

BLUE ZONES®

FAMILY CHECKLIST

The Blue Zones® Family Checklist contains a list of ways you can set up your home to promote healthy and happy children and families.



DIRECTIONS

1. Print and fill out the questionnaire with your family.
2. Add up your points to see your score.
3. Start making changes to your family environment based on the recommendations given. These changes don't have to be made all at once—pick the easier ones to start with and continue completing at least one item each week.
4. Complete this tool again in three months to see how many points you've gained and how much your rankings have improved!

Check off each item you and your family are currently doing, and add up the points to see how supportive your home is of a healthy environment.

	WE DO THIS NOW	POINTS
HAVE "FAMILY DINNER NIGHTS" THREE NIGHTS EACH WEEK		
How to do it: Take a look at the calendar with your family, and pick three nights a week to eat dinner together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Why do it? Adolescents who eat dinner with their family are 15% less likely to become obese. ¹ In addition, research shows that family meals positively influence family communication, development of healthy eating patterns in children, school performance, and the more often teens have dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink, or use drugs. ²		
HAVE BIKE HELMETS FOR MY CHILDREN		
How to do it: Buy a helmet and insist your child use it every time they ride their bike.	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Why do it? Wearing a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head injury in a crash by as much as 85%, and the risk for brain injury by as much as 88%. ³		
HAVE A CHILDREN'S BOOK LIBRARY		
How to do it: Create a starter library for your child. Add at least 10 new or used books from this New York Public Library recommendation list (http://kids.nypl.org/reading/recommended_favorites.cfm#21). Put all the books in one area of your child's bedroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Why do it? The presence of a home library encourages you and your children to read more often. Children should create this library with you, which improves their self-esteem and helps them see themselves as readers. ⁴		
THERE ARE NO TELEVISIONS OR VIDEOGAMES IN MY CHILDREN'S BEDROOMS		
How to do it: Remove the television and videogames from your children's bedrooms to avoid excessive use. The goal here is to nudge them away from screen time that detracts from potential physical activity and time with the family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
Why do it? People who watch too much TV are more likely to be overweight. Watching TV actually lowers metabolism so we burn fewer calories, and deprives us of spending our time more actively. The commercials often encourage us to eat junk food. Kids with a TV and videogames in their bedroom are 18% more likely to be (or become) obese and have lower grades. ⁵		

KIDS AND PARENTS TAKE THE BLUE ZONES CHALLENGE

How to do it: Go to the Blue Zones website (<http://www.bluezones.com/challenge>) and take the Blue Zones Challenge with your kids.

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Why do it? The Blue Zones Challenge is a four-week health and fitness program that empowers youth to take charge of their own health. The goal is for students to apply what they know and learn about healthy behaviors to their own lives.

CHILDREN WALK TO SCHOOL AS PART OF THE WALKING SCHOOL BUS INITIATIVE

How to do it: Contact your child's school or neighborhood school to find out if there is a Walking School Bus in your neighborhood, and volunteer to walk children to school as part of the initiative.

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Why do it? Walking to school is associated with higher overall physical activity throughout the day.⁶

TOTAL POINTS (60 possible):

TOTALS

50+ points: Blue Zones Family. You have set up your home to promote healthy and happy children and families. Can you get yourself all the way to scoring 60/60 points?

40 to 49: Almost There. You are well on your way to creating a healthy and happy home environment. What other changes are you going to make?

30 to 39: On Your Way. When you begin to pair many of these changes together, you'll start seeing improvements in your well-being. Which item is first on your list of changes? Get started on that right now.

Below 30: Just Getting Started. Everyone has to start somewhere. Begin the process by prioritizing the changes you want to make and start on them tomorrow.

REFERENCES

¹Taveras et al. "Family Dinner and Adolescent Overweight." *Obesity Research*. Vol. 13 No. 5 May 2005.

²Hamilton SK and J Hamilton Wilson. (2009). Family Mealtimes: Worth the Effort? *Infant, Child, & Adolescent Nutrition*. 1: 346.

³Thompson RS, Rivara FP, Thompson DC. A case-control study of the effectiveness of bicycle safety helmets. *N Engl J Med*. 1989; 320:1361-7.

⁴New York Times (July 8, 2010). The Medium is the Medium.

⁵<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/09/opinion/09brooks.html> (Accessed 8/30/11)

⁶Roberts DF, Foehr UG, Rideout V. (2005) "Generation M: media in the lives of 8-18 year-olds". *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 32, 1140-115.

⁷Cooper A, Page A, Foster L, Qahwaji D, et al. 2003. Commuting to school: Are children who walk more physically active? *Am J Prev Med*. 25(4):273-6.