

Making Health Easier: Healthy Changes Start in Preschool

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Claudia Mendoza] Inhale. Exhale. Again. Inhale. Exhale. One more time. Inhale. Okay, we're ready to start our day. My name is Claudia Mendoza and for the past five years I've been working with preschoolers. Child obesity - it's a problem in the US and it's a growing epidemic, but what worries me the most, it's something that could be prevented. One third of kids are overweight or obese. But now as the kids come, I want to do something about it.

[All] I'm moving. I'm learning. I'm moving. I'm learning. I'm learning to move, I'm moving to learn, so come on everybody let's sing this song.

[Claudia Mendoza] They're like little sponges that absorb everything. So as much information we can pass them out to them, they learn and they talk about it and they take that to their families, as well.

[Helen Wang] Amelia talks to me about the yoga classes and she tries to teach me her yoga poses. (Laugh)

[Claudia Mendoza] I saw the yoga class and was like, you know, I want to bring that to my classroom, too. It's not the yoga that is, like, concentration. It's yoga for preschool, which is only focused on stretching. And I also read that the benefits, you know, it's about controlling their bodies.

[Nicole Magallanes] It was nice to kind of boost her ego a little bit with something that she could teach us that we really couldn't teach her at all.

[Claudia Mendoza] We're going to leave it in our garden so we can see how they grow and we could eat all the stuff. Gardening and cooking with the kids is something very fun. And it also teach the kids, you know, where the food comes from. It teach the kids, you know, about the importance of nutrition.

[Helen Wang] Here she's planting a carrot, but at home, she's taking care of a tomato plant. One of Miss Claudia's lessons.

[Claudia Mendoza] If I could share an example of one of the kids, the parents shared with me that, you know, at home, he used to drink soda. So now he say, "No I need water cause my teacher say I need to drink water." So the family started drinking water, as well. He's making an impact as, you know, as young as four years old. Who's ready for lunch?

[Kids] Me!

[Claudia Mendoza] They're learning healthier habits at this age. It will stay with them for life.

[Fernando Magallanes] When we go to the store, she'll pick out fruit that *she* wants... healthier alternatives.

[Helen Wang] I've seen my kid grow, not only academically, but as a person, as a human being, and she's really learning, umm...you know things that will grow with her, that will make her make better decisions.

[Child] Let's go!

[Fernando Magallenes] The stuff she learns at school is going to carry on throughout her life.

[Claudia Mendoza] I think it's important we, as teachers, as adults, as parents, we have to show them. Sometimes we want the kids to read; they have to see us reading. We want them to eat vegetables; they have to see us eating vegetables. We want the kids to exercise; we have to exercise, as well. If everybody does just their little part, we could do so much.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.