

**GCCHM Leadership Certification
Level VI, Course #1**

**GOD'S DESIGN FOR HIGHLY HEALTHY CHILDREN
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(Presenter's Notes)**

What's a Highly Healthy Child?

True health involves our entire beings, with all the following elements functioning:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Relational
- Spiritual

The well being of highly healthy children depends on their inner life as well as their physical health. God wants to nourish and promote a healthy emotional, relational, and spiritual life because without it, our children simply will be less healthy than God designed them to be (Proverbs 17:22; Matthew 5:3-12; 6:33; Luke 6:20-26; and 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 are just a few Bible passage that support this statement).

Nick Zervanos, M. D., family physician says:

"When the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of well-being are singing in harmony, you're healthy. That doesn't mean there is no room for a dissonant chord, but that the music of life is pleasant to the ear."

Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, p. 103.

"The future happiness of your families and the welfare of society depend largely upon the physical and moral education which your children receive in the first years of their life."

The Four Wheels of Health

- Physical –the well-being of a child's body
- Emotional – the well-being of a child's mental faculties and connection with his or her emotions
- Relational – the well-being of a child's associations with parents, family members, friends, and community; and
- Spiritual – the well-being of a child's relationship with God

The Physical Wheel

- Preventing diseases and treating it as early as possible is essential.
- When illness or disorder occurs, physical health involves learning to cope and adapt as needed.

Illustration: Kate was born with cerebral palsy. Most of her right brain and about one-half of her left brain died and dissolved while she was in the womb. The brain damage greatly affected her physical development. She had had several operations to straighten her limbs

and eyes. She wore braces and splints, casts and eye patched, and for a time she was in a wheelchair.

Though she is not normal, but Kate has learned to cope and adapt. She learns to care for herself physically. She takes her medications, makes her doctor appointments, and does her own self-care. Her physical wheel is fairly healthy—not because her health is perfect but because it is reasonably balanced.

Kate could become unhealthy if her parents had not helped and supported her and taught her to adapt. Other children with similar disabilities became obese and unhappy.

The Physical Wheel

- Activity – exercise, play outside, participates in sports and physical education.
- Rest – adequate sleep and rest.
- Nutrition – drink water, nutritious foods, abstain from alcohol, smoking, etc.
- Immunizations – get the necessary immunizations and recommended vaccines.

The Emotional Wheel

- Great emotional health is not the absence of emotional stress.
- Emotional health is learning to cope with and then embrace the full spectrum of human emotions—positive and negative.
- Parents must teach our children how to appropriately recognize and express the full range of human emotions.

The Emotional Wheel

- Love/Respect – communicate love & respect to your child.
- Affirmation/Appreciation -- Praise your child's unique qualities, gifts, and talents.
- Media/Learning – influence your child's learning. Encourage reading, playing besides TV/ computer games.
- Boundaries -- Set appropriate & limits for media use and learning.

The Relational Wheel

- A child's relationship with his parents, siblings, friends, schoolmates, teachers, neighbors and the community affects his relational health.
- Parents must involve their children in healthy relationships and protect them from toxic relationships.
- Teach children how to exercise discernment in their relationships.

The Relational Wheel

- Relationship with Parents – need to spend time with your child – critical to his/her self-concept and ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
- Connectedness – is foundational to a child's relational & emotional health. Helps develop constructive interactions with others, good attitude, optimistic, and can tackle life's problems.

The Spiritual Wheel

- Personal relationship with God – personal devotions, Bible reading & prayer.
- Prayer – involvement in prayer groups, prayer conference.

- Spiritual instruction – training in church doctrines, Sabbath Schools. and Bible study guides, small groups
- Spiritual activity – involvement in church worship and activity, involvement in community services.

Valuable Teaching Principles

1. Be Proactive in Preventing Physical Disease

- Make sure your children receive regular checkups.
- See to it that your children receive appropriate immunizations.
- See to it that your children receive preventive dental care.

2. Ensure Proper Nutrition

- Teach them to select a balanced diet.
- Eat more vegetables and fruits and less meat.
- A healthy eating plate should have:
 - Vegetables
 - Proteins
 - Whole grains
 - Fruits
- Limit or eliminate fast food.
- Avoid snacks, sweets, and fast foods.

The Healthy Eating Pyramid – Harvard School of Public Health

Eat a plant-based diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables with various colors.

- Whole Grain Bread, Cereal, Pasta, and Rice Group—Eat Liberally—6-11 servings at most meals.
- Vegetables—Eat in abundance – 3-5 servings.
- Fruit -- 2-4 servings
- Legume, Nut, Seed —Eat Moderately— 1-3 times a day.
- Vegetable Fats and Oils (olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and other vegetable oils).
- Vegetables—Eat Generously—3-5 servings
- Fish, poultry, eggs – 0-2 times a day.
- Dairy or calcium supplement— 1-2 times a day.
- Red meat, butter, white rice, white bread, white pasta, potatoes, soda, and sweets – use sparingly.

Dangers of Childhood Obesity (Mayo Clinic Report)

- Childhood obesity is on the rise in children.
- Childhood obesity is now an epidemic in the United States.
- Childhood obesity increases the risk of childhood diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular risks.

U. S. Childhood Obesity Facts

(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm)

AGES	1980	2012
Children & Adolescents	In 30 years	Doubled Quadrupled
6-11	7%	18%
12-19	5%	21%
Children & Adolescents		>1/3 overweight

What Can You Do?

- Turn off the TV and get some exercise—5 or more hours of TV have 5 times more likely to be overweight.
- Limit or eliminate fast food—a Big Mac with fries and large soda, he gets 1,500 ca.
- Eat Together as a family—study by American Psychological Association found that teens who are with families 5 or more times a week were less likely to do drugs or depressed, were motivated at school & had better peer relationships.

3. Provide Adequate Protection

- Protect our children by building strong relationships with them.
 - Love them unconditionally
 - Listen to them as they share concerns
 - Hug them, write notes, little gifts, etc.
 - Build their self-esteem & confidence
 - Spend time to do things together
- Protect our children through discipline
 - Define boundaries before enforcing them
 - Avoid making impossible demands
 - Distinguish between willful defiance & childish irresponsibility
 - When defiantly challenged, respond with confident decisiveness
 - Reassure and teach after the confrontation is over
 - Let love be our guide
- Protect our children from a hostile world
 - Guard against abuse & abduction.
 - Know where your children are
 - Know their friends
 - Teach them how get help
 - Teach children to face bullying head on
 - Investigate the school's anti-bullying policy
 - Guard against strangers on the internet and television
 - Too much TV viewing can decrease family interaction, lower creativity, shape our children's minds and hearts
- **Protect your children from substance abuse**
 - Set an example as parents
 - Talk to your children about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, cigarettes

4. Nurture Family Relationships

- Strong families impact a child's physical, psychological, educational, social health.
- Studies show that father love is important in predicting social, emotional, & cognitive development & functioning of children & young adults.
- Developmental psychologist Brenda Hunter's studies leads her to conclude that mothers play a powerful role in a child's formation of conscience & empathy.

5. Establish A Spiritual Foundation

- God intends that the home to be the primary religious training facility, not the church (Deuteronomy 6).
- It is important to live and teach our children spiritual beliefs that permeate our conversation & interactions with our children.
- According to Barna's survey, children ages 5-13 have a 32% likelihood of beginning a relationship with God.

Research about Spirituality

- Three variables emerge strongly from James Garbarino's studies of kids committing senseless, violent crimes:
 - * Spiritual emptiness (vacuum)—a lack of spiritual meaning in a child's life lead to despair
 - * Toxic social environment
 - * Family instability

Illustrations: Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold shot and killed twelve classmates and one teacher at Columbine High School before taking their own lives. They were healthy physically, however, their emotional and social health wheels were severely damaged, and their spiritual wheel was totally deflated. According to the videotapes the killers made weeks before American's most deadly high school shooting, they shared an intense hostility toward Christianity and Christians.

Garbarino writes, "With neither hope nor a sense of purpose, troubled [children] are psychologically adrift and ... are drawn to nihilism, Satanism, and all the other 'isms' of the dark side."

- Andrew Weaver's research concludes that a spiritual foundation helps to buffer children from the cultural and social poisons of modern life.
- Parents need to develop true spirituality that results in the most important and enduring form of health and vitality.
- Medical studies clearly show that spiritual distress can negatively affect physical, emotional, and relational health.
- Spiritual distress or crisis occurs when people cannot find meaning, hope, joy, satisfaction, love, peace, comfort, strength, and connection in life.

Establishing Your Child's Spiritual Foundation

- Balance your own spiritual wheel.
- Teach your children spiritual truth daily.
- Pray with and for your children and family.
- Involve your family in a faith community.
- Prepare your children to make a difference in their world.

Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance*, 163

“No higher work was ever committed to mortals than the shaping of character. Children are not only to be educated, but trained as well; and who can tell the future of a growing child, or youth? Let the greatest care be bestowed upon the culture of your children. One child, properly disciplined in the principles of truth, who has the love and fear of God woven through the character, will possess a power for good in the world that cannot be estimated.”

6. Connect With the Larger Community

- Allow your children to grow beyond the family.
- Teach them to obey and respect authority.
- Teach them to respect differences that make people unique.
- Teach them to contribute to the world around them.
- Teach them to build great friendships.
- Teach them to seek out mentors:
 - ✓ Mentors provide unconditional support
 - ✓ Mentors model positive values attitudes, and behaviors
 - ✓ Mentors help kids discover solutions to their problems
 - ✓ Mentors help kids look beyond today and to see tomorrow’s possibilities

Hebrews 13:16 (The Bible)

“And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

7. Instill A Balanced Self-Concept

- Child development experts tell us that when a child believes he or she is a certain kind of person, that belief guides his or her behavior.
- An unhealthy self-concept originates in childhood.
- Parents, teachers, and peers are very important influences on a child’s developing self-concept.
- According to John Eldredge, boys & girls seek answers primarily from their dads regarding how strong they are, or how beautiful they are.

Nurturing Your Child’s Self-Concept

- Love each child unconditionally.
- Understand each child’s temperament.
- Provide plenty of focused attention.
- Give plenty of appropriate physical contact.
- Appreciate uniqueness of each child.
- Encourage child to believe in himself or herself.
- Allow your child to make his or her own healthy choices.

8. Engage in Healthy Activities

- There needs to be a balanced diet for the mind:
 - * Reading aloud to your children stimulates their brains
 - * Reading together as a family and discuss about stories or articles read
- Choose active as well as passive activities for the family.
- Choose activities with physical health benefits.

- Choose activities that promote spiritual health.
- Help your children choose the right balance of appropriate activities.
- Do not over plan too many activities.
- Plan a healthy dose of family traditions.
 - * Have kids write down their feelings
 - * Start a gratitude journal
- Make family vacations a healthy memory.

9. Cultivate Growth & Maturity

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

- Each child is to be trained according to his or her bent – according to his or her temperament and giftedness, according to the way he or she is created.
- Children need cheerleaders, not critics.
- Avoid comparing them with others.
- Don’t demand perfection.
- Avoid making rash comments in anger.
- Cheer them through their ups and downs.
- Give them wings and let go.
- Be sure to allow mistakes.

May the essentials presented by Dr. Larimore will assist you in raising highly healthy children, who will become highly healthy adults, who will contribute mightily to the health of the world around them.

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