

By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor

This Thursday marks the final day of the 2008-09 school year at Chase County Schools, and youngsters are about to embark on another summer of fun.

Hopefully, they'll make it a summer of activity, as well.

Fun can mean different things, and, unfortunately, to too many kids, it means TV and video games.

□ We've all read of the growing problem with youngsters being overweight these days (adults, too). Experts estimate that 15% of kids are overweight and another 15% are at risk of becoming overweight. And, two-thirds of these overweight kids will become overweight adults.

□ I remember a story I wrote a few years ago about our school's physical education (P.E.) programs and the importance of daily activity for kids. The story came as our school was facing some budget problems and program cuts were a possibility.

□ The P.E. teachers noted that year was the first time they had to order P.E. uniforms in XXL sizes for some of their elementary classes.

The teachers, rightly so, supported regular classes for all K-8 students, because in many cases, that was the only exercise some students were getting.

That's too bad, because we, as parents and guardians, should be seeing that our kids are getting outdoors and getting exercise. By emphasizing that early on, our kids will develop healthy lifestyles that include a life of regular exercise.

Any health-related program you attend these days emphasizes exercise and daily activity. Complemented with a good diet, it can mean a longer, healthier life.

Of course, there are hereditary factors that can affect health. But, you can improve your odds against pre-existing factors by making it a priority to exercise.

We can all set a good example for our children and grandchildren by living that type of lifestyle every day.

As summer takes off this weekend with the season's first major holiday, make a commitment to exercise and make sure your kids do, too.

□ Happy summer!