



Help Children Listen to Their Body

The human body sends signals about what it needs to be healthy. Shivering in the cold, yawning when tired, and a growling stomach are just a few of the body signals children can learn to pay attention to.

Young children often ignore signals from their body. A child having a great time playing might not stop for water even though she feels hot and her mouth is dry. A child having a tasty treat may keep eating until she feels sick – even though her body signaled it was full.

When adults teach children to listen to signals from their body, children are more able to make healthy choices.

Tips to Help Children Learn To Listen to Their Body

- Teach your child that “listening to their body” helps them make healthy choices and feel great. Point out body signals when they occur - like shivering, sweating, and full tummy feelings.
- Let your child know you understand when they want to ignore body signals. For example, *“I know you really want to keep playing. But you are yawning and looking so tired. Your body is telling you it’s time to rest.”*
- Tell your child that some choices about responding to body signals are up to them, and some are up to you. For example, a child may be allowed to decide between a lighter or heavier coat in winter, but not about whether or not to wear shoes outside.
- Using sweets or desserts to reward children entices them to eat whether they feel hungry or not. Consider extra attention or a special activity to encourage positive behavior.

When caring adults teach children to listen to body signals, children learn to make healthy choices that can last a lifetime!

Eat Healthy ♦ Be Active ♦ Build a Bright Future

For more ideas and resources to develop children’s social-emotional skills and healthy habits visit AcornDreams.com, a service of Wingspan, LLC