

From couch potatoes to jumping beans

Locally produced video gets kids moving while fighting youth obesity

TWO ATLANTA RESIDENTS HAVE GOTTEN SMART ABOUT HOW TO present exercise to children, but it's not a new idea: Make it fun. Rather than complaining about the immobility of today's youth, Kris Burnett and Katie Hart have answered the call of the U.S. Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics to tackle child obesity and inactivity. The dynamic duo has designed a unique, scalable fitness video for children and their families to use together.

Smartmoovz Inc. is a company with the mission of promoting physical activity in children and adolescents. "We're making aerobics and physical activity safe and educational," says Smartmoovz co-founder and former video and publishing executive Kris Burnett. "We use the bell curve model, which includes a warm up and a cool down. There is no extra equipment or extra training needed to use the video." Burnett makes a good point, in that many physical activities for children can hurt parents' wallets. From the fees associated with league sports, to the cost of after school programs, to monthly gym memberships, costs can mount in a hurry. At a one-time cost of \$19.99 for a Smartmoovz DVD (\$17.99 on VHS), the investment vs. the return is sensible for everyone.

"Smartmoovz is a low-cost alternative," says Katie Hart, co-founder of the company, certified aerobics instructor and registered nurse in pediatric orthopedics. "The activities can be performed in a small, confined area if necessary and are low impact, meaning one foot is on the floor at all times. We filmed real children performing at their own levels, unscripted and unrehearsed."

The first in a series of videos to be produced by Smartmoovz

is "Basic Moovz," which accommodates all skill levels and is interactive. With pop-up fitness facts, fun music and tidbits of interesting information on animals and more, the video keeps children ages four to 12 interested and participatory.

The 30-minute video can be done in five-minute increments based on skill level. Children are educated on the right way to exercise. "Other products have no rhyme or reason to their formats," Hart explains. "This video was created exclusively to be medically sound, with a warm up, a gradual increase in activity and an ending cool down and stretch. Kids are taught how to perform exercises properly and to get off their seats and on their feet."

Research for the first Smartmoovz video included drawing upon available medical expertise, but also interviewing numerous moms and looking at what was already out there – from the educational quality to the level of family orientation. And the team at Smartmoovz is relying on customer feedback as well to create new series pieces according to what is desired by the users.

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, 15 percent of children ages six to nine, and 10 percent of children ages two to five, are

overweight. It is no longer just a social epidemic; it's a medical emergency.

Dr. David Marshall, medical director of the sports medicine program at Children's Health Care of Atlanta, supports the program. "I often encounter kids and their families who are looking for fun ways to stay active and in shape," he says. "Basic Moovz is fun, entertaining and can be tailored down to meet the activity level of the child. I recommend it for all families, whether they are 'on the go' or not."

A portion of every sale of Basic Moovz goes to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. So far, the fitness video designed just for kids has received rave reviews. For more information, visit www.smartmoovz.com. 

