

weekly people

real life, relationships and more

ARE YOU KILLING YOUR KIDS?

Complete the National Parenting Test on page 23 and find out...

GETTY



PLUS

'We're in the baby business'

Bright ideas

PAGE 26 →

'Hepatitis C was a blessing for me'

Drug legacy

PAGE 29 →

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MEET THE EXPERT

LOUISE'S TOP TIPS: Healthier options

It will take eight to 10 attempts before a child will accept a new food. Keep trying and eventually they will start eating it. Talk positively about food. Pop a cherry tomato in your mouth and say how lovely it is.

Relationships

Mum and Dad need to have dates. It's a cliché but people are not doing it. Make the effort to go out together at least once a month. It doesn't have to be expensive. People fall in love for a reason and they need to build that up again.

Television

Sit down with your children at the start of the week and plan what they will watch. Turn the TV off when you're not watching it and don't have it on during meals.

Get active

Make sure your environment is set up for activities. Have bats and balls in the back yard. Go to the park with your kids and walk to and from school.

■ Ever wondered whether your family's lifestyle is killing your kids? Now you can find out – with the help of the *Honey We're Killing the Kids* parents' survey score card. Tune into the first episode of the show screening on 7 November at 7:30pm on TV3, answer the questions that appear on screen, write your answers on the score card provided and find out if you are on the right track with your parenting skills.

weeklypeople

FAMILY HELP

Nutritionist Dr Louise Schofield has one of the toughest – and most rewarding – jobs on TV

Tears well up when the shocking image of how the child will look at 40 appears onscreen. But it isn't just the horrified parents on *Honey We're Killing the Kids* who feel like crying. Programme health adviser Dr Louise Schofield has a hard job controlling her emotions too.

"It is such a difficult thing to do," says Louise (35), who admits that the "reveal"

is the hardest part of her job. "I'm saying, 'Look, you're killing your kids,' and that's very hard to say to parents.

"I have a tear in my eye every time."

Louise, whose background is in the areas of education and public health promotion, is passionate about the families' lifestyle changes and the success they have had.

But when she was first approached by a TV producer asking for her help with the New Zealand version of the hit British show, she wasn't sure Kiwi families would be unhealthy enough to fit the show's format.

"When I first saw the UK show, I thought, 'We don't have families like that here.' It was so extreme I didn't think it was possible. But I have been proven wrong."

So Louise decided to take up the challenge of providing expert advice on diet, health, fitness and relationships for the families who appear on the show.

"I had a meeting with the show's producer

and halfway through she pulled out a video camera and started filming me," laughs Louise. "I didn't realise she was thinking of getting me to be the presenter too."

Being a mother herself, Louise knows that modern-day parenting does not always help children, and admits she too is guilty of it.

She says we "overmother" our kids.

"We wrap kids up in cotton wool. We drive them to school and generally mollycoddle and fuss too much."

More than anything, Louise wants to get good parenting advice out into the homes where it is most needed.

"Every family featured on the show has been asked if they would do it again and they have all replied, 'Absolutely'.

"It doesn't mean they will be perfect after the show, but it does mean a couple of key messages will sink in and that's what we are aiming for," says Louise.

Jonica Bray

ARE YOU KILLING YOUR KIDS?

National Parenting Test

PHOTOLIBRARY



1 What is the minimum amount of physical activity (moderate to vigorous) that a school-aged child should get each day?

- a. 120 minutes
- b. 30 minutes
- c. 45 minutes
- d. 60 minutes

2 What is the maximum amount of screen time (TV and computer use, not including homework) school-aged children should engage in each day?

- a. 2 hours
- b. 5 hours
- c. 4 hours
- d. 7 hours



3 Giving positive (rewards) and negative (punishment) reinforcement helps to modify behaviour in children. What are the most effective rewards and punishments?

- a. Praise and smacking
- b. Money and time out
- c. Praise and withdrawal of privileges
- d. Food treats and ignoring the behaviour

4 Why is it important to have a daily routine and structure for children, especially regarding bedtimes?

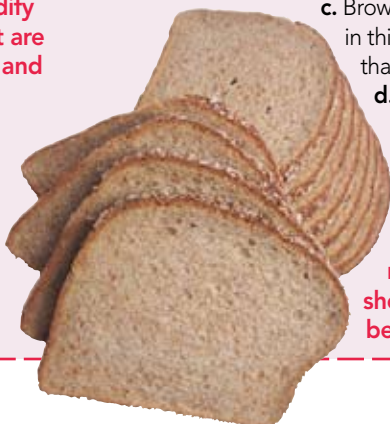
- a. Allows time in the evening for parents to spend time alone together
- b. Ensures children get the necessary amount of sleep
- c. A schedule provides structure and makes it easier to make healthy choices
- d. All of the above

5 What are the advantages of eating together at the dinner table with the TV turned off?

- a. Your mother-in-law will think you are being a good parent
- b. It encourages communication and bonding
- c. It's easier to clean up after dinner
- d. The telephone will ring less

6 Why are wholegrain and multigrain breads better for kids' health?

- a. Because they contain more fibre
- b. Because they have a lower GI (Glycemic Index) than white bread
- c. Brown breads are higher in thiamine (vitamin B1) than white breads
- d. All of the above



7 When introducing new foods to children, how many times should the food be presented

before it is accepted that the child really does not care for that food?

- a. One time only
- b. Three times, with a break between
- c. Five times over the course of five weeks
- d. 10 times in different ways (eg mashed, boiled or grilled) over a six-month period

8 At what age is it acceptable to introduce children to low-fat milk?

- a. From one month of age
- b. From two years of age
- c. From 15 years of age
- d. From 18 years of age



9 Why is it important to encourage children to prepare dinner and learn to cook?

- a. Because it will teach children that life is hard work
- b. It will teach children to behave better
- c. Because they will learn about nutrition and are more likely to try new foods
- d. Because it will encourage them to become a master chef

10 Who are the strongest and most influential role models in children's lives?

- a. School teachers
- b. Friends
- c. Parents or primary caregivers
- d. Sports coaches

Answers on page 24 →

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National Parenting Test

ANSWERS

1. D

Young people need at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. This can include everyday activities, such as playing with friends, or structured activities such as sports. Note that 60 minutes of activity is the minimum – several hours per day is encouraged.

2. A

Kids should have no more than two hours of screen time per day. This includes using TV, computers and video games but excludes educational computer use such as during homework. On the show, the two-hour rule was extended to include one screen-free day per week. This decreases the likelihood of children becoming dependent on TV or computers as leisure activities.

3. C

Smacking teaches children to use force to get what they want. Smacked children change their behaviour out of fear, whereas unsmacked children are more likely to change on the basis of right and wrong. Try using time out instead of smacking. Ignoring behaviour is also a good technique. Use praise to encourage behaviour you want to see repeated and withdraw privileges to discourage unwanted behaviour. It is never a good idea to use food as a reward – it implies that non-treat food is not as good.

Mum and dad need to work as a team:

- Back each other up when you ask for something to be done.
- Show your children you support each other.
- If mum has said “no”, dad must say “no” too, and vice versa.
- Reinforce positive behaviour – be lavish with your praise!
- Enforce consequences when things are not done – be consistent and never give in when you have set up a consequence.



4. D

Having a planned schedule for the day is good for children as it allows them to know what to expect as well as what is expected of them. In organised households, children get more sleep and tend to have healthier diets. They go to bed earlier too – leaving valuable “together time” for parents.

5. B

Research shows that eating as a family at the table can:

- Strengthen family relationships.
- Increase children’s communication skills.
- Help teens to cope with the stresses of adolescence.
- Lead to better nutrition as you have more control over the quantity of food eaten and the quality of kids’ food choices.
- Teach children good attitudes to food and acceptable table manners.

6. D

Wholegrain and multigrain bread cause less of a rise in blood sugar than white bread and this results in a more sustained release of energy. Brown breads are

higher in fibre and contain more vitamins than white breads, and are better for cardiovascular health as they contain more “healthy (unsaturated) fats”.

7. D

Children’s tastebuds can take a while to adjust to a new taste or texture. The trick is to present a new food many times in varying forms. If this done without making a big fuss, children will often start to eat the new food. It is also important to remember to discuss healthy foods in a positive way.

8. B

Before the age of two, infants should be breast-fed or having a specially formulated infant formula. When cow’s milk is introduced to their diet at age two, a low-fat variety such as Lite Blue, green- or yellow-top should be selected to decrease the level of saturated fat consumed. New

Zealand children have no shortage of saturated fat in their diets so reduced-fat milk is a good option.

9. C

Cooking is an important life skill. Children should learn to cook because:

- It will help them to learn about what they are eating and encourage them to eat healthy food.
- They will learn about nutrition, helping them to make healthy food choices later in life.
- Learning to make their own food will give them a sense of responsibility for their own nutrition. It will help them to develop self-confidence and independence.

10. C

A child’s parents or primary caregivers are the first and most influential role models in their lives. Children look to their parents to learn what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. It is important to realise that children learn the most from what they see parents do, rather than what they say.