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HEADLINE: **Bienestar** good for all kids ; Even healthy children benefit from good eating habits and regular physical activity.

BODY: The **Bienestar** program proves that a healthy lifestyle can benefit all children, not just those with health risks.

Bienestar was introduced in San Antonio School District elementary schools a few years ago to emphasize the positive effects of healthy eating and increased exercise for children predisposed to diabetes.

The program includes a health education and physical fitness curriculum that stresses cardiovascular exercise for children, as well as nutrition education for parents and school food-service workers.

It has helped reverse the early signs of diabetes in overweight children. Researchers now report that healthy youngsters also can benefit from the program, developed by San Antonio physician Robert Trevino.

A 2001 school year study that included 1,400 San Antonio fourth-graders with normal blood sugar levels found that they were able to improve their fitness levels and slightly lower their blood sugar levels through the program.

That's great news. Children who adopt healthy habits early in life are more likely to maintain them as they get older.