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A 30-Day Wellness Transformation

# Family Fit Plan

Natalie Digate Muth, MD, MPH, RDN, FAAP

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



**American Academy of Pediatrics Publishing Staff**

Mary Lou White, *Chief Product and Services Officer/SVP, Membership, Marketing, and Publishing*

Mark Grimes, *Vice President, Publishing*

Kathryn Sparks, *Manager, Consumer Publishing*

Holly Kaminski, *Editor, Consumer Publishing*

Shannan Martin, *Production Manager, Consumer Publications*

Sara Hoerdeman, *Marketing Manager, Consumer Products*

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## **Contributors**

### **Author**

Natalie Digate Muth, MD, MPH, RDN, FAAP

### **Reviewers**

Steve Abrams, MD, FAAP

Sarah Armstrong, MD, FAAP

Blaise A. Nemeth, MD, MS, FAAP

### **Staff Members**

Debra Burrowes

Anjie Emanuel

Mala Thapar





*To my husband, Bob*

*My children, Thomas and Mariella*

*Thank you for always being up for an adventure*







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I also want to thank my mom, who, more than 20 years ago, took me on an unlikely adventure to the Grand Canyon that strengthened our friendship and changed my life. That experience was the impetus for many choices I've made over the course of my young adulthood, training, and career. I'd also like to thank my dad, who showed me that when the time and circumstances are right, we can make changes that stick—even more so when we have the support and encouragement of our families.

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Finally, thank you to Dr Mary Tanaka for sharing her delicious, kid-tested, healthy, easy-to-make recipes that help bring *Family Fit Plan* to life.



## Introduction

When I was 16, one of my favorite t-shirts sported the unlikely picture of a frog in a compromising situation. The stork, having just plucked the amphibious snack from a pond, found itself, instead of having a satisfying feast, being strangled by the frog. The advice below the image: “Don’t ever give up.” Who knew this shirt and its mantra would play such an important role in my life? This was the shirt I wore on the morning that my mom and I began a breathtaking and grueling 20-mile, 3-day hike down into the depths of the Grand Canyon, and back out.

But hiking wasn’t always a part of my life. Through much of my childhood, I struggled to eat healthfully, sleep regularly, exercise daily, and cope with stressors in productive ways. My mom was in the same boat. Scared by the health risks associated with being overweight and inactive, when I was 16, my mom and I decided together to set ambitious goals to transform ourselves. We wanted to be healthier, more fit, and more confident. So naturally, we signed up to “conquer” the Grand Canyon—even though neither of us had ever even slept in a tent or trekked up a big hill.

My mom wisely enlisted the help of a personal trainer to help us get ready for our Grand Canyon experience. The trainer helped us develop a plan that would set us up for success. Week by week, we followed through on our plan, even though some days we didn’t feel like it. Other days we wondered if we had made a mistake—why didn’t we just decide to do something a little less difficult and a little less outside of our comfort zone?

But—we *didn’t ever give up*. The pounding of rain on my face that late September afternoon, my whole body covered in dirt, 30-pound pack on my back, sweating all the way to the final step of the 4,000-foot ascent from the Colorado River to the South Rim, my mom right behind me, defined an experience that changed my life.



My mom and I accomplished something we could not have imagined doing even six months earlier. The trainer, who stood by us and guided and encouraged us as we set out to achieve our ambitious goal, launched me on my journey to inspire others. What started over 20 years ago as a lofty goal of hiking the Grand Canyon with my mom has led me to places and experiences far beyond my wildest childhood dreams—including a career as a pediatrician, nutritionist, and mom to two incredible and healthy kids. I am thrilled that the next step in my story is to share with you my Family Fit Plan.

The goal of the 30-day Family Fit Plan is to help you and your family kick-start your health and wellness goals and help you set the stage for long-term, lasting success in improving the health and well-being of your *entire* family.

The Family Fit Plan provides you with a road map, from getting your family on board to change to setting inspiring goals and taking the steps you need to ultimately reach them—all while improving the quality of your nutrition, fitness, and sleep and better managing stress and screen time use.

Special features interspersed throughout each chapter help bring your plan to life. These features include



### LET'S EXPERIMENT

These short activities test out the chapter's tips in a fun, "scientific" way, and allows a child to participate in an "experiment."



### GET FIT!

Suggested exercises make it easy to incorporate activity into each week.



### Your Toolbox

These practical applications help your family increase skills to translate a plan into action.



### Mindful Moment

Suggested activities increase mindfulness and offer healthy ways to cope with stress.

### DID YOU KNOW ?

Surprising scientific facts help support recommendations made in the chapter.



### KITCHEN HACKS

These are quick tips for easy ways to eat better.

Recipes, activity plans and workouts, and online and in-print tools will help you take your Family Fit Plan to the next level. Most importantly, over the next month your family will have a lot of fun together on what I assure you will be an exciting adventure. There may be times that you will want to quit, but as I (and the frog on my shirt!) learned so many years ago, giving up is not the answer. Keep moving forward – even when it is tough. Not only will you successfully finish the Family Fit Plan but you may also have an experience that will impact you and your kids in a way that you never imagined.



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