



Parent Education Program: PEP!

INTRODUCTION

At Acorn Counseling Education Services, we strive to strengthen Denton County by empowering and educating parents and children. Acorn's Christian staff works to affect positive change through a combination of team oriented, evidence based, therapeutic and educational services. These include Child Parent Relationship Training [filial therapy], Counseling [individual, play, family, marriage, group], Wellness Opportunities, community service, and Parent Education Programs. All of these focus on empowering those in your family to have an abundant, full life. Our mission is simple: Stronger Children, Stronger Families, and a Stronger Community.

My hope in writing this e-book is to give you an overview of 4 critical components of our daily "diets" that affect our overall health. I am using a Nutrition metaphor, because we are what we do each day and our daily diet of food, media, exercise, and spirituality can be critical in determining the health of our family. We intend for this to be the beginning or continuation of a conversation between you and our counselors here at Acorn. Feel free to comment, ask [questions](#), and [call](#) us with any concerns you have about your family. If we can't help you, we will find someone who can!

4 Habits of Strong Families

The cornerstone of every person is what they put into their body, mind, and relationships. “Garbage in, garbage out.” A successful family focuses on good nutrition, whether that is what you eat and drink, or what you read or watch or play. If you focus on good nutrition, such as filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables every meal, or watching a movie about someone you admire, you are developing good habits. If you eat nothing but fast food and play violent video games, your life will form around less positive habits. But where do you start? Our lives are so fast paced and full of ‘busy’, that being intentional about what we are putting into our bodies, minds and relationships is difficult.



Food:

My family focuses on getting as much whole, fresh, food on the table as we can. Keeping cut up fruits and vegetables in our fridge, easily accessible, cuts down on food prep time at dinner and unhealthy snacks. We also attempt to eat out at fewer fried food establishments and choose healthier items on the menu. But, since we are a busy family of 5, we have difficulty with getting all the best nutrition on a daily basis. So we also take Juice Plus+ every day to get 17 fruits and vegetables. If you are interested in this easy way to supplement with whole food nutrition, check out my [JuicePlus+ website](#).

Media:



What you put in: My family focuses on the classic movies and books— Gooneys, Star Wars, Wally | C.S. Lewis, JRR Tolkien. We love to see movies together and learn about each other by talking about movies we enjoy. We also watch videos to learn things like how to solve a Rubio cube under 2 minutes. [Only one of us has completed this step as of today. But others are attempting!] We use what we watch to teach values, learn skills, and discover cool science tricks with dry ice. [You must check out the Crazy Russian Hacker on Youtube!]

Some of the ways we discover new content is from our children's teachers, and from [Common Sense Media](#). You can find information on my favorites by connecting with us on our Twitter, Facebook and Google+ Feeds. Let me know if you've found a new favorite!

What you keep out: We also limit screen time. A quick search of the American Academy of Pediatrics shows study after study that screen time can have negative consequences. This isn't just about the violence or the sexuality that can be present. It is also about what isn't there if you are looking at a screen all the time. Spend more time exploring the physical and relational world and you will grow and develop more successfully.



Exercise:

Our families favorite sport is fighting—Tae Kwon Doh style. Our dojang, [Marshalls](#) ATA, has really helped with discipline, physical and emotional strength, and character building for all of us. See some of my old blogs to discover all the positives I see in Tae Kwon Doh.

Regardless of what kind of activity, exercising as a family activity is an amazing way to change the lifestyles of those in the family. Getting used to moving around and being active is difficult for my family. We are basically huge geeks, but thanks to dedication on our part as parents, our kids are growing up very active.

Exercise is also a great time to play. Catch is actually physiologically a big deal. It grows connections in the brain and relational connections between the people who are playing that it is difficult to fully explain. Other kinds of games teach obedience, [Simon Says], cooperation [kickball], and many other positive character traits. Games in general teach taking turns, sharing, why rules are important. Plus, you get to do all the learning while having fun!



Spirituality:

Our family is Christian and we work to incorporate our values and world view into a lot of what we do. We talk about ethics and how the world works often while we are eating, watching TV or just reviewing our days. Your spirituality is a private choice lived out in a public manner, particularly in a family. Spending thoughtful time with your children talking about your deeply held beliefs will help them to determine and choose their own. It will also help you to understand what those beliefs are and how they effect your child's behavior and choices. Spiritual activities can provide deep satisfaction to your life and strengthen your bonds and attachments throughout the life of your family.

Spiritual exercises like prayer, meditation, studying texts are all ways to clear your mind and calm your heart. Studies show those with a deep spiritual life are healthier and heal faster. Teach time honored principles throughout your day and contribute to the emotional and physical health of your children.

Our nutrition isn't perfect: we like burgers and one of my good friends sent me a picture of a shirt that said: I love Jesus but I cuss sometimes. Our family simply strives to add as much good 'nutrition' as we can along the way. Whether it is when we spend an afternoon traveling from our favorite book stores to the library in search of the next classic, or when we quickly take our JuicePlus+ in the morning, we work to get the best 'nutrition' we can into our daily diet.

Do you need help being intentional about your daily diet of food, media, exercise, or spirituality? Think about your goals and call us-940-222-8703. We may be able to help you find just the right next step for you or your family to take. Or, if you simply need encouragement, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and on our Parent Education Program email list. If we can't help you, we will help you find someone who can!

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