

ELLYN SATTER'S DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY WITH ACTIVITY

Children are born loving their bodies, curious about them and inclined to be active. Good parenting with activity preserves those qualities. Parents provide *structure, safety* and *opportunities*. Children choose *how much* and *whether* to move and the *manner* of moving.

The Division of Responsibility for Infants:

- The parent is responsible for *safe opportunities*
- The child is responsible for *moving*

The parent provides the infant with a variety of positions, clothing, sights and sounds. Then the parent remains present and lets the infant experiment with moving.

The Division of Responsibility For Toddlers Through Adolescents

- The parent is responsible for *structure, safety* and *opportunities*
- The child is responsible for *how much* and *whether*
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Supporting activity is good parenting. Parents' jobs include:

- Develop judgment about normal commotion
- Provide safe places for activity the child enjoys
- Find fun and rewarding family activities
- Provide opportunities to experiment with group activities such as sports
- Set limits on TV but not on reading, writing, artwork, other sedentary activities
- Remove TV and computer from the child's room
- Make children responsible for dealing with their own boredom

Fundamental to parents' jobs is trusting children to decide *how much* to move, the *way* to move and *whether* to be active.

- Children will be active
- Each child is more or less active depending on constitutional endowment
- Each child is more or less skilled, graceful, energetic or aggressive depending on constitutional endowment
- Children's physical capabilities will grow and develop
- They will experiment with activities that are in concert with their growth and development
- They will find activities that are right for them

Crossing the lines of the division of responsibility is likely to create problems with movement and distort growth. Trying to control *whether, how much* or the *way* a child moves or how his body turns out crosses the lines. So does catering to a child's expectation that he will be endlessly entertained. For a further discussion of Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility With Activity, see *Your Child's Weight: Helping Without Harming*.



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