

Lifestyle

Green Time vs. Screen Time

HEALTHY & HAPPY CHILDREN



By Dr. Leila Masson, M.D., MPH, FRACP, FACNEM, DTMH

LIFESTYLE

for healthy and happy children

Benefits of:

- time spent in nature
- exercise
- limited screen time
- stress reduction



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NDD - Nature deficit disorder

Time in nature makes children happier:

- Improves health and fitness, motor skills
- Reduces stress and increases resilience
- Increases attention and learning
- Improves cognition, problem solving, constructive and imaginative play

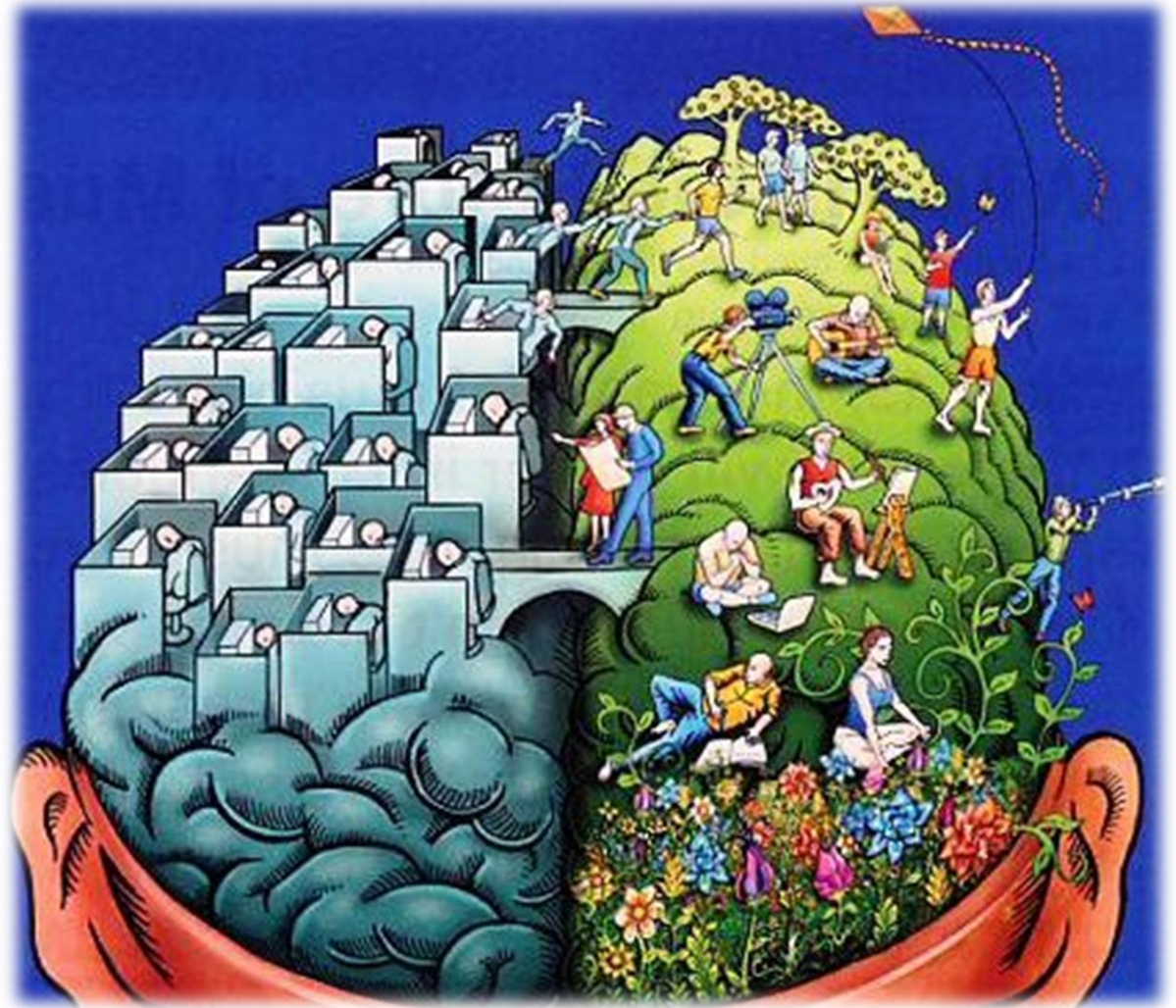


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Nature has a calming effect on the brain & increases endorphins

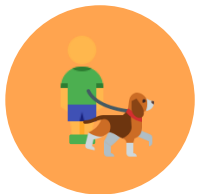




How do you feel when you look at this picture?

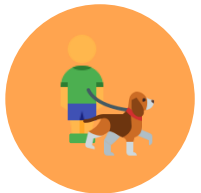
Green play to fight NDD

- Exposure to everyday green spaces may help treat ADHD: Overall milder ADHD symptoms and **better concentration** if children spent regular time in green area; **less hyperactivity** after playing in big open green fields.
- Children with attention deficits **concentrate better after a walk** in the park: Effect size similar to Ritalin
- Play in green or natural setting **reduces ADHD symptoms**: the greener the better
- **Improved cognitive development** in children exposed to green spaces (partly due to decreased exposure to air pollution)



Ideas for green play

- Walk, bike, scooter in the park
- Playground
- Skip rope or kick a ball in the backyard
- Climb a tree
- Build a sandcastle
- Surf, swim, paddle
- Go for a hike
- Grow a (veggie) garden
- Camping – in your backyard?



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Exercise & health

- At least 60 minutes a day
- Reduces stress hormones
- Increases white blood cells, antibodies, body temperature



Benefits of exercise

...ideally outdoors

- Fitness, lower BMI
- Motor skills
- Blood flow to body and brain
- Reduced stress hormones
- Happiness
- Improved sleep
- Vitamin D from sunshine
- Reduced time spent on screens...



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Screen time

- Screen time before 3 years of age increases the risk of ADHD
- AAP Recommendation: no screens for <18 months
- <1 hour per day for <5 years
- Reasonable limits for older children
- Affects concentration, focus, mood, behaviour



Effect of screens

...and blue light

- Reduces melatonin production – affects sleep
- Digital eyestrain
- Computer vision syndrome: headaches, blurry vision
- Behaviour problems
- Addiction – dopamine
- Content – avoid violence



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Practical tips

- Make a media plan with your child: content and time limits
- Set a timer, remind your child 5 minutes before time runs out
- Make it social: join in
- Check out: www.healthychildren.org
- Find fun non-screen activities
- No screens at meal times
- No screens in bedrooms
- Model good tech behaviour



healthychildren.org
Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

- Home
- Create Your Family Media Plan
- Media Time Calculator

Family Media Plan


The screenshot shows a navigation menu on the left with three items: 'Home', 'Create Your Family Media Plan', and 'Media Time Calculator'. To the right is a photograph of a young boy in a yellow shirt wearing earbuds and looking at a tablet. Below the photo is a white banner with the text 'Family Media Plan' in a bold, brown font.



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A conceptual image illustrating stress reduction. In the center, a black silhouette of a person is shown in a meditative lotus position. The text "REDUCE STRESS" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the person's back. The background is a light blue gradient, populated with numerous coronavirus particles. Some particles are in sharp focus in the foreground, while others are blurred in the background, creating a sense of a pervasive environment. The overall color palette is monochromatic, using shades of blue and black.

**REDUCE
STRESS**

Find out what stresses
your child and eliminate
the cause – if possible



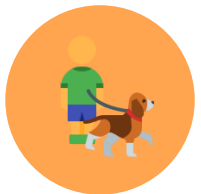
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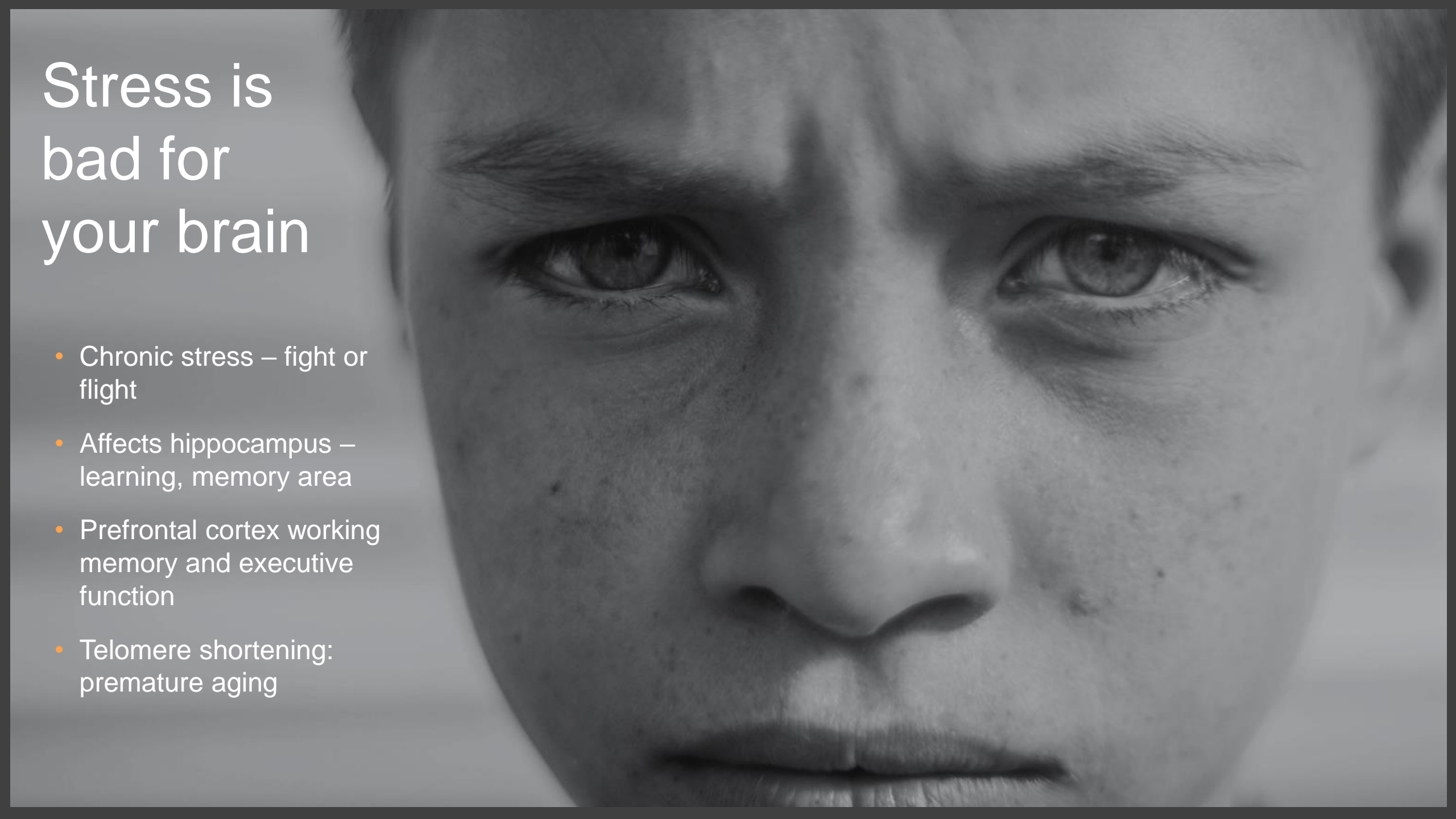
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Emotional stress has the same effect on cells as chemical toxins





Stress is bad for your brain

- Chronic stress – fight or flight
- Affects hippocampus – learning, memory area
- Prefrontal cortex working memory and executive function
- Telomere shortening: premature aging



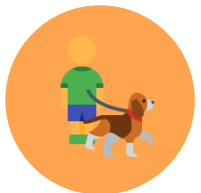
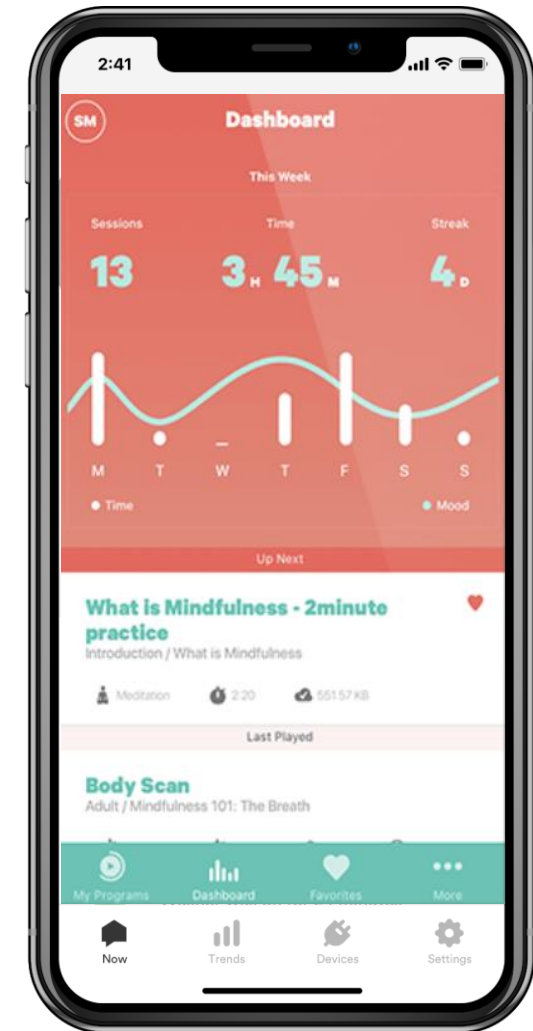
SMILING. MIND.

REDUCE
STRESS



Relaxation

- Brain workout for areas that are important for focus, memory, learning
- Improved immune system
- Less inflammation
- Stronger bones



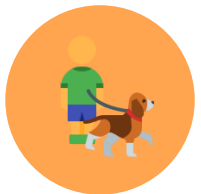
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Practical tips to reduce stress

- Less or no homework for young kids
- Do not overschedule
- Free play time
- Relaxation exercises, guided imagery
- Music
- Massage – essential oils
- Sign up for a positive parenting course



Marble Jar



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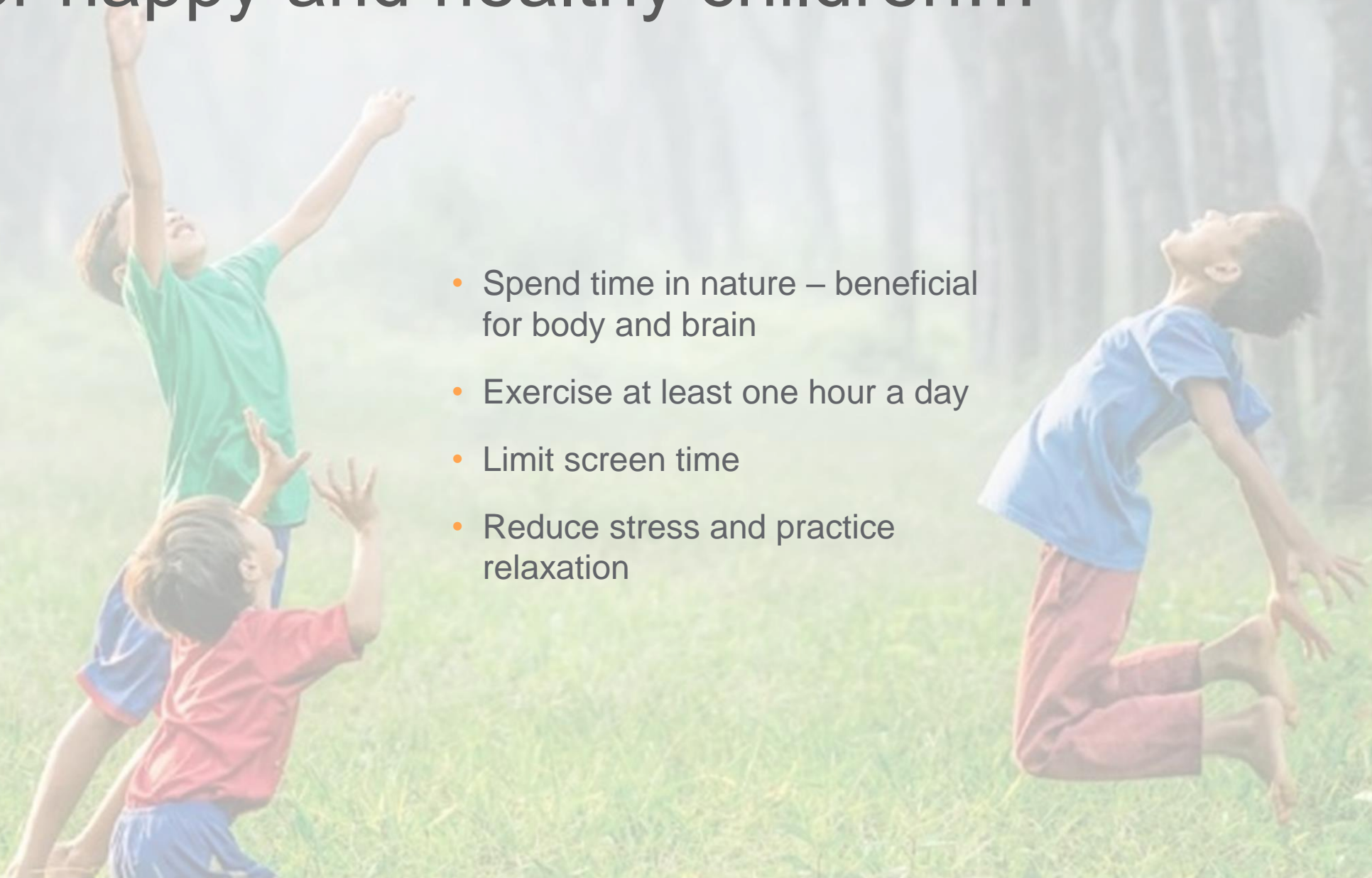
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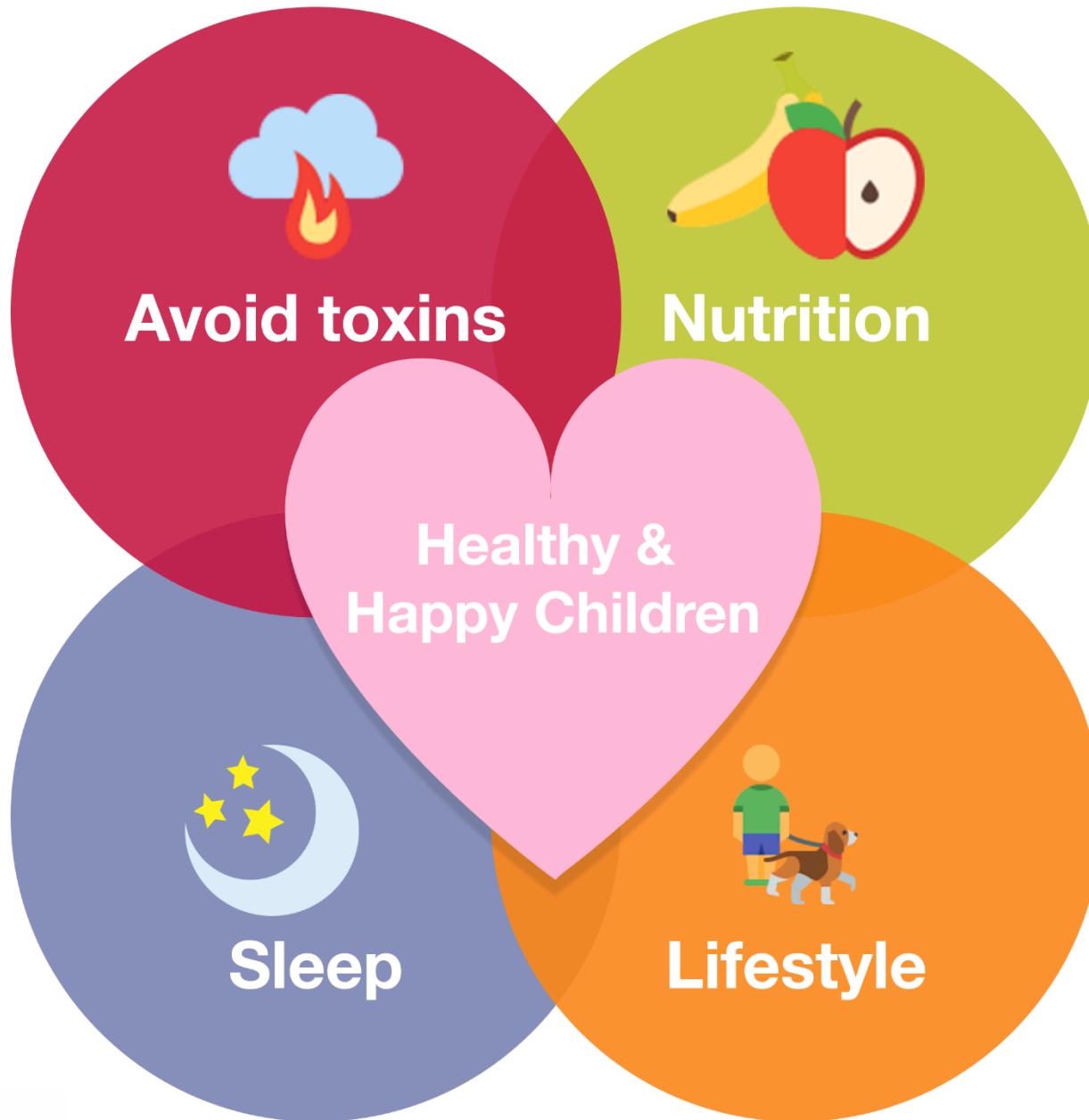
Get a pet!



For happy and healthy children...

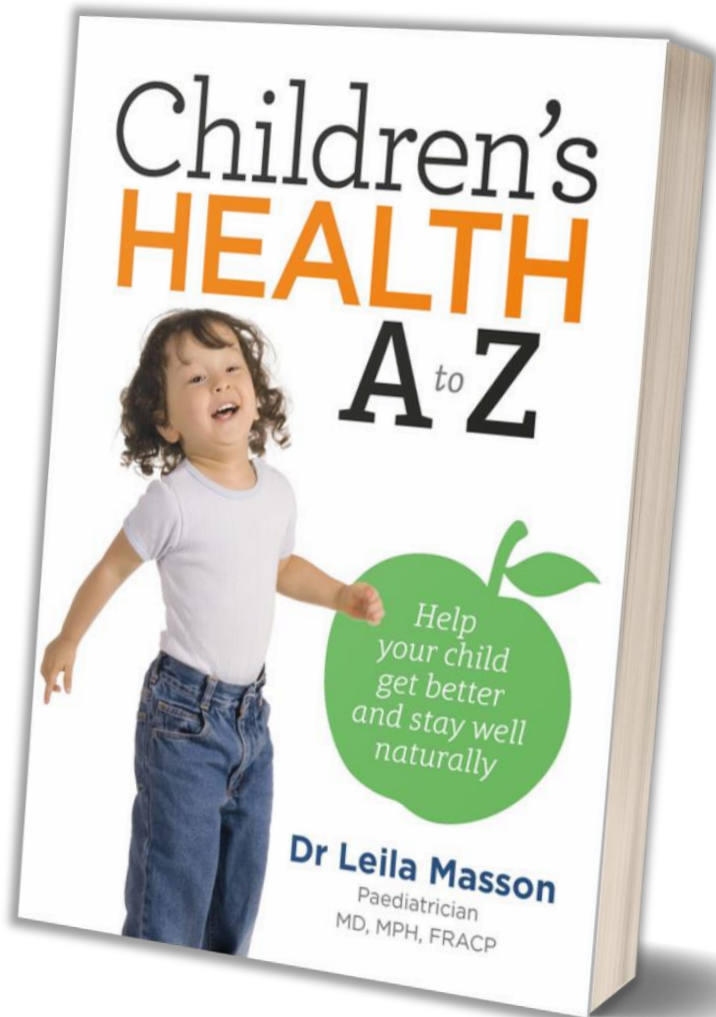
- Spend time in nature – beneficial for body and brain
- Exercise at least one hour a day
- Limit screen time
- Reduce stress and practice relaxation





My book

Children's Health A to Z



“A fantastic resource to have on hand. Great easy to understand advice and recommendations. A must-have!”



“Great book it is our bible in our house. If something is wrong with our children this is our first point of reference. Very easy to use and understand . Great present for a new parent.”



“This book is my go to every time our 3 children fall ill, its full of helpful remedies which really work and it is so easy to use and follow.”



“Incredible book -my go to for any childhood illness. Fantastic, knowledgeable advice. Easy to understand and follow. Highly recommend.”

Available at: Amazon, Fishpond and Bateman publishing



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