

Are Your Children Growing Up Too Fast?

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By Kimberly Chastain

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Each time our children graduate from one stage to another (i.e. crawling – walking, preschool – school, highschool – graduation) we as parents are excited and a little sad as well. We want our children to grow up, but we reminisce about the "good old" days. I think those mixed feelings are normal for all of us. My question for you is – "Are your children growing up too fast emotionally and socially?" We can't stop their physical growth, but we can effect their emotional and social growth.

Our society is compressing childhood more and more to where children are not children for very long. We only have 18 years in our entire life to be children. We struggle as parents to keep our children innocent. Unfortunately, the events of September 11th stole away even more of our children's innocence.

Children are not little adults. Often, children dress like adults in miniature. Children want to emulate their teen or adult heroes in dress and talk. As parents we are fighting a raging river in keeping our children young and innocent. Society, schools, and parents are pushing children to grow up too fast.

Answer the following questions to see if your children are growing up too fast?

1. Do your children want to wear clothing that is designed for much older children?
2. Do your younger children want to watch TV shows designed for teenagers? Do your teenagers want to watch adult TV shows that contain sex and violence?
3. Are the books your children are reading age appropriate?
4. Are your children involved in so many extra-curricular activities they have no down time to just explore or goof off?

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5. Are your children losing that wonderful "childish" sense of wonder about the world or do they know it all?
6. Do you find your children are growing increasingly impatient and have to be entertained? Do they often say I'm bored?
7. Can you remember the last time you told your child you are not old enough to know about a certain topic and we will talk about it when you get older?
8. When was the last time you told your children, "No, you can't do that until your older or that outfit is not acceptable to wear in our family?"
9. Do you monitor what music your children listen to, computer games they play, Internet sites they visit – are they age appropriate?
10. Do your children hang out with much older kids who are not a good influence?

Hopefully, these questions have caused you to stop and think about how quickly your children are growing up. Due to society's pressures you will have to make a concerted effort to keep your children innocent. There will be parent and child peer pressure to force your children to do things early. You may not be a popular parent when you say No to something "everyone else is doing." Parenting is not for the fainthearted or a popularity contest.

In closing, let me relate a recent example. I was watching a morning news show and they were discussing summer camps for kids. The guest said more and more kids are looking for computer and science camps, in order to improve their resumes for college. I found myself yelling at the TV – "Why can't you just enjoy camp, instead of it looking good on a resume. When did camp stop being fun and started being work?"

Remember the wise words of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:1 – "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Childhood is a precious time and it is all ready much too short, keep your children innocent and protect their childhood.

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Kimberly M. Chastain, MS, LMFT is the Christian Working Mom Coach and a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who specializes in helping Christian women make the most of their lives. She is the author of the on-line course, "I Can't Say No" and Pearls of Encouragement for Christian Working Moms, a free e-book. If you suffer from "I Can't Say `No" Syndrome, visit Kimberly's site today for the details on an exciting email course that's sure to set you free!

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Obesity In Children

By Zachary Thompson

Obesity is a condition that can shorten your life and can seriously affect you mentally and physically. It often has its roots in childhood. Obesity in children is growing at a frighteningly fast rate. There are more obese children now than ever before. Parents are letting their carelessness with their own diets spill over into their children's lives.

Here are a few points to think about when trying to prevent obesity and health problems for your children.

Small children are normally energetic and often require snacks in-between meals. It is most important to choose healthy snacks for your children.

Alternative snacks can include:

Vegetable snacks like carrot sticks and celery boats are a good and fun alternative to chips and "junk food" snacks.

Fruit can be substituted for candies and sugar snacks.

Soda and sugar snacks like candy produce hyperactivity in many young children and will sow the seeds for problems later in life. It also leads to dental problems and the beginnings of obesity. It is good to keep these foods in check and use alternatives if possible. Sugar is a known addictive food in that the more you eat the more you want to eat. This can quickly escalate into a serious eating problem and can lead to obesity as the body stores excess sugar as fat.

Breakfast cereals are perhaps the biggest problems in children's diets. Everyone is in a hurry in the morning and it is easy to reach for the cereal packet for a quick family breakfast. However be careful of these presweetened cereals as they give unnecessary large amounts of sugar to your child's system laying the grounds for sugar addiction. Now there are many alternatives to presweetened cereals. There are many good tasting "healthy" cereals providing added fiber and less if any sugar. These are good for your children as they will provide them with a much more nutritious breakfast and not just fill them up with sugar and excess carbohydrates.

Fast food habits also begin when children are quite small. This is reinforced by extensive TV advertising and propaganda for these foods. It is almost inbred in us to eat hamburgers chips and other fast food. Children have an inborn liking for these foods and can easily become quite addicted to them. It is wise to try to keep these foods in limit, as they are not the healthiest foods to eat, especially for children who are growing and need nutritious foods to develop properly.

Good eating habits begin when children are very young. It can start from the time they first start to eat. It is very important to a child's health to start good eating habits at a young age. It is possible to lay the foundations of good and healthy eating habits when children are still quite small. It is just a question of educating ourselves and passing on good habits to our children. When you do this you reduce the

Are Your Children Growing Up Too Fast?

possibility of obesity in your children and all the mental and physical risks involved.

Zach Thompson is a Glyconutrients Consultant. His clients range from pro athletes and actresses, to cancer patients and children with Learning Disabilities. To learn if glyconutrients can help you, visit

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