

My First Article by Noel Elizabeth DeCinti

Hello. My name is Noel Elizabeth DeCinti, and I am the daughter of Mike and Alison DeCinti. First off, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I was born three weeks ago on May 20th at 8:20AM and even though most women won't usually talk about their weight, I will let you know that I weighed 7 pounds 4 ounces and measured 20 inches in length. I enjoy staying at home, eating, sleeping and (well, you know.) I guess that's about it at this point.

Now normally you would be reading my dad's article, but he has asked me to write his column for him this week. He said something about being extremely tired and not being able to concentrate so I figured since I had the time to help him out I would give this writing thing a shot.

Since dad usually writes about health, fitness and wellness topics I thought I would do the same and try to write about something for the parents of newborns or toddlers out there who may be reading this article.

The first thing you'll want to do to help promote physical activity in your newborn or toddler is to be active yourself. Our attitude toward exercise is definitely shaped by our parents. Active children generally have active parents who encourage their children to exercise. However, as you may guess, inactive children frequently have inactive parents who do not promote physical activity. And this also extends to your child's attitude about healthy eating as well. Now currently I am breastfeeding, but when I get older it will be important for my mom and dad to help me to understand what a healthy diet is by enjoying one themselves. I can't eat junk food, if it's not in the house.

Now by the time us babies reach the age of one month we need and enjoy movement and not just the moving we do on our own. At this stage of life, babies need their parents' encouragement to move. As baby gets older, movement and exercise help them maintain balance, develop strength, and use new muscles. Exercise at any early age also establishes a habit of activity that carries over into adulthood.

To begin implementing regular exercise with your newborn, parents will want to capture their interest first. Start by simply putting your newborn on a blanket to watch you exercise. Let us see you doing exercises, enjoying them, and looking and feeling great. Children of exercising parents grow up accepting the exercise habit as both natural and necessary, which is the first step on the road to an active and healthy lifestyle.

And try not to put us in a playpen or crib unless it's time for our nap. When we are awake, try giving us every possible opportunity to move around on the floor and explore with some supervised tummy-time.

Any time is appropriate for an exercise session, however some experts say that bath time or the evening is probably the best. The exercise session can be any length of time, based

on your child's response. But keep the length of the session consistent, and try to hold it at the same time every day. The idea is to fit exercise into the daily routine of both parent and child.

If you perform the exercises in the same place every day, the child becomes familiar with the feel of the floor, the bed, or the blanket. And as a result when placed in that position again, over time, we may show that we understand by kicking, cooing, twisting, and smiling. Oh, and while I'm thinking about it, make sure you turn on some music. Not only do we really like music, but also it will help us make a positive association between sound and exercise.

Most important of all, make sure you exercise with us. Learning together, touching, talking, and sharing will improve our family relations.

Finally, I know Mother's Day has already passed but I wasn't "on the outside" for the last one so I just wanted to take this opportunity to tell my Mom what a great job she is doing. I know I can be difficult sometimes, and I don't always express my needs clearly, but you are always there for me and I love you very much.