

## - Children—nutrition / Child development

### Boosting mental energy

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MANY parents find their children lagging in focus and mental energy around the end of the second school term.



According to Michele Carelse, CEO of Feelgood Health, whether or not your child has received a diagnosis of neurodiversity, there are natural steps parents can take to help their child improve concentration and focus.

Having started her career as a clinical psychologist helping families deal with issues such as ADHD and ADD, Carelse recommends:

**Embrace a healthy family diet:** “You can’t underestimate the importance of healthy eating when it comes to children’s brain development and brain power. Reducing sugar intake, avoiding food additives and focusing on fresh, wholefoods makes a real impact. You want to make sure your child has a good intake of Omega-3 fatty acids from foods such as avocado, tuna, nuts and olive oil, as well as a variety of vegetables and fruit that provide a wide spectrum of vitamins and minerals.”

**Get physically active:** “Research has shown that outdoor exercise, whether that’s organised sports or rambling family walks and bike rides helps both children and adults to calm the mind, regulate emotions more effectively and release stress. Plan out your weekdays as well as the weekends to make sure you have time for daily physical activity. Getting out together as a family is also fun and it builds bonds, improving emotional well-being and enhancing resilience.”

**Limit screen time:** “With so much time spent online and so much entertainment available on-screen, our children need breaks every day from their devices. Set screen limits for the family and stick to them.”

**Implement sleep hygiene:** “There’s a lot of research showing that children today are not getting enough quality sleep. Problems with concentration and focus, as well as feeling moody, anxious or depressed can be attributed to, or worsened by inadequate sleep. Keep your children’s bedrooms free of devices and screens; find a calming bedtime routine that works for your family and make a good night’s rest for everyone a priority in your home.” Find support in natural remedies: “Explore a holistic approach to your family’s health to help support improved concentration and focus, and a calmer outlook in children. The advantage of natural remedies is that they are effective, free of nasty ingredients and non-addictive.”