



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.**

THE LATEST

Your Child's Online Time: Stepping In, Not Stepping Back

Kids today grow up in a digital world that changes quickly, and where the online rules aren't always clear. It can be easy to think: *"The app filters will handle it,"* or *"Regulations will keep them safe."* But the real truth is this: **you**, the parent, remain the most important guardian of your child's online experience.

When you put your child's online well-being in the hands of engagement-driven social media companies and laws that can't capture the nuance of every issue, you're sending them into the wild west of online content without the one thing those systems can't offer — your judgment and care.

The digital landscape is shifting — and not always in plain sight

Children under 12 are growing up with screens as normal parts of life. [Pew Research](#) found that 80% of children ages 5–11 have used a tablet and 63% a smartphone, and [another study](#) found that 46% of parents worry their child might access inappropriate content online.

At the same time, [a growing body of research](#) links **higher screen time** with social-emotional issues, attention, and sleep problems in young children.

What does that mean for families? It means that while tech companies and lawmakers may make rules or tools, **parents still make the day-to-day choices** that shape how kids build a healthy relationship with technology.

Why You Still Hold the Key

- Tech companies build algorithms for engagement. You build boundaries.
- Governments can set age limits. You provide context and values.
- Screens aren't the enemy — but if we let them make the rules, we risk losing connection, movement, and family time.
- Kids don't "figure it all out" just because they're digital natives. They still need your guidance, example, and guardrails.

How to Lead the Conversation

1. Get the screen rules out in the open.

Have an honest conversation about what devices your child uses, when, and where. Make the message clear: "We use screens here, but they're only part of your day — not the center of it."

Set practical guidelines, like no devices during meals or after bedtime, so screens don't quietly replace sleep, play, or real conversation.

2. Model the behavior you want.

Children learn from what we do even more than what we say. If you're scrolling through dinner, it sends a message that constant connection to a device is normal.

Try creating "unplugged" family moments — short breaks from screens that remind everyone what connection feels like in real life.

3. Stay involved—don't outsource.

Instead of leaving online oversight entirely to apps or laws, keep tabs:

- Ask what apps or games your child uses and why they like them.
- Set devices in communal spaces until you're sure habits are healthy.
- Talk about what happens online: Is this app helping you talk to friends? What's the context around what you're watching? (queue 6-7 confusion for all our elementary and middle school moms)

You're not being controlling — you're being a parent in a world full of competing influences.

Why This Matters

Their childhood is about more than what happens behind a screen. It's about laughter around the dinner table, running in the backyard, learning to navigate friendship, and discovering who they are in the real world.

Being a parent in the digital age doesn't mean throwing up your hands and hoping someone else figures it out. It means showing up, asking the hard questions, setting limits that make sense for your home, and keeping the focus on relationships over algorithms.

No app store, law, or corporate filter can replace you knowing your child's habits, heart, and limits. You don't have to be perfect, just present. Because when you stay involved, your child learns that technology isn't what defines their world—real experiences and real connections do.

Vaccine Guidance Changes: How Parents Can Stay Grounded

If you've ever felt overwhelmed by shifting vaccine recommendations, you're not alone. Updates can happen quickly — and as a parent, it can feel like the rules are always changing. But the truth is, you don't have to make decisions in a rush. You can take your time, ask smart questions, and make choices that feel right for your family.

Step 1: Understand what's changed — and why

When new vaccine guidance comes out, start by asking: What exactly changed? Sometimes updates reflect new research, a reformulated vaccine, or better data about timing and effectiveness. Other times, it's a small tweak to an existing schedule.

Check official sources like the [CDC's Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule](#) or ask your pediatrician for a summary to outline what's new, without the noise of headlines or social media.

Step 2: Bring questions to your doctor

You don't need to have all the answers before you walk into the office. What helps most is bringing *specific questions* like:

- What are the benefits of this vaccine for my child's age and health?
- What are the most common side effects, and how do we manage them?
- Is this something every child needs right away, or does timing depend on individual factors?
- What information sheets (*like the Vaccine Information Statement or product label*) should I read first?

Asking these questions turns your appointment into a real conversation. One where you and your child's doctor work together, with you leading the decision-making as the parent.

Step 3: Compare sources, not opinions

When researching, focus on **where** information comes from. A good rule of thumb: start with primary sources (like the CDC, FDA, or the original study), then see how other outlets interpret them. Be cautious with social posts or headlines that make sweeping claims without links or context.

If you want balanced information, look for data from multiple sources — government, independent research, and trusted medical organizations. When several types of evidence point in the same direction, it's usually a good sign you're on solid ground.

Our [Resources Page](#) is a good place to start your research.

Step 4: Make decisions at your family's pace

Every family's comfort level is different. Some parents choose to follow the recommended schedule as written. Others prefer to move more gradually, using the flexibility built into the

official timing intervals. Both approaches should be discussed with your doctor, but the key is to make sure any plan you follow is educated and intentional, not reactionary.

It's okay to ask for time to think, to revisit decisions at your next appointment, or to get a second opinion if you need one. **The goal isn't speed — *it's confidence.***

Step 5: Keep the big picture in mind

Vaccine decisions are just one part of raising healthy, resilient kids. Nutrition, sleep, physical activity, and emotional connection all play vital roles in immunity and development. Making thoughtful choices about your child's health, including medical interventions like vaccines, is only a piece of what it means to be an educated, empowered parent.

The Bottom Line

Parents don't need to be experts — they just need access to good information and the space to make thoughtful decisions. Take your time, ask questions, and use trustworthy sources. You know your child best, and **when you combine that intuition with clear facts, you can move forward with confidence.**

FACT OR MYTH?

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You should always accept everything your child's doctor recommends without question.

MYTH: Empowered parents ask questions, seek clarity, and take time to understand their options. If something doesn't feel clear, it's okay to pause, do your research, and move forward when you feel confident in your choice.

Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@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**





Create a “movement menu” with **your kids** — a list of fun ways to be active each day, like bike rides, backyard soccer, dance breaks, or family walks.

Let your child pick one each day for a week. Giving them choices builds independence and shows that movement is meant to be joyful, not a chore.

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



Dear Friends,

Parenting today can feel like standing in the middle of endless information, advice from doctors, headlines, influencers, and friends, all saying they know what’s best for your child. But what I’ve seen time and again, both as a physician and a mother, is that the best decisions come from partnership, not pressure.

Good care doesn’t mean saying “yes” to everything you’re told. It means asking thoughtful questions and taking time to understand what makes sense for your family. The goal isn’t to challenge for the sake of challenging; it’s to stay engaged and confident in the process.

When parents stay informed and involved, children grow up seeing that their health isn't something decided for them, but with them. That's how trust and confidence are built — through conversation, curiosity, and care.

So the next time you're faced with a new recommendation or an unfamiliar decision, take a breath. Ask the questions that come to mind. Seek clarity, not certainty. Because the real power in parenting isn't about knowing it all — it's about staying present, engaged, and grounded in what you know to be true for your child.

Warmly,

Siobhan Dunnavant, MD

Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

EASY SCHOOL NIGHT DINNER RECIPE

ONE-POT CHICKEN & RICE SOUP WITH LEMON & SPINACH

When the weather cools down and everyone's fighting off the sniffles, this simple soup hits the spot. It's warm, hearty, and made with ingredients you probably already have. The lemon adds brightness, the spinach adds color and nutrients, and everything cooks in one pot for easy cleanup — perfect for a busy school night.



[DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER](#)

ENGAGE WITH US

Where do you turn first when you have a medical question — a trusted doctor, a friend, or a specific website that explains the facts clearly?

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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