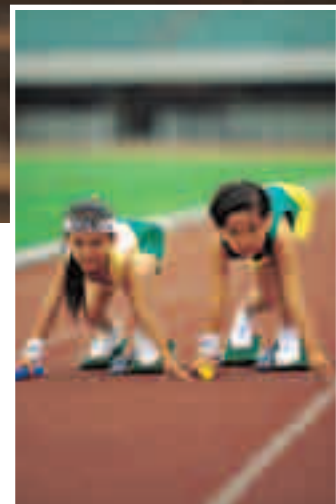
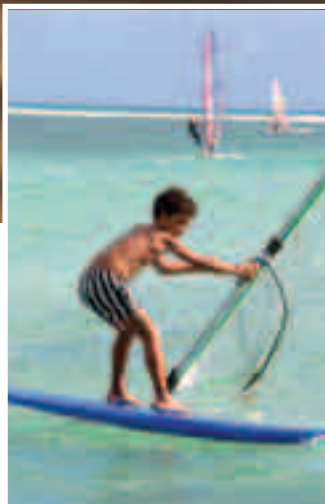




# FIT for Life

*Helping children fight the obesity crisis*



BY KRISTY GILLINDER

**M**ore and more children are battling with what has previously been thought of as an adult problem—obesity.

Childhood obesity is an alarming problem with heart-breaking consequences and, in recent years, it has truly reached epidemic proportions. A child is usually not considered obese until his or her weight is at least ten percent higher than what is recommended for height and body type. With the growing temptations of television, time consuming computer activities, and “super-sized” fast foods, it has become all too easy for today’s youth to become inactive and, in addition, overweight and unhealthy. Studies have revealed that a child who is obese between the ages of ten and 13 has an 80 percent chance of becoming an obese adult.

Obesity in childhood can lead to a lifetime of health problems, if it is not

conquered. These problems may include: lowered self-esteem and emotional suffering, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and stroke. Someone who is 40 percent overweight is twice as likely to die prematurely as a person who is considered to be of average weight. This is particularly true for those who are overweight for ten to 30 years. Therefore, the earlier obesity is conquered, the better chance a person has of living a longer and healthier life. Armed with this knowledge, educators have stepped up their involvement in fighting this frightening problem.

Being a good educator is never a nine-to-five job and it is truly a calling. Most educators get to know their students personally and, as they do so, develop genuine feelings of concern, not only regarding students’ academic achievements, but also their well-being. Many educators strive to