

# Nutrition Ambition: *Reaching Your Wellness Goals*

## Parent Guide Introduction

Dear Parents,

You and your child are about to embark on a fun, yet important, health and wellness experience. Together you will have the opportunity to explore the **Nutrition Ambition** Instructional Workbook and supplemental ***Finding the Balance CD*** simulation that was produced in partnership with the Duke University Center for Wellness. The CD, while fun, is not something that you must use to complete the program. If you do not have a computer, you can take the CD to the local library or community center for computer access if you want to participate.

You may not be aware but the United States is currently faced with an obesity and diabetes epidemic not just among adults but also children. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) predicts that by the year 2010, 50% of the children in our country will be over-weight. Even if your child is not overweight they could be undernourished. Many children are eating too many empty calories and most do not get enough exercise. This program is a fun, engaging, non-punitive way to teach and inform your child or adolescent about Nutrition and Wellness and how it relates to all aspects of their daily health and wellness. To reinforce this concept, all the topics tie back to Nutrition!

There are a number of ways to use the materials. The workbook has nine chapters that are all set up the same way. Each chapter starts with an informational section that you can read to your child, or you can have your child read to you and/or their brothers and sisters. After reading the information section, there are engaging activities that provide real world experiences that further aid in the understanding of the Nutrition and Wellness topics. The unique advantage is that these activities are cross-curricular and allow your child to practice and improve their reading, math, science and health skills. The activities are flexible. You can pick only those activities that you would like to do with your child. (There is an **Answer Key** to the activities provided in the back of each workbook). Our research has shown that the more activities you do the better chance your children have to remember the concepts. Each chapter also includes related vocabulary words that you can go over with your child either at the beginning of the chapter or at the end. (There is a **Glossary** at the back of the book to help with vocabulary words) At the end of the chapter there are activities '**Parent Connection**' specially designed for you and your child to do together. Most importantly there is a place for your child to set goals for each chapter topic and a place for your family to set goals as well. Other than reading the content, the goal setting is the most one of the beneficial parts of the program! Research has shown that when you write a goal down, you are more inclined to actually follow through on those goals. Additionally, when you finish the book you will have a special 'Nutritional Diary' of your performance against those goals you and your children have created.

The interactive CD simulation, ***Finding the Balance*** can be used at any time by anyone in the family. You can use it at home, at the Library, at School, or at a Community Center. The purpose of the program is to provide all family members a better understanding of the relationship between food (calorie) intake and the amount of exercise required to 'burn off' those calories. The game consists of an old fashioned balance scale in the middle of the screen. There are food choices on the right and exercises choices on the left side of the screen. Using your mouse, 'Drag and Drop' a food choice to the right side of the scale. Then 'Drag and drop' an exercise choice to the left side of the scale. As stated, the goal is to balance the amount of exercise it takes to burn off certain food choices! You can add up to 5 exercises at one time to try to get the scale to balance. You will probably be quite surprised how much exercise it takes to burn off one slice of pepperoni pizza!

We hope you enjoy learning about wellness and have a fun time with your family as you explore this Nutrition and Wellness experience.