

# Scientific Research Basis of Childhood Physical Health

Research Basis Behind Fit4You by Hatch

Research shows that the connection between health and education is close, complex, and interdependent. Better academic outcomes are seen for healthy children compared to those who are less healthy. Further, there is a relationship between a child's success in school and gaining higher education levels and better health as an adult <sup>1</sup>. High quality early childhood programs must attend to the health of the children they serve to reach goals in the cognitive, emotional, and academic areas.

One area in particular that is receiving increased attention is obesity among young children, as its prevalence is increasing to the point that it is now seen as being at epidemic proportions. National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES 2003-2004) data show that the number of obese preschool age children is approximately 14% <sup>2</sup>. Being medically overweight is linked to a number of poor school outcomes including lower performance on intelligence and achievement tests, decreased range of interests, less capacity social adaptation capacity, and a greater likelihood of placement in remedial classes <sup>3-7</sup>.

One of the reasons for this includes sleep disturbances, which may factor into impaired attention, learning problems, and school failure <sup>8-9</sup>. Additionally, overweight children often have poorer attendance in school due to health problems and face risk for behavior problems, low self-esteem, and depression <sup>10-12</sup>, all of which can negatively impact success in school.

**Key Message:** Health and school success are intertwined. Attention to healthy practices in early childhood is important to lay the foundation for a child who is ready and able to learn to his or her fullest potential.

## Using Fit4You by Hatch to Help Children Achieve Critical Health Outcomes

The Fit 4 You<sup>®</sup> Kit provides a wealth of information and activities to help the teacher increase young children's participation and development in four key areas: Physical Development, Nutrition, Cognitive Development, and Social/Emotional Development. The Fit 4 You<sup>®</sup> Kit introduces exercise and wellness in the classroom.

## References

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