

HEALTHY KIDS = SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS ACTION PLAN

For promoting the importance of healthy eating and physical activity among children and youth to combat the growing national epidemic of childhood obesity

What can my PTA do?

There are many ways PTAs and schools can work together to help students, families, and communities improve nutrition, physical fitness, and overall health habits. Research shows a strong link between children's health and academic performance. Healthy eating habits can help improve attendance, energy levels, classroom participation, school behavior, test scores, and academic success. Children who are fit and nutritionally healthy are ready to learn—by supporting healthy eating and regular physical activity, schools can improve student performance and achievement.

Help establish nutrition standards in schools.

Schools can make a commitment to healthy eating by establishing nutrition policies and standards for all food and beverages at school. Some states already have statewide nutrition policies.

IDEAS for PTAs:

- Work with school officials to review existing policies or develop a new nutrition policy for your school.

Make more healthful foods and beverages available.

Schools can serve high-quality meals (breakfast, lunch, and or/snacks) and offer nourishing choices in vending machines and cafeteria sales. Schools can also limit student access to foods and beverages high in sugar and fat and to those of minimal nutritional value.

IDEAS for PTAs:

- Provide non-food or nourishing alternatives to traditional ice cream or pizza parties.

Address food and beverage contracts.

Schools don't have to get rid of everything—start by increasing the number and variety of healthy choices and alternatives sold or offered at school.

IDEAS for PTAs:

- PTAs can make strategic business choices to conduct fundraising activities that sell healthful foods or non-food items.

Integrate opportunities for physical activity into every day.

In the U.S., 14% of young people say they don't get any physical activity at all. Active kids (and families) have healthier growth patterns and reduced risk of diabetes. Encourage schools to provide regular physical activity for all students with in-class and after-school activities.

IDEAS for PTAs:

- Students earn a walk with the principal, instead of just a place on the honor roll.
- Create in-school Walk-a-Thon – using pedometers where most “miles” win prizes.
- Apply for a \$5,000-\$10,000 Nickelodeon “Let's Just Play” Grant—the program provides funding and resources to create or expand opportunities for physical play in schools and after-school community-based organizations

Implement family nutrition and fitness programs.

Schools can support family involvement in nutrition and fitness through school-based events, educational opportunities, and take-home materials.

IDEAS for PTAs:

- Start a cycling, in-line skating, or walking club for parents, teachers, and students.
- Create fact sheets on health and nutrition for families. Many resources are available online at USDA Team Nutrition: www.fnsusda.gov/tn/Default.htm