

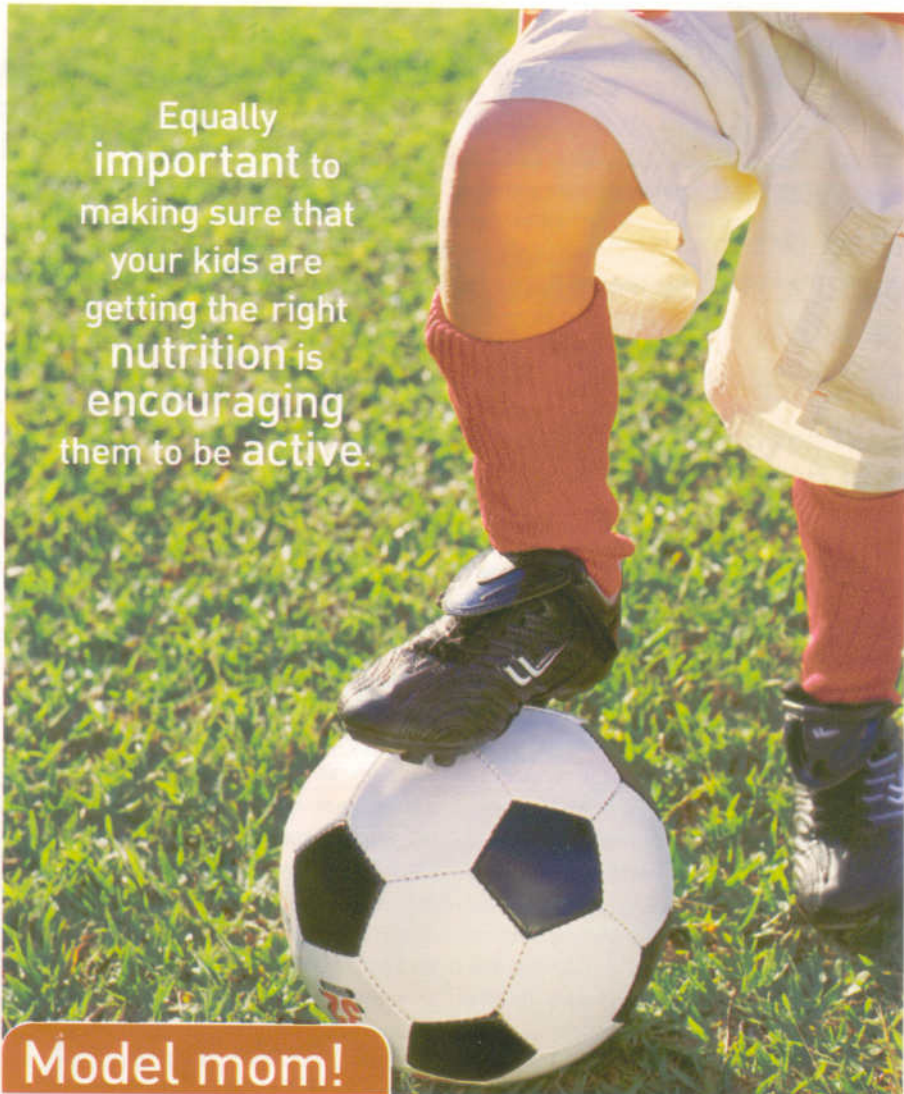
only a 7% chance of becoming overweight. By the time they are 15 or 16 and have a will of their own, then they can do what they like, to some extent, but before this time you have a chance to educate their palate.

Marieke van Rooyen, a Bryanston-based dietician, says that, ironically, in an age of increasing obesity, parents worry about underfeeding their children. If you are worried about your child's weight, see a dietician and find out where your child's weight for his or her age and height should be. "You don't have to force feed children. They eat when they're hungry. These days everything is enriched or fortified, and too much of a good thing," says Marieke.

Encourage exercise

Equally important to making sure that your kids are getting the right nutrition is encouraging them to be active. We all know the formula: that in order to avoid obesity, energy input must equal energy output – and so it is vital that kids are encouraged to run around and play. According to Howard Snoyman, a qualified fitness trainer who works with children, kids should be exposed to sports from as young as possible.

Playball is a great method of introducing your kids to ball sports. The concept is to improve hand-eye coordination while still having fun at the same time. It is a fantastic stepping stone into school sports and as a welcome consequence, additional social interaction, which is particularly important in terms of helping introverted children. At home, children can have fun skipping with a skipping rope, playing soccer (even against the wall in the backyard), practising basketball, throwing cricket balls in the garden, swimming – the list is endless! The purchase of a basketball board and net to hang above the garage door in the driveway, for example, will occupy a child for many hours per week, and is sure to be an attraction whenever family and friends visit. "I have set up a boxing bag for the older children that I train. The kids can box, kick and can even practise some kind of martial art on the bag. One particular client has gone from never doing any exercise



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Model mom!

Leigh Maidwell, who is a single working mom with three children, is a super example of someone who has adopted the attitude of encouraging a healthy lifestyle, despite all the stresses she has to endure. Having fallen pregnant for the first time at the age of 21, Leigh says she never used to find time for herself, but someone pointed out to her that she had to slow down. "I have had to

teach myself the words: 'It's Mommy's time'," she says. Leigh started karate lessons with her son Jason, who today at age 15 is a champion. She herself has reached the level of a brown belt and loves going there to release tension and bond with her kids through this activity. "My kids are all outgoing, positive, confident, very busy and well-rounded," she says.

to partaking in an hour session of boxing/kicking twice a week. In addition to losing weight due to the amount of skipping and hopping, he is also becoming increasingly fit," explains Howard.

"It is vital that parents actively participate

in a form of exercise with their children. If children grow up in an active, sporty environment, it becomes second nature to them to seek out physical activity when bored. In this regard, *Supersport's* initiative 'Lets Play' and the *Omo* 'Dirt is Good' campaign are truly commendable," he adds.