



**Children's  
Miracle Network  
Hospitals**

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## **Primrose Schools® Steps Up the Fight on Childhood Obesity**

*National Preschool Launches Family Dance-off Benefiting  
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals® Feb. 1*

**ATLANTA (Feb. 1, 2011)** – Primrose Schools, *The Leader in Educational Child Care*, is stepping up its fight against childhood obesity with its second annual Family Dance-off, benefiting Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Primrose Schools invites families across the country to submit their 30-second dance videos at [FamilyDanceoff.com](http://FamilyDanceoff.com) to compete for cash prizes and a donation to their local Children's Miracle Network Hospital.

"Dancing is a fun, easy way for families to fight the risk of obesity, enjoy physical activity and spend quality time together," said [Dr. Mary Zurn](#), vice president of education for Primrose Schools. "Dance not only helps even the youngest of children stay active and fit, it is a creative form of self-expression that builds their self-confidence and promotes social, emotional and motor development."

According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), the national childhood obesity rate has tripled in the last 30 years. The [American Journal of Health Promotion](#) reports one in three children under two years old – an age [experts](#) call the "tipping point" for later obesity – is overweight. At Primrose Schools nationwide, children learn healthy lifestyle habits through purposeful play and physical activity. The Family Dance-off is part of Primrose's commitment to happy hearts and healthy bodies in each of its schools and communities.

This year, Primrose Schools will donate a total of \$65,000 to Children's Miracle Network Hospitals in the top three winning families' hometowns. Families can submit videos from Feb. 1 through March 19. Two finalist families will be selected each week based on the number of votes their video received. The 14 finalist families will then advance to compete during the finalist week from March 20-26. The grand prize winner will receive a \$5,000 check and a \$30,000 donation to their local Children's Miracle Network Hospital; the second prize winner, \$3,000 and Primrose will make a \$20,000 donation to their local Children's Miracle Network Hospital; and the third prize winner, \$1,500 and Primrose will make a \$15,000 donation to a local Children's Miracle Network Hospital. The winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the number of votes received during finalist week, creativity, originality and humor. For full contest rules, visit [FamilyDanceoff.com](http://FamilyDanceoff.com).

### **Tips to Get Your Family Dancing:**

With more than 40 years of experience in early childhood education, Dr. Zurn oversees the development of curriculum and training for Primrose Schools and is responsible for the

continuous improvement of the Primrose Balanced Learning® curriculum in over 200 schools nationwide. Dr. Zurn worked with Dr. Steve Sanders, a fitness expert and member of the Primrose Education Advisory Board, to offer parents five easy steps to use dance to add physical activity to their family's daily routine.

**Step 1: Pick the right music.** Age-appropriate lyrics count, but so does the beat! It's important to find music with an eight-count beat that isn't too fast or too slow, so children can easily and successfully develop movements in time with the music.

**Step 2: Create a dance routine with your child.** Together, decide how your dance will begin, what moves will go in the middle and how it will end. Children naturally respond to music with movement, which they can then turn into a dance. They love to play and don't have any difficulty pretending to swoop like a bird or gallop like a horse. Their imaginations don't need much encouragement to get moving!

Dance, like music, can also tell a story, so listen to the music first and talk about it: does it sound like a train rushing down the tracks or a bee buzzing on a lazy day? You can create original dance moves by "acting out" the story you hear (or make up). If you get stuck, try incorporating some well-known steps from the Chicken Dance, Macarena, Electric Slide, Hokey Pokey, Bunny Hop, Twist and other simple line dances.

**Step 3: Focus on developing key motor skills.** Freestyle dancing is great for getting the heart rate up, but it can also develop your child's motor skills and coordination. Dancing will enable them to practice fundamental skills like jumping, landing, leaping, sliding, galloping, moving forward and backwards, and learning how to mimic moves. Here are a few basic dance concepts:

- **Flow:** Focus on the transition between steps, or moving from one position to another. Combine several traveling steps together, as well as some movements like stretching or bending while standing still. The idea is to connect the steps as smoothly as you can.
- **Force:** Include strong and light force in your movement or steps. Show your child how to be strong like a stomping elephant or soft like a snowflake gliding through the air.
- **Speed:** Does the music prompt you to move slowly or quickly? Varying the speed is one way dancers express themselves.
- **Formation:** Each family member can dance independently or with a partner. An example of partnering would be to have your child mirror your movements or vice versa.

**Step 4: Check your child's heart rate.** Teach your child to connect physical activity with maintaining a healthy heart by measuring his or her heart rate. Show your child how to feel and count his or her heart beats.

- Take your child's resting heart rate before dancing, and then check it again after you've boogied down so you can measure the increase.
- Count the number of heart beats in 15 seconds. Multiply that number by four to calculate heart rate.
- A resting heart rate should be 60 to 140 beats per minute for children between the ages of one and 10. Their heart rate should be between 120-150 beats per minute when they are physically active.

**Step 5: Enter Primrose Schools' Family Dance-off competition.** Be sure to film your family's best moves and upload your video to [FamilyDanceoff.com](http://FamilyDanceoff.com) between Feb. 1 and March 19 for a chance to win!

For more ideas to get your family dancing and other parenting tips, visit [www.DrZandFriends.com](http://www.DrZandFriends.com).

### **About Primrose Schools**

Founded in 1982, Primrose Schools is the nation's leader in providing consistent, accredited [early childhood education](#) and childcare services in more than 200 schools in 16 states. Primrose School's foundation is based on a dedicated and passionate group of early childhood professionals providing high quality education with a balance of learning, character development and play.

Primrose School's Balanced Learning® Curriculum blends teacher-directed and child-initiated activities and is consistently delivered in all Primrose Schools nationwide. This exclusive curriculum is standards-based and enables teachers to help children build a foundation of knowledge and skills that will enable them to move successfully from one level of development to the next. Primrose is the first preschool organization in the country to achieve the gold standard in educational accreditation from AdvancED and to require all of its schools to become SACS CASI or NCA CASI accredited.

For more information, visit [www.PrimroseSchools.com](http://www.PrimroseSchools.com).

### **About Children's Miracle Network Hospitals**

Children's Miracle Network Hospitals® raises funds for 170 children's hospitals across North America, which, in turn, use the money where it's needed the most. When a donation is given it stays in the community, ensuring that every dollar is helping local kids. Since 1983, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals has raised more than \$4 billion, most of it \$1 at a time. These donations have gone to support research and training, purchase equipment and pay for uncompensated care, all in support of its mission to save and improve the lives of as many children as possible. Learn more at [www.CMNHospitals.org](http://www.CMNHospitals.org).

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