

The Healthy Buzz



Fresh tips, tasty bites, and growing strong—together!

WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

One of the hardest parts of parenting today is the quiet pressure to do everything perfectly — perfect meals, perfect routines, perfect decisions.

If there's one thing I've learned as both a physician and a parent, it's this: real life rarely looks like the ideal version we imagine.

Some weeks you cook balanced meals at home. Other weeks you're eating in the car between practices, homework, and bedtime. Some days you feel confident in every decision you make for your child. Other days, you're simply doing your best to keep things moving forward. And that's not failure — that's life.

*Health isn't built on perfection. **It's built on patterns over time.***

What matters most is overall balance: nourishment most of the time, movement woven into daily life, thoughtful medical choices made with care, and space for rest and connection. Convenience doesn't cancel out good intentions, and one busy day doesn't undo weeks of healthy habits.

If this season feels full, remember this: steady, reasonable choices matter far more than any single meal, screen, or appointment. When parents lead with balance, kids learn how to do the same.

You don't have to get everything right. You just have to keep showing up.

Warmly,

Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?



Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](https://www.instagram.com/adv4healthykids) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY ACTION



Family Balance Bingo

Mark what you do – winner picks a fun treat!



Family Balance Bingo

Make a simple bingo card with easy habits for the week, like:

- Try a new fruit or veggie
- Go for a short walk or bike ride
- Help set the table
- Read or play without screens

Kids mark off squares as they go. At the end of the week, whoever has the most squares gets to pick a **fun "off-routine" treat, like:**

- Stop for ice cream on the way home
- Choose what's for breakfast one day
- Stay up 30 extra minutes for 1:1 time with a parent
- Pick a fun after-dinner activity instead of the usual routine

Why it works: Kids learn that healthy habits matter, but life isn't perfect. Balance means steady effort most of the time — and making space for fun and flexibility is part of the plan.

The Science (and Sanity) of Finding What Works for Your Family

If modern parenting has a theme, it's that there's always one more "must." One more rule for food, screens, sports, medicine, sleep. But life with kids isn't lived at the extremes; it's lived at the kitchen table, in a car on the way to another event, on sidelines, and during family conversations. The good news is that science backs what many parents feel in their gut: a balanced approach, built on shared decision-making, real connection, movement, and family time, helps kids grow into healthy, resilient adults.

Why Balance Beats All-or-Nothing

Human development is complex. Health recommendations evolve, kids differ, and families have real constraints. That's why many leading organizations emphasize principles over perfection — supporting parents to make educated, doable choices over time. Shared decision-making in healthcare, for example, is a well-established practice where families and clinicians discuss options, risks, and preferences together so decisions fit a child's unique circumstances. It's evidence-based, and it respects parental judgment.

Real-Life Connection

Screens Are Part of Life, But Balance Matters

Research links heavy device use with disrupted sleep, attention challenges, and mood concerns for some kids, which is why [pediatric groups](#) focus on boundaries, not bans — co-creating a family media plan, protecting sleep, and making room for in-person connection. Teachers, too, report that phones can disrupt learning. A Pew Research [survey](#) found most educators view in-class phone distraction as a significant challenge.

Practical balance might look like:

- Tech-free anchors (meals, bedtime, church, practice).
- Charging devices outside bedrooms to protect sleep.
- Replacing some screen time with in-person or outdoor play.

Medical Freedom

Case-by-Case, Question-by-Question

Medical choices aren't one-size-fits-all. For routine decisions, a balanced approach can look like this:

- Start with clear, plain-language information from trusted sources
- Ask questions without apology; good clinicians welcome them. That's shared decision-making in action.
- Take it step by step. Many families find it helpful to consider options one decision at a time rather than feeling pressured to accept or reject everything at once.

This isn't about being "for" or "against" anything; it's about being for your child, with the best available information and the space to decide what fits your family.

Parents Know Best

Values Centered Learning

Parents know their kids best — and schools are strongest when family values are considered during learning. A balanced approach keeps parents as an equal (if not leading) voice in the classroom, strengthens parent-teacher teamwork, and gives families real choices so learning fits each child.

- **School choice matters:** Every child learns differently. Education dollars should follow the child, giving families access to schools that reflect their priorities and values. Competition and choice expand opportunity.
- **Parents as partners:** Moms and dads should be informed and involved in what's taught. Open, two-way communication with educators builds trust and accountability and improves student well-being and outcomes.
- **Protecting parental rights:** One-size-fits-all policies miss families' unique needs. Keeping parents at the center ensures children are raised with the values of their own homes and receive an education aligned with their family's goals.

Put parents first, build strong partnerships with teachers, and protect choice — so family time and family values stay at the heart of every child's learning and growth.

Power in Movement

Fuel for Body, Mind, and Mood

If there's one habit that pays off across health, learning, sleep, and emotional balance, it's daily movement. [U.S. guidelines](#) recommend children and adolescents get at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity per day, with a mix of aerobic play and muscle- and bone-strengthening movement throughout the week. The benefits are broad: better fitness,

improved mood, stronger sleep, and sharper focus.

Importantly, unstructured play (climbing, building, inventing games) isn't "extra"; it's essential for creativity, problem-solving, and social skills. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) calls play "powerful" for healthy development and recommends protecting time for it. Organized sports are great for teamwork and confidence, but bike rides, yard games, dance parties in the kitchen, and walks after dinner count just as much.

Putting It All Together

- **Medical Freedom:** Ask questions, weigh options, and choose case-by-case with your clinician. That's responsible, not rebellious.
- **Parents Know Best:** Keep parents first in education. Expand school choice, strengthen parent-teacher partnerships, and protect parental rights so schooling reflects family values.
- **Real-Life Connection:** Create tech boundaries that preserve sleep, attention, and relationships; prioritize person-to-person time.
- **Power in Movement:** Aim for daily activity and protect unstructured play; both build strong bodies and resilient minds.

A Balanced Home is a Steady Home

Balance doesn't mean doing everything; it means doing the next right thing for your family. Maybe this week it's eating together twice, collecting phones at bedtime, asking one more question at a well visit, or scheduling a Saturday hike. Small, repeatable steps add up — and kids notice.

Remember: You know your child best, and you don't have to be perfect. Being present with your family and confident in the choices you make for your home is more than enough. With balanced choices, real connection, and steady movement, you're building the kind of childhood that grows healthy bodies, grounded minds, and resilient hearts.

Looking for a place to start your research?

Check out our [Resources Page!](#) It's a great place to begin your journey in becoming a confident, educated advocate in your child's development.

START YOUR RESEARCH

EASY TREAT FOR BUSY DAYS

FRUIT & YOGURT COOKIE SANDWICHES

Busy days don't have to mean boring or nutritionless treats. These cookie sandwiches are **fun to make, balanced, and flexible** — a little indulgence with plenty of healthy ingredients. Kids can help assemble, which makes them proud of what they eat!



DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER

ENGAGE WITH US

Life with kids is busy, and balance can look different every week. We'd love to hear from you:

- *What part of your weekly routine feels easiest to maintain?*
- *Which part feels hardest?*
- *How do you bring things back into balance when life gets hectic?*

LET US KNOW HERE

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



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