you to develop your knowledge and understanding of pupils' learning difficulties and explore a range of approaches for addressing their individual needs.

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* Reference: Loughborough University, 21st International Tech Conference on the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles, 2009 Stuttgart ** 2005 BRITAX study