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Bustin' baby fat

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No more cookies and milk for these kids!

Appearance-obsessed parents in the Big Apple are hiring personal trainers for their preteens, shelling out \$95 an hour to whip their little dumplings -- some as young as 5 -- into shape.

Jennifer Dimuro of TriBeCa hired a personal trainer to hit the gym with her 8-year-old son, Julian, after he packed on some pounds on a family vacation.

"We spent the whole summer traveling through France and Italy and eating, and I could see he was putting on a little weight," she said.

"Julian's idea of recreation is a food tour in the West Village."

So Julian meets with his trainer, Mitch Baseman, weekly for an hourlong routine of stretching, jogging, resistance training with a rubber band and doing squats followed by step-ups and hip raises.

Without the fitness sessions, Dimuro said, her son would have scant time to work off his baby fat. The family's so busy, she said, they can't find time to teach Julian to ride a bicycle.

Like most city kids, Julian's days are jam-packed with extracurricular activities. And most of them -- Spanish class, piano class, art class -- don't involve exercise.

"City kids do not have time to be active," said Elle Shindler, an Upper East Side mother of two who started a kiddie personal-training business after realizing her own girls hardly ever broke a sweat.

"After fifth grade, homework is all consuming," she said.

Shindler's Kid Fitness business caters to parents who want to keep their offspring lean.

Since opening three years ago, demand has skyrocketed, she said. She now has a staff of seven trainers who take care of kids either one-on-one or in group classes.

One of Shindler's perky trainers, Alison Gritz, 24, disguises her workouts as hip-hop classes and dishes out compliments to coax her pint-size, sometimes-cranky clients into performing.

"Straighten that back leg, Annabelle. Your other right arm, Libby. Beautiful, ladies," she said during a session for three 8-year-olds in a Manhattan apartment.

Personal trainers need to keep the sessions fun, said nutritionist and pediatric specialist Jenner Medina, or they risk putting too much pressure on the kids.

"Regarding the children I work with, many of the parents say their girls, in particular, start complaining about their bellies as young as 5," Medina said.

Family psychologist John Rosemond, an expert on parenting, blasted the fad, calling it the latest in "trophy parenting."

"The way to deal with chubbiness is to feed a kid properly and let them have some fun outside -- not micromanage every inch of their lives," Rosemond said.

"They're trying to raise trophy children -- children they can brag about at cocktail parties."

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