

AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All

AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All is a series of handouts under the AMERICAN FAMILY National Outreach Campaign's umbrella slogan: **AMERICAN FAMILY – Getting Healthy Together!** With the exception of this introduction, all handouts are directed to families as the primary audience. Your station may use these handouts in conjunction with your AMERICAN FAMILY Health Fair, as part of an annual family day, in parent/caregiver workshops, or at screening events. You may also use the handouts to support your station's participation in local health fairs, conferences, street and shopping mall events, and festivals.

The purpose of this AMERICAN FAMILY module is to encourage families to enjoy physical activities, whether together, individually, or as part of family or neighborhood events. As noted in the **Physical Activity Fact Sheet** created by the National Latina Health Network, "Physical activity is necessary to maintain a healthy body and to prevent the onset of chronic diseases. Physical activity can also be used to control obesity, which has become an overwhelming epidemic in the Latino community in the past 20 years." (For this Fact Sheet, see IV. Reproducible Fact Sheets in Section Two of this Station Readiness Notebook.)

We've designed the activities and information to highlight the family and intergenerational aspects of the AMERICAN FAMILY series. Grandparents, parents, children, and other extended family members can have fun together ... and help one another to set and follow through on fitness goals. Together, they can choose healthier foods and become physically active to shed unwanted pounds.

Since walking is something most people can do and that families can do together, we've included **Walking ... A Step in the Right Direction**, which is part of the National Diabetes Education Program's Small Steps, Big Rewards GAME PLAN toolkit. In its preface to the toolkit, NDEP states: "The risk is great. The goals are important. The changes are modest. The action steps are clear." We hope you'll convey this message to children and families in your AMERICAN FAMILY outreach. *Please Note: Although this primer was developed as a resource tool for use by public television stations, any community based organization will find it contains useful information and can be easily adapted to fit your needs.*

Here are the handouts in this module:

- **Getting Started** encourages families to enjoy a healthier lifestyle, including being physically active. It offers some "start-up" tips.
- **Fun Activities to Enjoy with Your Family** suggests enjoyable activities for families to do together, including a family walking program and information on measuring your heart rate and your target heart range during activity.
- **Walking ... A Step in the Right Direction** provides guidelines for starting a walking program. This information is drawn directly from the National Diabetes Education Program's GAME PLAN toolkit. This should also be distributed with Fun Activities to Enjoy with your Family. (See preceding bullet.)
- **AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All Event** offers step-by-step suggestions on involving an extended family or neighborhood group in conducting a fitness fun day. It

includes sample games and activities, both competitive and non-competitive, and an AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All Certificate.

- **My AMERICAN FAMILY Healthy Family Promise**, which is designed to engage young children and their families, provides a place for a family photo and asks each member of the family to write down his/her promise to live a healthier lifestyle. Station staff may take a Polaroid photo of the family and tape it to the Promise or crayons/markers may be available for children to draw a picture of their family. The family is encouraged to complete the Promise together.
- **Pathways to a Healthy Heart** offers a way for families to monitor important health measures such as cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight. The handout suggests that families record these measures on a regular basis.
- **1-866-SU-FAMILIA** (1-866-783-2645) Bilingual Flyer invites families to call the National Alliance for Hispanic Health for information on health topics and referrals to local health care providers. Bilingual health information specialists are available and the service is confidential.

**Major funding for the AMERICAN FAMILY television series is provided by
Johnson & Johnson, the American Legacy Foundation,
the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS.**

AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All: Getting Started

Watch AMERICAN FAMILY on PBS!

AMERICAN FAMILY is everyone's family. The 13-part second season, which premieres on PBS Sunday, April 4, 2004, is filled with the warmth and humor that characterized the first season of AMERICAN FAMILY, casting the Gonzalez story against a broader canvas and capturing the epic sweep of one family's quest for the American dream. Created by Academy Award® nominee Gregory Nava to be the first Latino drama to air on broadcast television, the series boasts an all-star cast led by the family's patriarch played by Edward James Olmos, and also includes Esai Morales, Raquel Welch, Constance Marie, Yancey Arias, Jesse Borrego, and special appearances by Sonia Braga.

AMERICAN FAMILY travels deep into the past of the Gonzalez family who in 1917, during the Mexican Revolution, came to the United States in search of the promise of a better life. Juxtaposed against modern-day events of 2003, the story follows eldest son Conrado, an Army doctor, on the front lines of the Iraqi War. The everyday life of the Gonzalez family plays out against these world-shaping events both past and present, intertwining the stories until they reach a fateful climax that will change the lives of the Gonzalez family forever.

Getting Started

The AMERICAN FAMILY National Outreach Campaign encourages you to celebrate your family and get healthy together. Your family's healthy lifestyle includes being physically active as well as eating the right foods. Physical activity helps you improve the health of your heart and lungs and prevent certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis. It will help your family members, including children, manage their weight and avoid the risks that result from obesity. Even better, it's a fun way to spend time with your family. Thirty minutes of physical activity a day (60 minutes for children), five times a week, can greatly improve the health of your family and bring you closer together.

Here are some tips to help you get started:

Note: Experts advise that people with chronic diseases, such as a heart condition, arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure, should talk to their doctor about what types and amounts of physical activity are appropriate. If you have a chronic disease and have not already done so, talk to your doctor before beginning a new physical activity program. – *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity*

Involve your family. Being physically active with family members can help all of you stay committed to a healthy lifestyle as well as make it more fun.

Start out slowly, especially if you've been inactive for a long period of time, and gradually increase the amount of time and intensity of your activity.

Set achievable goals. Choose a goal that is easy to reach in a short time period and that will be personally satisfying to you; write it down. Once you've achieved some short-term goals, you'll have a better understanding of meaningful long-term goals.

Choose something you like to do. You're more likely to continue activities that you enjoy. Try different activities to find out what works best for you, whether it's walking, swimming, gardening, dancing, or cycling.

Manage your weight and encourage healthy weight in your children. Set a good example for your children by practicing healthy eating habits and enjoying regular physical activities together.

Find a time of day that works for you and your family. Parents, children, and other family members have different demands on their time. Decide together what days of the week and times are convenient for all of you to enjoy physical activities such as walking, cycling, and playing games.

Find out what's available in your community. Many communities have walking trails or bicycle paths. Organized sports are available for children.

Take care of yourself. Wear comfortable clothes and shoes and drink plenty of water. Monitor how you feel. Slow down or rest when you feel the need.

Be patient and don't get discouraged. It can take weeks or months before you notice some of the changes from regular physical activity. Some changes may be more energy, feeling less stress, weight loss, greater strength and flexibility, as well as health benefits.

Keep informed. You'll find new articles on physical fitness and healthy eating in your favorite magazines and on the Internet. New reports on studies related to disease can also help you to learn and practice prevention.

Make a commitment to a lifetime of physical fitness. Physical fitness helps us to look, feel, and do our best.

Remember that the best exercise is one that you will do!

Resources

American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/

National Diabetes Education Program: <http://ndep.nih.gov>

National Latina Health Network: www.nationallatinahealthnetwork.com

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports: www.fitness.gov

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AMERICAN FAMILY – Getting Healthy Together!

Fun Activities to Enjoy with Your Family

Here are some fun activities all family members – from children to grandparents – can enjoy doing together. Try all of them!

Note: Experts advise that people with chronic diseases, such as a heart condition, arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure, should talk to their doctor about what types and amounts of physical activity are appropriate. If you have a chronic disease and have not already done so, talk to your doctor before beginning a new physical activity program. – *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity*

Activity #1: Family Walking Program

Walking is one of the easiest ways to be physically active. Use the handout **Walking ... A Step in the Right Direction** developed by the National Diabetes Education Program. You'll find out why walking is good for you as well as how to begin a walking program.

Some more ideas include:

- Choose a time when all family members can enjoy a walk together. Try to walk at the same time so it becomes a regular part of your lifestyle.
- Spark your children's interest by challenging them to look for items with different colors, or objects with a variety of textures (smooth, spongy, rough) or shapes (round, square). Look for signs that an animal or another person has walked along the path.
- Vary your rate and intensity of walking. Start out slowly to warm up. Increase your pace, walking vigorously (or jogging, if you wish), then return to a moderate pace. Walking up steps or uphill can increase the intensity.
- When you go to a shopping mall, spend 15 minutes walking briskly around the mall before you begin shopping.
- Find out whether your community has special walking or hiking trails. If they don't, create your own. Try different routes to add interest.

Activity #2: Jump for Joy

Jumping rope is a great way to build muscle, strengthen your heart, and even shed unwanted pounds while having fun. The rope(s) should have handles and should be heavy enough to swing well. To check for correct length, step on the middle of the rope with one foot then raise the handles at your sides. The handles should reach your armpits. Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes. Try some of the following jump rope activities and create a few of your own. Be sure to warm up your muscles before jumping by walking briskly for five minutes.

- Take turns timing each other with a stopwatch or the second hand on a watch. Jump for one minute then rest for 30 seconds. On your first day of jumping, repeat this jump-and-rest cycle five times. Record each family member's jump rope session in a notebook. A day or two later, increase your jumping time by 30 seconds. Don't forget to rest in between cycles and record your jumping time. Each day that you jump rope, continue to add 30 seconds to the jump cycle until you're able to jump for sustained periods without feeling fatigued.
- Instead of jumping in one place, establish a path for "travel jumping." Travel jumping is accomplished by keeping one foot out in front of the other. As you step with the leading foot, hop forward a bit along the jumping path. Once you know how to travel jump, you can race another

family member. Increase your jumping time or distance gradually over a period of days and weeks.

- Using a long jump rope, choose two family members to turn the rope as other family members take turns jumping. Let each family member jump ten times. Change the rope turners to give everyone a chance. The next time it's your turn, try to jump 15 times. Increase your jumping goal by five jumps each time you have a turn.
- Jump rope to the music of your favorite CD, tape, or radio station. Rest or change jumpers when the music stops.

Activity #3: Family Dance Night

As a family, create your own dance(s) and perform to some of your favorite tunes. Each family member should choose a favorite piece of music. For each selection, try one or more of the following activities.

- When your favorite music is played, it's your turn to be the leader. Dance free form, creating moves for your family members to copy. Or you might want to develop a pattern of three or four different moves and repeat those moves in a specific order, creating a routine for your piece of music. Your family should copy your routine.
- For each piece of music, let every family member create one dance move. Repeat each move for eight counts then begin the sequence of moves again.
- To work the upper body separately, sit in chairs and let one family member create arm movements for others to copy. Or take turns demonstrating new arm movements. Repeat all of those movements in order, creating an upper body dance routine.
- Make up a dance that requires you, at some point, to do any of the following:
 - Touch the floor with your hands
 - Stretch from side to side
 - Kick your legs up
 - Balance on your tip toes
 - Dance with a prop such as a broomstick
 - Keep a ball or balloon afloat as you dance
 - Hold a partner's hand
 - Wave a scarf around
- *Freeze*: Begin playing music, everyone moves and dances until the music stops then they must "freeze" in whatever position they happen to be.

Activity #4: Obstacle Course

As a family, create an obstacle course – a path of tasks to perform – that requires the use of a variety of muscles. Use a stopwatch or the second hand on a wristwatch to time each person's progress through the course. Try to beat your own time on your next run. Or create two identical courses and hold team or individual races.

Use a combination of the ideas below, together with obstacles that already exist in your environment such as holes to jump over, bars to swing on, or a low fence to climb, to create a path of physical tasks that's right for your family. Over a period of days and weeks, increase the length and/or difficulty of the course according to family members' abilities.

Some possibilities:

- A course for running marked by objects such as rocks, bricks, or boards
- A hopscotch area
- A path of hula-hoops for jumping
- A balance beam—a two-by-four balanced on three bricks, one at each end and one in the middle
- A padded or grassy area for somersaults or push ups
- A tree or pole to skip around

Activity #5: Favorite Traditional Game

Grandparents and parents should describe the traditional games they played as children. Focus only on games where you are physically active. Decide as a family which game you want to play. Figure out the materials you will need ... and make them or gather them. Make sure everyone understands the rules. Choose a different game on another day. Children can teach parents/grandparents their favorite action games, too!

Activity #6: Healthy Habits Contest

Forming healthy habits can be more fun if you and your family members view the new habits as an opportunity to engage in some friendly competition. You may create a chart (see below) to record individual or team progress.

- Divide the family into two teams or compete as individuals.
- As a family, decide how participants can earn points, i.e., one point for walking around the block; two points for walking around the block twice; three points for drinking water instead of soda; three points for snacking on carrot sticks instead of chips.
- Choose a prize that supports healthy habits and will motivate all family members to participate. For example, the losing team/individual prepares healthy afternoon snacks for winners.
- Tailor the point system to meet your family's health needs and preferences. For example, if late-night snacking is a habit your family would like to change, award points for having a cup of fresh fruit instead of ice cream. Make sure substitute food choices include options that every family member enjoys.
- Begin with attainable goals and change the point system gradually as family members agree they are ready to make additional modifications or substitutions.
- Congratulate each other along the way as you see family members making healthy choices.
- At the end of each week, tally points to determine the winning team or individual.

Create a Contest Chart to record family/individual points

After you've decided on a point system and a prize, you may want to create a chart for recording team or individual progress. Decorate the border of a large poster board with pictures of healthy foods and/or people involved in exercise. Some possibilities for charting points:

- List each team member's name on the chart – or use a favorite photo of each person. Paste stars or stickers on the chart next to the names as team members earn points.
- Choose team names. Write the team names at the top of the chart and draw a line down the middle to separate the two teams. Keep track of points using stickers or drawing a simple symbol of health such as an apple for each point earned.

Activity #7: Getting a Beat on Fitness

One way to gauge the effect of physical activity on your body is to determine your heart rate – how fast your heart beats. Sit quietly for 5 minutes, then measure and record your **resting heart rate**. The easiest way is to do this is to take your pulse at your wrist, just below your thumb using the index and middle fingers of the opposite hand. Count the number of beats you feel for 15 seconds. (You may want to ask a family member to monitor the 15 seconds for you, using a stopwatch or second hand.) Multiply that number by four to get your heart rate (the number of beats per minute).

Keep in mind that resting heart rates will vary among family members, depending on age, fitness level, and gender. Children have higher heart rates than adults. Older adults often have slower heart rates. Women tend to have slightly higher heart rates than men.

Once you've determined resting heart rates for all family members, try some of the following activities to determine the effect of physical activity on your heart.

- After 5 minutes of your favorite activity, check your heart rate and compare it with that of your resting heart rate.
- Check and record your heart rate after 5 minutes of different activities: walking, jumping, skipping, jogging, running, dancing.
- After you finish, continue to check your heart rate to determine how quickly your body returns to its resting heart rate. How quickly your body recovers is another measure of your fitness.
- You can get the most out of any physical activity you do by working in your **target heart rate range**. In this range, you'll improve your cardiovascular fitness and burn fat. You can determine your **target heart rate** by using the following formula. You'll need to know your resting heart rate (described above). *Reference: Fitness Fundamentals, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.*
 - Determine your **maximum heart rate** by subtracting your age from 220.
 $220 - \text{_____}(\text{age}) = \text{_____}$
 Example: $220 - 40(\text{age}) = \mathbf{180}$ (maximum heart rate)
 - Now, subtract your resting heart rate.
 $\text{Maximum heart rate} - \text{resting heart rate} = \text{_____}(\text{a})$
 Example: $180 - \mathbf{60} = 120$
 - Your optimum target heart range is an intensity level of 60 to 80 percent.
 - Multiply the number on line (a) by .60 and add your resting heart rate. _____
 Example: $120 \times .60 + 60 = 132$
 - Now, multiply the number on line (a) by .80 and add your resting heart rate.

 Example: $120 \times .80 + 60 = 156$
 - In this example, for maximum benefit at 40 years of age, you want to work out with a heart rate between 132 and 156.
 - If you are working at lower levels of intensity, your heart rate will be below these numbers.
 - Try several different activities for 5 minutes each and see which of them allows you to work out at your **target heart rate**.

After enjoying the fun activities, you're probably ready for a snack! Gather everyone together and head for the kitchen. Remember to eat in moderation.

“Cooking” Up Healthy Snacks

Everyone in the family can help to prepare the following snacks. Most of the snacks can also be placed in plastic bags and stored in the refrigerator for later use; some can be frozen. Breaking old eating habits is easier if healthy food choices are available when hunger strikes. Some possibilities:

- Wash and cut up your family's favorite raw vegetables. To make these snacks more appealing to children, allow them to create pictures on napkins using the vegetables before eating, e.g., cherry tomato eyes, a carrot circle nose, a bell pepper smile. Encourage them to make spiders, monsters, dinosaurs, or whichever creatures interest them. Children can play the parts of heroes by gobbling up the creatures before they have a chance to harm anyone. Experiment with vegetables that may be unfamiliar to your children such as jicama, snow peas, or raw peas from a pod. (The cut-up vegetables can be stored in plastic bags in the refrigerator so they are available during the day.)
- Wash strawberries, grapes, strips of mango, or other favorite fruits. Cut larger fruits in bite-sized pieces for young children. (These can be frozen for later use.)
- Peel some bananas and cut them in half. Place them in a plastic freezer bag, seal, and leave in the freezer until they are frozen. Remove from the freezer two minutes before eating. (Overly

ripe bananas that you might otherwise discard lose some of their strong flavor when frozen.) This might be served as a substitute for ice cream.

- As a variation, wet the bananas and roll them in unsweetened coconut flakes or rolled oats.
- As a refreshing soda substitute, keep a pitcher of ice water in the refrigerator. When you pour a glass, add a few squeezes of lemon, lime, orange, or strawberry. Drinking this through twisted or flex straws can make flavored water more enticing for young children.
- Cut a fat zucchini into quarter-inch slices. Use small cookie cutters to cut shapes from the slices. These can be eaten raw or steamed. Remind children that the borders that are left are edible too.
- Make a nutritious dip for the vegetable snacks:
 - *Dill dip* – Combine the following ingredients in a blender until smooth: ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese, ½ cup plain non-fat yogurt, 2 chopped green onions, and 1 teaspoon fresh dill.
 - *Bean dip* – Use a can of black beans, vegetarian refried beans or a cup of your favorite cooked beans. Add ¼ cup water and blend until smooth in blender. (Add more water gradually, if necessary.) Scoop the blended beans into a bowl. Add ½ chopped onion, 2 chopped tomatoes, some hot pepper sauce to taste, and mix thoroughly.
 - *Salsa* – Make your family's favorite salsa recipe, or try the following: Skewer a tomato and roast over an open flame until the skin is charred. Puree the entire tomato with skin in a blender. In a bowl combine pureed tomato with 2 tablespoons minced onion, ½ minced Serrano or jalapeño chili, 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro, and 1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice. Let salsa stand for at least 15 minutes before serving. (*Note: Avoid touching your eyes when handling jalapeño to avoid stinging.*)

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Walking ... A Step in the Right Direction

Developed by the National Diabetes Education Program

Why walk?

Walking is one of the easiest ways to be physically active. You can do it almost anywhere and at any time. Walking is also inexpensive. All you need is a pair of shoes with sturdy heel support. Walking will:

- Give you more energy.
- Help you to relax.
- Reduce stress.
- Help you sleep better.
- Tone your muscles.
- Help control your appetite.
- Increase the number of calories your body uses.
- Help prevent diabetes.

For all of these reasons, people have started walking programs. If you would like to start your own program, read and follow the information here.

Is it okay for me to walk?

Answer the following questions before you begin a walking program.

- Has your health care provider ever told you that you have heart trouble?
- When you are physically active, do you have pains in your chest or on your left side (neck, shoulder, or arm)?
- Do you feel extremely breathless after you have been physically active?
- Has your health care provider told you that you have high blood pressure?
- Has your health care provider told you that you have bone or joint problems, like arthritis, that could get worse if you are physically active?
- Are you over 50 years old and not used to a lot of physical activity?
- Do you have a health problem or physical reason not mentioned here that might keep you from starting a walking program?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, please check with your health care provider before starting a walking program.

How do I start a walking program?

Make time in your busy schedule to follow a walking program that works for you. Consider the following:

- Choose a safe place to walk. Find a partner or group of people to walk with you. Your walking partner(s) should be able to walk with you on the same schedule and at the same pace.
- Wear shoes with thick flexible soles that will cushion your feet and absorb shock. Wear clothes that will keep you dry and comfortable.
- Think of your walk in three parts. Walk slowly for 5 minutes. Increase your speed for the next 5 minutes. Finally, to cool down, walk slowly again for 5 minutes.
- Try to walk at least five times per week. Add 2 to 3 minutes per week to the fast walk. If you walk less than three times per week, increase the fast walk more slowly.

- To avoid stiff or sore muscles or joints, start gradually. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further, and walking for longer periods of time.

How Do I Warm Up?

Before you start to walk, do the following stretches. Remember not to bounce when you stretch. Perform slow movements and stretch only as far as you feel comfortable.

- **Side Reaches**
Reach one arm over your head and lean to your side from your waist. Keep your hips steady and your shoulders straight. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat on the other side.
- **Knee Pull**
Lean your back against a wall. Keep your head, hips, and feet in a straight line. Pull one knee to your chest, hold for 10 seconds, then repeat with the other leg.
- **Wall Push**
Lean your hands on a wall with your feet about 3 to 4 feet away from the wall. Move one foot forward, bending the knee toward the wall. Keep your back leg straight. Both feet are flat with your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold for 10 seconds and change your leg positions. This stretches the calf muscle of your back leg.
- **Leg Curl**
Pull your right foot to your buttocks with your right hand. Keep your knee pointing straight to the ground. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat with your left foot and hand. Hold on to a wall with your opposite hand for support.

Take the first step.

Walking the right way is very important:

- Walk with your chin up and your shoulders held slightly back.
- Walk so that the heel of your foot touches the ground first. Roll your weight forward.
- Walk with your toes pointed forward.
- Swing your arms as you walk.

Build up to 30 minutes of brisk walking five days a week. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further, and walking for longer periods of time.

	Warm Up Time	Fast Walk Time	Cool Down Time	Total Time
Week 1	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 5 min	walk slowly 5 min	15 minutes
Week 2	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 8 min	walk slowly 5 min	18 minutes
Week 3	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 11 min	walk slowly 5 min	21 minutes
Week 4	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 14 min	walk slowly 5 min	24 minutes
Week 5	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 17 min	walk slowly 5 min	27 minutes
Week 6	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 20 min	walk slowly 5 min	30 minutes
Week 7	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 23 min	walk slowly 5 min	33 minutes
Week 8	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 26 min	walk slowly 5 min	36 minutes
Week 9+	walk slowly 5 min	walk briskly 30 min	walk slowly 5 min	40 minutes

Daily Physical Activity

Keep track of your physical activity on a chart. Make sure you are physically active for at least 30 minutes a day for five days per week. The more often you are physically active, the more it will become part of your routine.

MY DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHART

Date	Type of Activity	Minutes

Walking ... A Step in the Right Direction is part of the **Small Steps, Big Rewards GAME PLAN** toolkit developed by the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP). It is based on the lifestyle modification strategies used in the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. The Walking section was adapted from a brochure produced by the Weight-Control Information Network. These may be reproduced without permission and shared with others. Find the complete toolkit on NDEP's Web site:
<http://ndep.nih.gov/materials/pubs/DPP/GPToolkit.pdf>

AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All Event

An AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All event is a great way for your family, social group, neighborhood, or club to have fun while improving everyone's health and fitness. Choose a variety of activities that can engage people of all ages and fitness levels. Here are some suggestions to help you get started.

- **Find a group** – Decide who will participate in your AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All event. This can be a fun activity for youth groups, religious groups, family reunions, neighborhood block parties, and children's birthday parties. You may want to form a small planning group to help make decisions and share some responsibilities.
- **Pick a date and time** – If you're considering an event for a larger group (e.g., family reunion, youth organization), set a date that provides sufficient time for planning as well as alerting guests. One month is generally enough time.

Plan at least two to three hours for your AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All event. When choosing a time, be sure to keep the weather in mind. If your event will take place in the summer, you may want to avoid the hours when the sun is at its strongest (between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.). Depending on where you live, these hours may work to your advantage in the spring and fall.

- **Pick a place** – When deciding where to hold your event, choose a venue that has a large, open space. A park with a large, grassy area works well. If you're having a neighborhood block party, you may want to block off a portion of your street for the games. Recreation rooms at community centers and places of worship may offer additional places.
- **Invite participants** – Once you've decided on the details of your AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All event, the next step is to invite participants. You may want to create a flyer and send it to family members, attach it to neighbors' doors, or distribute it at your child's youth group.
- **Choose your activities** – You'll find unlimited ideas for games and activities you can do during your AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All event. Some games you may remember from your childhood include relay races, potato sack races, three-legged runs, hula-hoop contests, and dance contests. Some of these are described in the suggested Games and Activities. Decide how many activities you'll need based on the time of your event and the number of participants.
- **Provide water and healthy snacks** – Being physically active makes people thirsty and hungry. Be sure to have lots of water available so that participants don't become dehydrated. A good idea is to ask participants to bring their own bottled water or energy or sports drinks.

Offer healthy snacks as part of your event. Avoid salty and sweet snacks such as chips and candy. Instead, offer snacks like apples, bananas, carrots, celery, and other fruits and vegetables that don't get too messy. Other choices include dried fruits such as raisins, unsalted pretzels, popcorn (without salt or butter), or baked crackers. You can also ask participants to provide some of the snacks and drinks.

- **Certificate** – At the end of the event, give each participant an AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun For All certificate (use template provided). If you wish, provide copies of the activities so families can enjoy them together at another time. Encourage the children to hang their certificates on the refrigerator door or post them in their bedrooms to remind them of how fitness can be fun for the entire family.
- **Let the games begin!**

Watch AMERICAN FAMILY on PBS!

AMERICAN FAMILY is everyone's family. The 13-part second season, which premieres on PBS Sunday, April 4, 2004, is filled with the warmth and humor that characterized the first season of AMERICAN FAMILY, casting the Gonzalez story against a broader canvas and capturing the epic sweep of one family's quest for the American dream. Created by Academy Award® nominee Gregory Nava to be the first Latino drama to air on broadcast television, the series boasts an all-star cast led by the family's patriarch played by Edward James Olmos, and also includes Esai Morales, Raquel Welch, Constance Marie, Yancey Arias, Jesse Borrego, and special appearances by Sonia Braga.

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Games and Activities—Competitive

- **The Balance Challenge***

Balance is important in several different physical activities, but is often a difficult task to master. Ask participants to take the following two challenges and see who can stay balanced the longest.

One Leg Stand – Balance on one leg and hold the free leg behind you with the knee bent, holding your ankle in one hand. It may help to hold your other arm, inclined forward, above your head. Focus on a stationary object.

Standing Arch – Stand up straight with arms out to the side. Slowly arch the back looking at the sky.

- **Hula-Hoop Contest**

Using a hula-hoop, see how many hoop circles you can make. Standing with your feet apart, hold the hoop at hip height, and then bring it way over to one side as a wind up. As you let go of the hoop, rotate your hips in a circle. The winner is the person who can make the most circles before the hula-hoop falls to the ground. You can spice up the activity by adding a second hoop, or putting on some energetic music.

What You'll Need: At least one hula-hoop

- **Circle Jump***

Take a piece of chalk and draw eight medium-sized circles in a row. Stand at the end of the circles and throw a stone into the first circle. With your feet together, jump over it and into all the circles up and back except the circle with the stone. Next, pick up the stone and throw it into the second circle, jumping into every circle except the one with the stone in it. Continue with this pattern until you have thrown the stone into each circle. See who can complete all eight circles without falling out or missing a circle.

What You'll Need: Chalk and Small stones

- **A Through Z Exercises**

Create every letter in the alphabet using just human bodies. Encourage participants to stretch their bodies to create every letter by standing, sitting, or lying down. See who can create the most letters with their body.

- **Parachutes and Popcorn***

Create teams of at least four people. Each person holds a side and a corner of a sheet and stretches it tight. Place ping-pong or tennis balls in the center of the sheet. Shake little waves into the sheet causing the balls to pop up in the air like popcorn. Try to keep the balls “popping.” Don't let them jump off the sheet. Whichever team can keep the balls “popping” the longest wins the game.

What You'll Need: One old sheet per team and two or three ping-pong or tennis balls per team

- **Three-Legged Races**

Have each participant partner with another person. The game works best if the two people are approximately the same height. Tie the partners' inner legs together with a rope or old scarf (not too tight, but strong enough to keep the legs together) in order to form three “legs.” Line up each group of partners at a starting line. When the referee shouts, “Go,” each set of partners runs to the end of a marked course. The team who makes it to the finish line the fastest, with their legs still tied together, wins the race.

What You'll Need: Ropes or old scarves

- **Potato Sack Races**

Each participant will line up at the start of a course (similar to the one described in the Three-Legged Races). Each person steps inside a large potato sack – one person per sack. If you don't have a potato sack, try using a cloth laundry bag or large pillowcase. Participants should jump through the course. Whoever reaches the end first wins the race.

What You'll Need: Large pillowcases, cloth laundry bags, or potato sacks

Games and Activities—Non-competitive

- **Soccer Circle***

Inflate a balloon and knot the end. Have participants form a circle, standing close together (shoulder to shoulder). Participants gently kick the balloon around the circle, passing to each player down the line. After the balloon has been successfully circulated, everyone takes a giant step back and starts the process again. Keep playing until the balloon drifts out of the circle. You can vary this activity by bouncing the balloon with your knee rather than your foot.

What You'll Need: 9-inch round balloon

- **Hip-Hop Funk Dancing***

Put on some cool, hip-hop music and have participants do the following three dance moves.

The Butterfly – With feet in a wide stance, bring your knees in and out repeatedly. At the same time, with elbows bent, your arms follow the movement of your knees. This should look like a butterfly's wings opening and closing.

Running Man – This is an in-place running step with knees lifting high up in front. Arms are held out to the side; lift up slightly with each step.

Snake – With elbows bent, lead with your head to one side and follow the motion with the upper body (shoulders, chest, and waist) and return to the upright position. Repeat this with the other side of your body so your motions imitate a snake.

Or – just let everyone do his/her own dance moves!

What You'll Need: Cassette or CD player and hip-hop or funk dance music

* Activities with an asterisk are taken from Julia E. Sweet's *"365 Activities for Fitness, Food, and Fun for the Whole Family."* New York, NY: Contemporary Books, a Division of the McGraw-Hill Companies, 2001. Permission has been granted by the author.

Note: Experts advise that people with chronic diseases, such as a heart condition, arthritis, diabetes, or high blood pressure, should talk to their doctor about what types and amounts of physical activity are appropriate. If you have a chronic disease and have not already done so, talk to your doctor before beginning a new physical activity program. – *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition & Physical Activity*

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AMERICAN FAMILY National Outreach Campaign**

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Johnson & Johnson, the American Legacy Foundation,
the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS.**

AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun for All

Congratulations!

Participant's Name

For successfully participating in
AMERICAN FAMILY Fitness Fun For All
and for setting a life goal of fitness fun!

Signed

Date

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My AMERICAN FAMILY Healthy Family Promise

We, the _____ Family, promise to celebrate our love for each other by taking steps to achieve good health. We promise to eat healthy foods and participate in physical activities to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

PLACE FAMILY PHOTO HERE OR DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR FAMILY

- 1.** Write down a promise you can all do together, e.g., take a family walk together three times a week.

Our family will: _____

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- 2.** Write down a promise each family member will do on his/her own to live a healthier life. (Examples include: walk every day; participate in a sport [name the sport] at school or after school; take tap dancing lessons; ride my bike every day; drink water instead of soda; stop smoking; or eat fresh fruit every day.)

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

I will: _____

Signature of Family Member

AMERICAN FAMILY Pathways to a Healthy Heart

Family Name

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Use your Pathways to a Healthy Heart to keep track of your family's health: cholesterol, blood pressure, and weight for adults; and height and weight for children. By doing so, you'll be on your way to maintaining a healthy heart. Local health clinics, pharmacies, and doctor's offices are places you can go to measure your cholesterol, weight, and blood pressure. The chart provided allows you to record this information on a quarterly basis (every three months). Unless you are monitoring your cholesterol because it is too high (above 240 MG/DL) or borderline high (200 to 239 MG/DL), you may only need to check it once or twice a year. Find out what your health care provider recommends.

	Cholesterol	Blood Pressure	Weight
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Month 1 <i>(Example: March 2004)</i>			
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Adult Family Member	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Adult Family Member	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>
	Height	Weight	
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Child Family Member	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Child Family Member	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/> Child Family Member	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/>	
<hr style="width: 20%; margin-left: 0;"/>			

Month 4
(Example: June 2004)

Cholesterol

Blood Pressure

Weight

Adult Family Member

Adult Family Member

Height

Weight

Child Family Member

Child Family Member

Child Family Member

Month 7
(Example: September 2004)

Cholesterol

Blood Pressure

Weight

Adult Family Member

Adult Family Member

Height

Weight

Child Family Member

Child Family Member

Child Family Member

Month 10
(Example: December 2004)

Cholesterol

Blood Pressure

Weight

Adult Family Member

Adult Family Member

	Height	Weight
Child Family Member	_____	_____
Child Family Member	_____	_____
Child Family Member	_____	_____

Goals and Visions for a Healthy Heart

As you begin using your Pathways to a Healthy Heart, ask family members to write down their health goals or vision for life with a healthy heart. Be sure to write down your plan for reaching your health goal. Check in with one another to see what progress you've made in reaching your health goal.

Example:

Goal: Lose ten pounds before attending my high school reunion in six months.

Plan: Walk or jog for 30 minutes five times a week.

Adult Family Member

Name _____ Goal: _____

Plan: _____

Adult Family Member

Name _____ Goal: _____

Plan: _____

Child Family Member

Name _____ Goal: _____

Plan: _____

Child Family Member

Name _____ Goal: _____

Plan: _____

Child Family Member

Name _____ Goal: _____

Plan: _____



**Su Familia: The National Hispanic Family Health Helpline
1-866-Su-Familia (1-866-783-2645)**

Su Familia offers free reliable and confidential health information in Spanish and English. Call toll free Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Our bilingual health information specialists will provide you with basic health information on a wide range of health topics and can refer you to a health care provider in your community.

Su Familia is a program of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health and is made possible by support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Office of Minority Health.