

## Questions for Sept. 2005 *Whole Foods* Children's Health article

Answered by Dr. Richard W.M. Visser, SimplyH CEO and Founder;  
Caribbean Obesity Coalition (COCO) President

*BIO: Dr. Richard Visser, a holistic and integrative medicine doctor, is a trailblazer in childhood obesity research, and is continually on the forefront of addressing kids' evolving developmental needs and raising the awareness of proper nutrition for healthy and fit toddlers and children. Through his current clinical research on children and the obesity pandemic, he has identified a great need for new nutritional options for toddlers. As founder and CEO of SimplyH, a global health organization, he continues his quest to revolutionize the way people think about health and healing through continual research, product innovation and community education.*

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- 1. We've often heard the phrase, the younger you are, the healthier you are, even in regard to children. To what degree is this true of today's children? Please include comments on childhood obesity, autism, ADHD, and other conditions that tend to afflict children.**

Childhood overweight and obesity does not *fully* discriminate according to age. Younger children have a slightly lower incidence of excess weight, but unfortunately they have recently been catching-up with their older siblings; the American Heart Association has found that children's excess weight gain is beginning at a younger age. From 1994 to 2002 the incidence of overweight 2-5 year-olds increased 3 percent, and undoubtedly the current 2005 percentage is growing as well. According to the most recent 2002 numbers from the American Heart Association and American Obesity Association, children's health is in an increasingly dismal state across the board:

- 2-5 year-olds: 10% overweight
- 6-11 year-olds: 15% obese
- 12-19 year-olds: 16% obese

Many factors are currently influencing our children's health. From increasingly larger meal portions, to increased sedentary activity, to an abundance of readily available sugary snacks and drinks; our kids are becoming heavier. With this extra weight comes increased risk of health problems such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes and developmental disorders.

- 2. What sorts of products and/or supplements do babies and children require the most? And how can natural health retailers best direct parents/guardians to these products?**

Toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged kids will benefit from adding products, either in food or beverage mediums, that contain the following ingredients to their diets:

1. **Omega-3 fatty acids/DHA** for brain development
2. **Fiber** for regularity and digestive health/weight management
3. **Amino acids** for healthy muscle development
4. **Calcium** and other bone health nutrients for healthy bones and teeth
5. **Phytonutrients** for immune support/general health

Retailers can further empower parents to make smarter and healthier decisions for their kids by employing a two-pronged approach – (1) steering buyers away from bad choices and (2) directing them towards health-conscious products:

- 1) Retailers can steer buyers *away* from unhealthy products by limiting the number of items that are carried that contain simple/refined sugars and trans/saturated fats. Also, retailers should pay attention to the number of processed foods that are on their shelves.
- 2) At the same time, retailers can direct parents *towards* useful information and health-conscious children’s products that contain the aforementioned ingredients. Here are a few potential ways to accomplish this:
  - Carry new mediums. Distributors are introducing innovative concepts in the children’s beverage arena that were developed to fulfill the needs of specific age groups. Don’t be afraid of different and unique market niches.
  - Offer better placement of healthy foods. Put them in a highly visible location where they will catch both a child’s and a parent’s eye.
  - Hold free in-store education sessions where parents and children can learn more about what makes up a child’s nutritious diet and active lifestyle. Hand out attendance coupons that can be redeemed for healthy children’s beverages and foods.
  - Make literature on childhood obesity risk factors readily available at the checkout counter.
  - Create and distribute a quarterly newsletter that highlights your healthy product offerings for children and where they are located within the store.
  - Establish a “Healthy Children’s Product of the Month” and offer a temporary price incentive.

**3. What children’s products/supplements does your company offer? Please be sure to include brand names and some of the ingredients.**

Born out of Dr. Visser’s childhood obesity clinical research, SimplyH’s balanced nutritional drink mix, Toddler Health™, was developed to help parents establish healthy eating habits for their 13 month-olds to 5 year-olds. Toddler Health contains vitamins, minerals, protein, antioxidants, prebiotics, fiber, phytonutrients and DHA. Sodium-free Toddler Health contains low levels of natural sweeteners, and includes no cholesterol, preservatives, milk, soy, or artificial colors/flavors.

Toddler Health, [www.toddlerhealth.net](http://www.toddlerhealth.net), is all-natural and contains the following specific ingredients: HiORIC fruit and vegetable blends, SUNACTIVE®-FE, Natureal® oat bran, Calcilife™, Tagatose and Luo Han Guo fruit extract. Toddler Health comes in non-GMO oat and rice bases, in kid-friendly chocolate and vanilla flavors. A 15-ounce can contains 30 servings.

The development of Toddler Health has created a new market category by being the first product to specifically address the needs of toddlers/preschoolers who have allergies to milk- and soy-based drinks. Additionally, it has given parents a low-sugar alternative to replace high- and added-sugar beverages by way of a convenient powdered drink mix medium. As current studies call the nutritional values of added-sugar juices, drinks and sodas into question, Toddler Health is a highly relevant addition to the children’s beverage marketplace as an 8 oz. serving **contains only 2 grams of sugar**, compared to 8 ounces of organic apple juice that contains 29 grams of sugar.