

Fit Kids

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 29 June 2012 13:21 -



Summer program gets kids off the couch and into the gym

With the national attention that First Lady Michelle Obama has placed on physical fitness and this country's battle against the bulge, it's no surprise more and more local parents are pushing their kids off the couch and into the gymnasium.

It's not a big struggle, though, for most parents whose children are enrolled in Gothenburg's Fit Kids program.

"The kids really look forward to it," says director Jonathan Meyer, a sixth-grade teacher leading his fourth summer of Fit Kids.

The program offers a variety of sessions for different age groups including simple fitness, basketball instruction, power and speed development and a 3-on-3 basketball league.

Beginning next month, volleyball skill development will replace basketball for most participants.

"We've tried to offer football but there just wasn't enough interest," Meyer said.



The program is Meyer's brainchild, something he came up with the summer before student teaching for his education degree.

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While still living in Broken Bow, Meyer approached that city's summer recreation director with a plan for Fit Kids and it was immediately successful.

After his first year teaching in Gothenburg, Meyer took the idea to the District 20 school board.

"It has grown quite a bit," Meyer said.

In the first three years, Meyer said he averaged 80 students between first and eighth grades.

This year, enrollment is at 125.

"Parents have been very positive," Meyer said. "This whole community just seems to be supportive and it has worked out well."

As he has become more comfortable, Meyer has added programs.

This year he sweetened the deal with volleyball and 3-on-3 basketball.

"It was originally just fitness," he said. "We worked on overall body movements, exercise and hand-eye coordination."

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My next fitness tip is to get your child to do a dumbbell press. This is a great exercise for the chest, shoulders, and triceps. It's also a great way to get your child to use their arms and core muscles. To do this, have your child lie on their back on a mat with their feet flat on the floor. They should hold a dumbbell in each hand with their arms extended straight up. They should then lift the dumbbells up to their shoulders, keeping their elbows close to their body. They should then lower the dumbbells back down to the starting position. This is one repetition. Repeat for 10-15 repetitions.