



Walking the Walk

The Children's Strong4Life Campaign Moves Forward

You saw the ads. You heard the talk. "Last year's childhood obesity campaign definitely ignited a firestorm of opinion. But the bottom line was that it raised awareness about childhood obesity being a significant problem in Georgia," said Trisha Hardy, Director, Childhood Wellness. "Now, a year later, we're taking the campaign to the next level, inspiring and motivating families to change."

Kicking off Childhood Obesity Awareness month in September, Children's recently launched Strong4Life.com, our revamped website designed to ignite individual change and inspire a true movement. With easy-does-it advice, helpful tips and recipes, the Strong4Life website informs, even as it inspires. "Our research showed that while the majority of Georgia parents recognize the severity of our statewide childhood obesity epidemic [nearly 40

percent of Georgia's children are overweight or obese], many are still in denial about their own families," said Hardy. "We've fine-tuned our campaign accordingly and are now focused on helping parents examine their family health risks more honestly and effectively."

For example, many parents say they'd rather talk to their kids about sex or drugs than weight issues. To help, Children's has created "The Talk," which inspires parents to jumpstart the

The Four Healthy Habits

At the foundation of our Strong4Life campaign lie the Four Healthy Habits:

1. Make half your plate fruit and veggies.
2. Be active 60 minutes a day.
3. Limit screen time to one hour.
4. Drink more water; limit sugary drinks.

conversation about healthy living—and to recognize their own role in shaping nutrition and fitness habits.

But Strong4Life isn't just about "talk." It's equally about "do."

From rock climbing to the classroom

Sarah Gillis carefully finds her hold on the face of a rock climbing wall, as her fellow Strong4Life campers watch excitedly from the ground. At the top, her face flushed from exertion and excitement, she proudly rings the bell. A huge cheer goes up; everyone there knows just how hard Sarah worked to accomplish her goal.

"Our campers are all working to address their weight issues, so they share a common bond, but the great thing about camp is that it is not about weight," said Hardy. "Many never have swam in a pool or even put on a swimsuit, much less climbed a rock wall. Here, they're accepted, encouraged and informed. We are teaching them habits that help them achieve good health and improve their quality of life."

Camp Strong4Life is just one of many obesity-related outreach programs from Children's. Here's a (small) taste of more:

Provider training. Children's has already trained more than a thousand healthcare providers, and we're going statewide with an American Academy of Pediatrics-certified Maintenance of Certification program to manage and treat children's obesity.

Research presentations. Our Child Wellness team has presented our findings and our targeted, innovative and measurable initiatives at several prominent, national obesity conferences.

Back-to-school outreach. From pep rallies to cafeteria worker training to wellness challenges,

Children's is all over Georgia's schools, getting kids (and adults!) fired up about healthy habits.

Peer-to-peer activities. Children's is partnering with organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, to train older youth to be leaders and healthy role models for the younger children. Georgia's Girl Scouts can now earn a Strong4Life patch after completing the program.

Atlanta attraction signs. Visitors to Zoo Atlanta now see fun, interactive Children's signs encouraging kids to "hop like a kangaroo."

"We have a lot more to do, but it's been great to see so many people and organizations get on board with Strong4Life," said Hardy.

So what can Children's employees do to join the movement? Visit Strong4Life.com, set some healthy goals—and get moving! ☺

► Campers show off the muscles they used this summer at one of Children's Strong4Life camps.



► Image above: Camp Strong4Life participants prepare for a challenging ropes course exercise.