

Mind Games Is It Cheating If It Isn't Physical?

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**1982:** Trina Wiggins, a gymnast and pre-med student at Stanford University, weighs 124 pounds.

**2007:** Wiggins, now a pediatrician, returns to her 25th college reunion; she weighs 125 pounds.



# Honey, I Benchpressed the Kids

## A Pediatrician Works to Make Young People Healthy

by pamelakjohnson

**G**etting through medical school, facing the challenges of being a wife and mother and keeping a dozen plates spinning in the air easily could have added several layers to Trina Wiggins' waistline. Yet she's always maintained a focused exercise and diet regimen. Recently the Las Vegas physician, whose been married to Carl Allen, an obstetrician/gynecologist for 22 years, and is the mother of Malcolm and Marcus, 13-year-old twins, began to participate in fitness competitions. Now she's trying to pass down her good habits to the next generation.

"In a practice setting," she says, "a physician only has a few minutes with a

patient. You don't have much time to talk nutrition and exercise. I found myself trying to talk a mile a minute to get it all in, but they'd come back a month later, and Johnny had gained five pounds." She was prescribing meds for early onset diabetes and high blood pressure to kids.

That gave Wiggins the idea to create Fit Kidz Consulting, which hosts week-long fitness camps for about \$200. Children get their cardio on for 20 minutes to their favorite CDs. Then they may spend 20 minutes playing Portion Control Bingo or compare food labels.

Wiggins recently spoke to 800 students about why it's important to be fit. "We showed them a cartoon of two

women who go from age 13 to 60." One rides a bike, the other a couch. One has a good diet, the other bad. "At 60, the one who was riding the bike at 13 is still riding with friends, while the other is in a wheelchair with a stack of 10 medications." The moral of the story, of course, is make smarter choices now.

Wiggins lets kids try different foods at camp, substituting high-fat mac and cheese, for instance, with a better choice from markets such as Trader Joe's or Whole Foods. She sends home notes to parents with healthier items their kids like, so they don't spend money on products a child won't eat. But turning people on to her favorites has a down side. "I went to get turkey bacon, and they said, 'We had a lot of people buying this.' That felt good," she says, even though she went home without any for herself.

Wiggins not only makes exercise fun for kids, she also has a ball doing her fitness competitions. Earlier this year, she performed dressed like Tina Turner; the year before her theme was Mission Impossible, where she took on the persona of a spy. During Ms. Fitness USA, she and other competitors are judged in categories that may include a dance routine, to show off their flexibility and strength; evening gown/swimsuit, to highlight their physiques; and speaking ability, to extol their passion for fitness.

Wiggins has been entering contests since 2004, when she and her sister were scoping out a place for her sister's wedding. They popped their heads in on a fitness competition at a local hotel. "My sister challenged me to enter one. I was inspired because she'd recently run a marathon." Now she's casting about for grants to hold her fitness camps year-round and marketing her portion-control plate, because it doesn't take a doctor to tell you you'll probably live longer if you roll like Ms. Fitness instead of Miss Piggy.

For more on Fit Kidz camp, go to [northstarsdanceacademy.com](http://northstarsdanceacademy.com) ♥

*Pamela K. Johnson is a California writer.*