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Fitness for the Busy Family

It's no secret kids are naturally driven to be physically active, but is it possible they still aren't getting enough exercise? According to KidsHealth.org, toddlers should be very active each day, getting at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity, at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity and not be inactive for more than one hour at a time, except when sleeping. That's a tall order! Setting daily patterns and introducing healthy habits to young children can be difficult for working families. Busy schedules can make it hard to find time for exercise, but if families take advantage of time when everyone can get their energy out while working on their specific fitness goals, they can grow those healthy habits together.

Mommy/Daddy FIT is a total-body conditioning class for moms and dads who want to get a great workout while spending time with their children and setting a great example of a healthy lifestyle. The class is led by certified personal trainer Mich Wruck, who focuses on offering a challenge for parents of all fitness levels while providing the expanse of the Fieldhouse turf for children and parents to run, jump and play.

There are many different reasons participants attend Mommy/Daddy FIT. Mindy Todd brings her two highly-energetic kids to class because it's a fun place for them to get out their energy while she exercises. Alaina Denke puts emphasis on showing her two girls the fun side of exercise. Michelle Halley began class feeling very out of shape, but has been impressed with Wruck's talent for working with participants of all fitness levels. Wruck patiently shows Halley necessary modifications as she encourages the group with instruction and praise, repeating, "Keep working. Something wonderful is happening."

Tom Savino is a stay-at-home dad who enjoys keeping his girls active with trips to the zoo, bike rides, visiting parks and shopping. In June 2015, Savino was told by his doctor that he needed to begin a fitness program. Mommy/Daddy FIT was recommended to him and soon after he began the class, Wruck got him running, which was something he hadn't been able to do in a long time. "I've never done any formal exercise. The kids love coming and I fit right in."

Participant Holly Kline loves the diversity of the exercises given by Wruck, as well as the many other benefits of a class where kids and adults workout together. "Mich does a variety of exercises, from yoga to cardio to strengthening. I get a total body workout. And the best part is that your kids get to work out and socialize with other kids."

The many benefits of exercise for youth affect not only the muscles and bones, but also the brain. Improving social skills like sharing and communicating can be difficult for kids who aren't yet in school. In Mommy/Daddy FIT, they are encouraged to work out and play not only with their

parent or caregiver, but also with their peers, aiding in the development of cooperation and teamwork skills. Exercise helps kids develop a healthy self-image, confidence and positive self-esteem. Studies also show that regular exercise can improve memory and help participants develop a more positive outlook on life.

As children get older, getting the proper amount of exercise for both kids and parents becomes a real challenge. It's important to make time for physical activity, even if it's just running around in the backyard for an hour or bringing the kids along while walking the dog. Kids who are active and develop healthy habits at a young age tend to stay active throughout their lives. For children, watching their parents set a positive example of a healthy lifestyle while placing importance on self-improvement can be one of the most valuable lessons they will ever learn.

Mommy/Daddy FIT takes place on Mondays and Fridays at the Parker Fieldhouse, 18700 E. Plaza Dr. in Parker. For more information or to register for the class, visit www.ParkerRec.com or contact Hillary at hroemersberger@parkeronline.org or 303.805.3278.

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