



Parents are the Power!

Toolkit for Creating Change

improve your school's nutrition and physical activity environment



Colorado
Action for Healthy Kids®

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Introduction



“Parents can have the greatest impact on changing the practices of our schools because they are the strongest advocates for America’s children.”

National AFHK Report: Parents’ Views on School Wellness Practices

Action for Healthy Kids Information

What is Action for Healthy Kids?

Action for Healthy Kids is a national grassroots effort created to address the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes at school. Action for Healthy Kids is a public-private partnership of more than 60 national organizations and government agencies representing education, health, fitness and nutrition, which supports the efforts of its Teams (including all states and the District of Columbia) made up of over 9,000 volunteers. These volunteers include leaders in education, administration, health, physical activity/education, government, student leaders, concerned parents and business leaders. Action for Healthy Kids was created in response to The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, which identified the school environment as one of five key sites of change. The 16th U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, is the founding chair of Action for Healthy Kids.

Colorado's Focus

Colorado Action for Healthy Kids Team focuses on three key strategies: adopt policies that ensure all foods and beverages available on school campuses and school events contribute toward eating patterns consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans; provide after-school programs that include physical activity, adequate co-curricular programs, and fully inclusive intra-mural programs and physical activity clubs; and ensure that healthy snacks and foods are provided in vending, school stores, a la carte and other venues within the school's control.

In 2007-2008 the focus is on two projects. One is a Parent Engagement Project that includes a toolkit, training and a mini-grant opportunity for parent teams in Colorado. The project goal is for Colorado parents of school age children to become empowered and actively engaged as advocates for change and implementation of their District Wellness Policy specifically in the area of nutrition and physical activity/education. The second project involves the implementation of ReCharge!, an after-school program designed to help students in grades 3 to 6 learn about and practice good nutrition and physical activity habits through fun, team-based strategies. We are focusing this project in the Denver Public School System.

How to reach us or get involved:

To find out more about the Colorado Action for Healthy Kids Team or to become a member and access information that can help make changes towards healthier schools, visit the Colorado page at

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Welcome Parents!

Welcome to the **Parents are the Power! Toolkit for Creating Change** brought to you by Colorado Action for Healthy Kids! We are pleased to present this toolkit that highlights nutrition and physical activity/education project areas that parents can become involved with in schools.



The National Action for Healthy Kids report, “Parents’ Views on School Wellness Policies”, states that parents can have the greatest impact on changing the practices of our schools because they are the strongest advocates for America’s children. Promoting better nutrition and physical activity in school is one way to help children receive a quality education and build healthy habits for the future. Because, as childhood obesity rates are on the rise, and this issue leads to devastating health problems, reduces life expectancy, and increases health care costs parents must be fully engaged in the effort and play a key role in providing solutions.

This toolkit also includes a very important element to create change in school, which is understanding how schools work and how to work with schools. Schools are faced with many regulations and challenges and we hope this toolkit will increase your understanding of the process.

As we continue to gather examples of positive parental involvement in schools and identify resources to assist your efforts, please visit the Colorado Action for Healthy Kids Web site for updated information: www.ActionForHealthyKids.org. Also tell us about your successes so we can add your story to our Web site!

We hope to hear from you soon!

Colorado Action for Healthy Kids Team

How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit is laid out in a step-by-step fashion; each section builds on the previous one. Remember that change is a process; small steps are a success. Enjoy the journey!

1 Become an Advocate, How to Create Change

This first step is very important. In this section you will learn how to become an effective parent advocate. Working with other concerned individuals to further change is an excellent method to use when attempting to make change. This type of effort is traditionally called grassroots advocacy when performed on a local level. Grassroots advocacy has changed everything from school policy to law. It is critical to building slow sustainable change.

2 Understand the School Environment

When you are planning for change in a school it is important to know how the school works and how to work with the school. This section will also review how policies are made and provide key information about a very important policy, your district wellness policy.

3 Conduct a Needs Assessment

The next step for the team is to identify areas of the school environment that need improvement. We will provide you with a sample needs assessment as well as where to find others to choose from.

4 Follow the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

The P.A.R.E.N.T. Process is designed to help guide parents through the basic steps needed to help advocate better wellness practices in their local schools. Follow the steps of the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process to forward a topic in this guide or use the structure to help guide a matter of your own choosing.

5 Success Stories

Parents can make change. Here you will read about Colorado parent teams making successful changes in their schools in the area of nutrition and physical activity/education.

6 Evaluate

Review your progress – recognize your successes and resolve problems that arise. Your team may need to revise the plan as you go along to make sure you accomplish your goals.

7 Communicate

Let other people in the community (including the media) know about your activities. Invite them to participate as often as possible. This will help you win support for your goals, gain recognition for your school and encourage others to join the team.

8 Additional Resources

Here you will find contact information for a few more organizations that are working towards improving the nutrition and physical activity/education environment in schools.



Become an Advocate

Section 1



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

How to Create Change

As a parent interested in seeing that certain changes are made in the nutrition and physical activity/education areas of your child's school how do you get started? Focused persuasion with the goal of effecting change is what advocacy is all about. Here are a few steps to help you get started as an advocate for school wellness.

Getting Started – First Steps

Arrange for a meeting.

Find other interested parents through your school PTA/PTO group, parent night, networking with other parents and teachers, school health council, wellness policy team, school nutrition staff.

Identify your issue.

What health and wellness issues concern you? Setting a clear, measurable goal for your effort is the most important part of a campaign for change.

Identify your target audience.

Who will be the focus of your efforts? Determine why your goal is of concern to them. What will move them to take the actions you request? Knowing your audience will keep you focused in developing strategies in order to meet your overall goal(s).

Researching Your Issue

Know the impact.

Find out the number of people (i.e., students) who are currently affected by the problem you wish to correct as well as the number of people who will benefit from your plan.

Gather stories.

Having real life examples to share that support your efforts is a highly effective tool. Look for examples from other schools or districts that tackled similar issues and concerns.

Developing a Compelling Message

Connect with your target audience.

When possible, pre-test your message with a few members of the target audience to make sure it works. Note their opinions and suggestions. Remember, you need to think like those you wish to affect - not like those who are already on your side.

Don't forget to "ask."

Make sure that your message includes a doable action you want your target audience to perform or support.

Use multiple tactics.

Writing letters or flyers, writing an op-ed for the local newspaper, holding a rally, activating a phone tree and speaking at public meetings are all examples of ways to get your message out to your target audience. Don't forget to use the PTA channels and communication tools.

Moving on – Next Steps

Find a spokesperson.

Make sure that whomever you use is credible, has good communication skills and has the ability to have an impact on your target audience.

Build a budget.

Spend your funds wisely. Don't forget to allocate some funds for long-term follow-through. Consider your budget (time and money) when establishing your goals.

Call in the experts.

Consider talking to people outside of your organization for advice. This will help you target your audience rather than the people within your organization.

Identify like-minded advocates.

Are there others in your community who support your goals? Seek them out and solicit their help. The more diverse your voice, the more powerful the message. Just make sure that you stay focused on the goals you've established and that you don't stray into other areas.

Evaluate and Celebrate!**Evaluate often.**

Frequently evaluate and assess progress and make changes to your tactics as necessary.

Celebrate your success!

Don't forget to have your team celebrate in your achievements!

For more information visit www.pta.org and access the PTA Grassroots Advocacy Toolkit.



Understand the School Environment

Section 2



“The link between good nutrition and good education is clearly demonstrated by higher test scores, better attendance and fewer behavior problems in schools.”

Dan Glickman, Former Agriculture Secretary

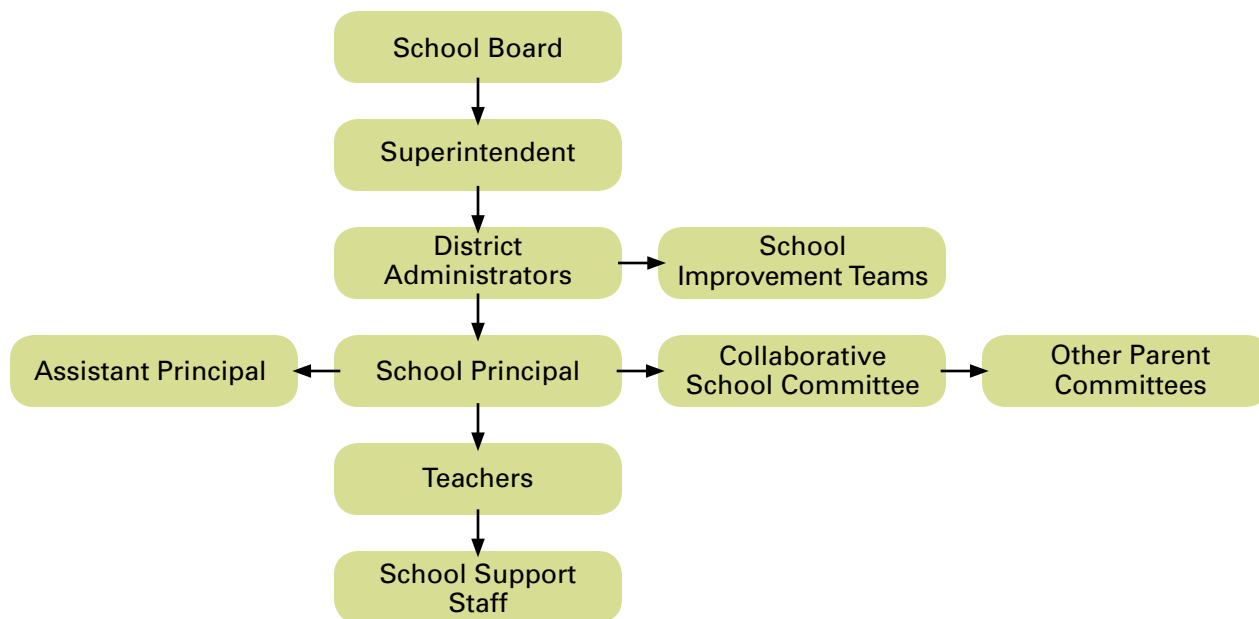
How Schools Work

When you are planning for change in a school it is important to know how schools work and how to work with schools. This section will also review how policies are made and provide key information about a very important policy, your district wellness policy. In addition, as you begin to suggest policy change to your school's nutrition and physical activity/education environment it is helpful to have position statements that support your work which you will find at the end of this section.

First, we would like to review the school environment and how it works. It is important to know this background before you pursue a project in your school as it will help you understand the dynamics of the school environment and be better prepared when you approach school leaders. School environment structure varies by district. We encourage your parent team to request a hierarchical flowchart from your school or research it on the Internet. On the following page is an example of a school environment structure.



School Environment Flow Chart



The following provides a description for each title:

School Board: Oversees public schools and ensures they are in compliance with constitutional responsibilities.

Superintendent: Oversees and enhances educational programs, implements rules, regulations, policies and procedures and increases student achievement.

School Improvement Teams: These are formal committees composed of community members and parents who advise the school district (name may vary by district)

District Administrators: Administrators oversee specific areas such as: curriculum and instruction development, student services, special needs, English language learners, athletics, transportation, federal programs, testing and assessment, finances, etc.

School Principal: Oversees school operations, providing staff with necessary skills to fulfill educational goals, and ensures that the rules, regulations, policies and procedures are enforced and fulfilled.

Assistant Principal: Assists the school principal in overseeing school operations, providing staff with necessary skills to fulfill educational goals, and ensuring that the rules, regulations, policies and procedures are enforced and fulfilled.

Parent Advisory Committee(s): Advises the school principal in student matters and educational needs.

Standing Parent Committees and/or Ad Hoc Committees: Roles vary per committee; some committees are responsible for representing the student body and others represent parent and student interests. Committees consist of Parent-Teacher

Associations (PTA), Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), English-Language Acquisition Parent Advisory Council (ELA PAC)

Teachers: Assist students in gaining the necessary skills to be successful in life, such as: social-emotional and cognitive development.

School Support Staff: Provides student support services, such as counseling, case management, psychological assistance, and counseling, to name a few.

Specifically, in the areas of nutrition and physical activity, there are two environments in your school that your team needs to become familiar with. They are the School Nutrition Environment and the Physical Education Environment, which are covered in the following sections.

School Nutrition Environment

The nutrition environment in your child's school is very complicated and governed by many factors. A primary influence on how the food programs operate is the USDA, which sets the rules, regulations, and reimbursement rates for the meal programs. If you decide this is an area you want to work on, it becomes very important for you as a parent to first learn as much as possible about how the programs operate and the regulatory constraints that govern them.

National School Lunch and National School Breakfast Programs

What are the National School Lunch & National School Breakfast Programs?

Both programs are federally assisted meal programs operating in public and non-profit private schools. These programs are administered by USDA and the Colorado Department of Education. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) started in 1946 and the National School Breakfast Program (NSBP) started in 1966 as a pilot and was made permanent in 1975.

How Do the Programs Work?

School districts that choose to take part in the NSLP and NSBP receive cash subsidies and donated commodity food items from USDA for each meal they serve. In return they must serve meals that meet federal nutrition standards and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to eligible children. School nutrition directors face the challenge of operating nutritionally sound programs that meet federal requirements, are cost effective, and are acceptable to children.

What are the Nutritional Requirements?

In 1995 the USDA launched the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children in an attempt to improve the nutritional quality of school meals by promoting consistency with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This initiative included nutrition standards for school meals that maintained the long-standing goal of providing one-third of a student's daily needs for calories and key nutrients for lunch and one-fourth of the daily needs for breakfast. In addition the standards include goals for fat (no more than 30 percent of calories) and saturated fat (less than 10 percent of calories). State and federal reviews are conducted to ensure that schools are meeting the requirements, including nutrition standards.

School Meals are Healthy Meals

The 2001 School Nutrition Dietary Assessment-II

(SNDA-II) found that in 1999, students in 91 percent of secondary schools and 82 percent of elementary schools had the opportunity to select lunches that were consistent with dietary standards for fat and saturated fat. Also according to SNDA II, roughly two-thirds of all lunch menus offer more than the required two fruit and vegetable choices required by USDA regulations. SNDA II also found that school meals continue to meet or exceed virtually all of recommended daily allowances (RDA) for key nutrients analyzed for school breakfasts and lunches.

Through the National School Lunch Program, children consume twice the servings of fruits and vegetables and greater amounts of grains and dairy than children who eat lunch brought from home or who leave school to eat lunch. No super-sizing here. The meals served as part of the NSLP are provided in age-appropriate serving sizes – making schools one of the last places in the U.S. where you can purchase a meal with the recommended serving sizes. The foods offered at schools can be used as a learning tool and provide many opportunities to engage students in healthy eating.

How Do Schools Decide What to Serve Students?

While federal regulations state the food components and portion sizes that must be offered, child nutrition professionals at local school nutrition service departments make decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared. Cultural and regional preferences play a role in determining the foods, as do student preferences. Child nutrition professionals set up tasting parties for focus groups and student groups, called Nutrition Advisory Councils, to determine the foods that students will find acceptable. While the menus offered over the week must meet USDA nutrition standards, they also have to appeal to student customer tastes.

Milk and other dairy products provide 72 percent of the calcium in our nation's food supply. Schools serve milk, and offer low-fat milk because children

need calcium. Studies show that children who do not eat a school lunch have lower calcium intakes for the day. According to CDC statistics, nine out of 10 girls and seven out of 10 boys (ages 12-19) currently fail to meet the recommended daily amount of calcium of 1,300 mg per day, or the equivalent of about four 8-ounce glasses of milk.

The decision-making process in the school nutrition environment varies by the district, and often, the size of the district. In smaller school districts, those that may be one or two schools, site-based decisions related to menus are often made at the school level. In the larger school districts, there is very little site-based decision-making related to menus in the cafeteria. In the larger school districts, there may be a nutrition services director, an assistant director, and there may be area supervisors assigned to the schools to help managers make decisions. It is best to contact one of those individuals to start a constructive dialogue.

How Are School Nutrition Programs Funded?

Most child nutrition programs in Colorado school districts are considered to be "enterprise funds" that must be self-supporting. That means they receive no funding from the school district and must earn enough money to pay all their expenses which include food, salaries and benefits, utilities, repairs and purchases of equipment, cleaning supplies and disposables. The total federal reimbursement for each school lunch served last year (2006-07) was about \$.40 for paid students and about \$2.60 for free and reduced-students. Cash sales from reduced-price and paid students, and revenues from a la carte sales make up the rest of the income a program receives. Factors such as labor and food costs must be considered when making decisions about foods that are offered to our students.

Where to Find More Information

The best source of information about the meal programs in your child's school is the Nutrition Services Director for the school district. You can also find information about the NSLP and NSBP by contacting:

Colorado Department of Education
Child Nutrition Unit
201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
303-866-6661
<http://www.cde.state.co.us>

US Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service
Public Information Staff
3101 Park center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22303
703-305-2286
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd>

A la Carte

In addition to offering meals to students, many nutrition service departments sell other food items that are called a la carte. The items chosen for sale are selected and purchased by nutrition service department. In addition, all the revenue from the sale of these items remains with nutrition services. A la carte sales present an additional source of funds for nutrition service departments which are required to operate as enterprises and generate enough revenue to pay all expenses of the operations. If the revenue (federal reimbursement) from meal programs does not sufficiently cover the expenses then departments look for other sources to increase their revenue.

When purchasing items to sell a la carte, nutrition service directors carefully look at the nutritional content and purchase items that meet strict nutritional standards as outlined by their district's wellness policy. One of the requirements of the wellness policy mandate was to establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day. If they are selling these items in vending machines Colorado Senate Bill 04-103 encourages the nutritional content of these items to follow the recommended guidelines. Established nutritional guidelines vary by District, but items generally are no more than 35 percent of calories from fat and no more than 10 percent of those calories from saturated fat. They are no more than 35 percent of total weight in sugar.

With the establishment of nutritional guidelines, a la carte programs can serve an important role in maintaining financial soundness for the nutrition service department as well as providing nutritious choices for students who want additional food items.

Competitive Foods

What are competitive foods?

Competitive foods are foods offered at school, other than meals served through USDA's school meals menu program. USDA defines two categories of competitive foods: ¹

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)

belong to specific categories described in the regulations for the National School Lunch Program and include soda water, water ices, chewing gum, hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy-coated popcorn. *Current federal regulations prohibit the sale of FMNV in the nutrition service area during the school meals periods.*

All other foods offered for individual sale range from second servings of foods that are part of the reimbursable school meals to foods that students purchase in addition to or in place of a reimbursable school meal, such as a la carte sales and other foods and beverages purchased from vending machines, school stores, and snack bars. *Regulations do not prohibit the sale of these foods at any time during the school day anywhere on the school campus, including the nutrition service areas.*

Some states have created regulations regarding competitive foods that go beyond the federal regulations described above. For descriptions of State Competitive Food Policies, go to: www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/state_policies_2002.pdf. Colorado's current policy reads "No competitive foods offered on campus from ½ hour prior to until ½ hour after the last regular breakfast or lunch. This may be waived for mechanically-vended beverages in senior high. Federal regulations for FMNV cannot be waived for any grade level."

What is the Current Status of Competitive Food Sales in Schools?

Studies of national trends in competitive foods have determined that:

- Ninety percent of schools had food and beverages available as a la carte items.²
- School stores and snack bars were present in nine percent of elementary schools, 35 percent of middle schools, and 41 percent of high schools.²
- Vending machines were available in 15 percent of elementary schools, 55 percent of middle schools, and 76 percent of high schools.²
- Eighty-two percent of schools allowed organizations such as student clubs, sports teams, or parent groups to sell food at school or in the community to raise money during the 12 months preceding the study.³
- The most common items sold for fund raising were chocolate candy, baked goods that were not low in fat, and non-chocolate candy.³

Why are Competitive Foods Sold?

The decisions for schools to provide competitive foods have been driven by a variety of factors:

- Student preferences. Students come to school with established preferences for fast foods, sweetened beverages and salty snacks.
- Increased financial demands. Many schools are compensating for the funds lost through budget cuts by selling competitive foods. Profits from the sale of competitive foods are often used to support athletics, educational programs, and other activities.
- Support for school meals programs. In most cases, school nutrition service programs are required to be self-supporting, with no financial support provided by the school districts. The sale of competitive foods, such as a la carte items, by school nutrition service programs is often used to maintain the financial stability of the program.
- "Pouring rights" contracts. Many schools have exclusive contracts with soft drink companies, which offer higher payments for higher sales, thus encouraging schools to promote soft drink sales.

What are the Issues Associated With Competitive Foods?

If there are no nutritional standards in place guiding the selection of these items, they can be low in nutritional value and high in fat, sugars and calories. Therefore, they may contribute to poor dietary habits and result in obesity. Sales of competitive foods may stigmatize and affect the viability of the USDA school meal programs.¹ Since only children with money can buy competitive foods, students may perceive that USDA school meals are primarily for poor children rather than for all children. Increases in the sales of competitive foods, in the absence of regulated nutrition standards, may result in decreases in participation in school meal programs that must meet nutrition standards.¹ Students may be receiving a mixed message if they are taught about good nutrition in the classroom, but this message is not reinforced throughout the school environment. It is important that strict nutritional standards are established and adhered to for all foods available to students; by any group or organization; and at any time of the school day or after.

For additional information please visit the School Nutrition Association Parent Site: <http://www.schoolnutrition.org/parent.aspx?id=1981>

References:

- ¹ Food and Nutrition Service, USDA. *Foods Sold in Competition with the USDA School Meal Programs: A Report to Congress*. 2001. Available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/report_congress.htm (Accessed 06/11/03).
- ² Fox, M.K., Crepinsek, M., Connor, P., Battaglia, M. School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study-II: Summary of Findings. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/CNP/FILES/SNDAllfind.pdf> (Accessed 06/11/03).
- ³ Wechsler, H., Brener, N.D., Kuester, S., Miller, C. Food Service and Foods and Beverages Available at School: Results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study 2000. *Journal of School Health*. Vol. 71, No. 7, Sept. 2001.
- ⁴ Probart C., McDonnell E., Hartman T. *Assessment of Competitive Foods Sold in Pennsylvania High Schools*. Final Report submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. 2003.

Open vs. Closed Campus

Many schools, especially at the high school level, may have open campus policies. Simply put, students may leave the building for lunch. While this topic is controversial it is important for your parent team to consider the implications of open vs. closed campus policies. Parents should consider the advantages and disadvantages. Pertaining to the school meal programs, nutrition programs have worked hard to offer nutritious foods and beverages. Schools with open campus policies potentially undermine their healthy school environment policies by providing access to fast food outlets and convenience stores. Parents may play a huge role in supporting open vs. closed campus policies.



Physical Education Environment

Another very important environment of the school to understand is the Physical Education area. Here we will cover what constitutes a quality physical education program and why it is important to maintain this program in the school environment.

In general, elementary schools will have one physical education teacher who is responsible for curricula design and instruction. Depending on the size of the school, middle schools and high schools will have teams of physical education teachers that work as a team to decide who will provide instruction in different areas.

What constitutes a quality physical education program?

According to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, a high-quality physical education program includes the following components: opportunity to learn, meaningful content and appropriate instruction.

Opportunity to Learn

- Instructional periods totaling 150 minutes per week (elementary) or 225 minutes per week (middle and secondary school)
- Qualified physical education specialist providing a developmentally appropriate program
- The teacher: pupil ratio in physical education is no greater than 1:25 for optimal instruction
- Adequate equipment and facilities

Meaningful Content

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child
- Fitness education and assessment to help children understand, improve and/or maintain their physical well-being
- Development of cognitive concepts about motor skill and fitness
- Opportunities to improve their emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multi-cultural perspective
- Promotion of regular amounts of appropriate physical activity now and throughout life

Appropriate Instruction

- Full inclusion of all students
- Maximum practice opportunities for class activities
- Well-designed lessons that facilitate student learning
- Out-of-school assignments that support learning and practice

- Do not withhold physical activity as punishment
- Regular assessment to monitor and reinforce student learning

Why is it important to maintain a quality physical education program in school?

Quality physical education programs are important because they provide learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of youngsters, improving a child's mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and enthusiasm for learning.

Most schools in the state of Colorado do not meet this standard because of staffing or facilities. On average, elementary students have physical education one time a week and secondary students are required to take one semester of physical education in middle and high school. Students may have added opportunities for physical activity through recess, interscholastic sports, intramural activities, before and after-school activities and school partnerships with community organizations.

Adapted from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Fact Sheet: What Constitutes a Quality Physical Education Program?
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/>

How to Work with Schools

Now that you have an understanding of how the school works, you are now ready to learn the suggested steps to take as you begin to work with the schools. In this section we will provide ideas and examples on how to work with the “champions” in the school environment in the areas of nutrition and physical activity/education which are School Nutrition Services, Physical Education Department, Before and After-School staff and the School Principal.

How to work with School Nutrition Services

As you begin it is very important to find out the facts. Find out the facts by asking questions. Your best resource for these questions is your District School Nutrition Services Director or your School Nutrition Services Manager. Visit your child’s cafeteria to see what is going on. Are fresh fruits and vegetables being offered on a daily basis? How is food prepared (Baked vs. Fried)? Does your school offer pizza made with whole grains? How are dairy products being served/merchandised? Overall, how is the food prepared and is the food served in an attractive manner?

Ask how you can become a school nutrition service advocate to help increase awareness to the students and school staff that healthy choices are available in your district. Is there a way that you can help promote the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables and milk? How can you educate parents about the fact that healthy meals are currently being served in the schools? Most people do not realize how much better the nutritional value of the foods offered today is compared to what was offered 15-20 years ago.

Ask how you can help to increase participation in child nutrition programs. Many schools participate in the National School Lunch Program, but fewer schools participate in the Breakfast Program. One barrier to participating in the school breakfast program is that there is not enough supervision in the school until staff gets into the school for their regularly scheduled workday. Other schools simply cannot afford the additional cost that supervision

would create in the morning. Can you volunteer to be a monitor at breakfast time, so that cafeterias can be opened earlier in the morning to accommodate the students that would like to participate? Also, investigate other alternative breakfast serving options such as Breakfast in the Classroom, Breakfast After 1st Period and Grab-n-Go.

Once you meet the Director of Nutrition Services for your district, work to cultivate a positive relationship with her/him. Make sure they understand that you want to work WITH them to effect change in your child’s school. Find out the areas you can assist them in making changes. Often they too have ideas but need support or other forms of assistance to make their ideas become a reality. Suggest areas you have observed that could use some change. Working together gives you each a greater ability to positively influence the health and wellness of the students in your school.

How to Work with the Physical Education Department

In general, elementary schools will have one physical education teacher who is responsible for curricula design and instruction. Depending on the size of the school, middle schools and high schools will have groups of physical education teachers who work as a team to decide who will provide instruction in different areas. It is suggested that parents work with the physical education department chairperson when working with the Physical Education (PE) department.

One of the best ways to work with your PE department is to volunteer with special events. This is one of the easiest ways to observe what is going on and show you are interested. Many schools have Field Days that take place at the beginning or end of the school year. See if you can help set up, run an event, assist special needs children etc. Many schools have a jog-a-thon as a fund raiser. Ask your PE department chairperson if the PE teacher at your school would incorporate a walking/jogging segment into their curriculum to help the kids prepare and train for the event.

It is important to keep in mind that the PE department has standards and goals just as other academic teachers that they must accomplish. It works best to show that you are interested by asking how you can get involved and assist with their current events/curriculum.

How to Work with Before and After-School Programs

First, it is important to understand that parents are needed and appreciated in after-school programs. The key is to let parents know this through effective communication. Flyers are one way, but often not the most effective way to communicate with parents about after-school. One-on-one, face-to-face communication is often the best way to approach parents, incorporating trust, relationship-building and personal contact. Whoever is doing the outreach must be sensitive to language and cultural differences. Flyers should be written in major languages used in that school/community. Latino parents may prefer the personal approach and may not participate until they are asked in person and in a language they can understand. A friendly meeting that includes food and translation may get the ball rolling.

Second, a parent leadership group should be developed to lead other parents, rather than just relying on school staff. Many successful examples of parent leadership groups exist and can be adapted to a particular school community. The staff or after-school coordinator may take the initiative to first develop these leaders, perhaps in concert with an expert from an organization such as the Colorado Statewide Parents Coalition. Then this group can organize plans for further parent involvement.

Third, years of experience in parent volunteerism have taught us that we must be SPECIFIC with what help is needed and what roles parents can play.

There should be a listing of parent involvement roles and their requirements (e.g., serve on the Parent Advisory Committee, twice a month, one and one-half hours, child care available. Or you could assist the instructor of the after-school program for one hour, once per week, etc.).

Fourth, remove barriers to parent involvement, which can include lack of childcare for younger children, non-English speaking (provide translator or other options), lack of transportation, weak literacy skills (provide verbal and written communications), and so on.

Colorado has an After-School Network. The Colorado After-School Network is committed to supporting quality after-school programs in Colorado. Their goal is to be a clearinghouse on research and resources related to quality and best practices in the after-school field. Utilize the resources and expertise provided by this network. More information can be found at <http://www.coloradoafterschoolnetwork.org/index.asp>.

How to Work With the School Principal

A good working relationship between your parent team and the school principal must be established and maintained if the goals of your team are going to be accomplished.

A good place to start is by simply introducing yourself and informing the principal that you want to be a supportive parent. Volunteer to help where needed. Then, when asked to volunteer, make every effort to be available. Attend parent meetings, PTA, and accountability meetings. When attending meetings, you can learn about your principal's school philosophy, issues of high priority, and vision for the school. If you offer comment, always state in a positive, solution-oriented manner. This gives the message that you are on his/her team.

Once this trust relationship has been developed, and an "I am on your team" attitude has been established, set an appointment with your principal to voice your concerns and or changes your parent team would like to make. Any change suggested should be for the benefit of the whole, not individuals. For example, if your child is allergic to apples, you should not demand that all apples, apple juice etc. be banned from the school.

Come to the meeting with support materials:

Position Statements (refer to the Position Statements section of this toolkit), current research, success stories (refer to the Success Stories section of this toolkit) etc. Also, try to align your parent team project with one of your principal's priority areas.

For example, your parent team decides to select the project of increasing school breakfast participation. By attending meetings, you learn your principal's highest priority is to decrease the absentee rate. After you do some research, you discover that well-nourished children have fewer school absences and less tardiness. You propose to the principal that perhaps if we work together to increase school breakfast participation we would help student attendance. This creates a win-win for the principal, your parent team and the ultimate goal – the students.

Policies in School

School policies can be altered, influenced and created by concerned community members and parents. By understanding how policies are made, you are able to be a positive influence on any policy established regarding the implementation of your school's wellness policy.

Schools play a powerful role in influencing students' food choices and physical activity level. There are several ways that schools can ensure that students' eating habits and access to physical activity contribute to their learning achievement and lifelong good health. The *Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in School* encourages the development of policies to support healthful choices for a la carte, vending, after-school programs and school events such as classroom events, celebrations, class snacks, meetings, parties, concessions, intramural events, fund raisers and extracurricular events. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate for the policy to be made at the district, school or classroom level.

What is a Policy?

Policies are official statements of vision and judgment that address the needs of a school system, school or classroom. Values, convictions and beliefs usually form the basis for a policy statement. Policies can provide the following:

- Leadership
- Commitment
- Support
- Direction
- Guidance
- Institutionalization
- Public Engagement
- Accountability
- Legal Protection

Policies generally address what should be done, why it should be done and who should do it. Procedures outline the details of how to accomplish a policy's goal. Policies can be formal or informal and written or unwritten.

Sample District Policy for:

School Celebrations

- It is the intent of ABC School System to use rewards and incentives that do not undermine the health of students and/or reinforce unhealthful eating habits. Non-food rewards and incentives will be used as the first choice to encourage positive behavior. If food is used for a reward, healthy choices with appropriate portion sizes are required.
- It is the intent of Good Learning Elementary School to eliminate the practice of using foods that promote unhealthful eating habits as classroom rewards. Teachers will use pencils, erasers and stickers to use as rewards for students.
- It is the intent of Mrs. Parsley, first-grade teacher, to not reward her students for positive behavior with food. Mrs. Parsley will use a system of verbal praise and certificates and ribbons to reward her students.

Rewards and Incentives

- It is the intent of ABC School System that school celebrations be limited to no more than four times per year (K-5 grades) or two times per year (6-8 grades). When possible, it is recommended that celebrations feature activities other than eating. If food is involved, it should include healthy choices.
- It is the intent of Good Learning Elementary School that celebrations be limited to one per nine-week quarter per classroom. The celebration should take place during the last hour of the school day so it will not interfere with school meal. Teachers are encouraged to choose non-food ways to celebrate for two out of the four celebrations. If food is involved in the celebrations, parents can consult the student handbook for possible snack choices.

- It is the intent of Mrs. Parsley to set the dates for classroom celebrations within the first month of school. Parents are encouraged to assist with the celebrations by volunteering to prepare healthy snacks when requested. A list of dates and options are sent home with students. Parents can consult the student handbook for possible snack choices.

How is a policy developed?

Common tasks needed to develop a policy:

- Lay the groundwork
- Build awareness and support
- Draft the policy
- Adopt the policy
- Administer the policy

Getting Support for a Policy

Groups that can support policy change:

- PTA/PTO
- School Improvement Teams
- School Health Advisory Councils
- Public Health Partners
- Cooperative Extension Partners

Developed in partnership between the NC Division of Public Health, NC Department of Public Instruction, NC Cooperative Extension and NC Action for Healthy Kids. For more information on school nutrition issues and policies: visit www.nasbe.org, www.ActionForHealthyKids.org or www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com.

Understanding and Getting Involved with Your School Wellness Policy

One of the key policies that your parent team should become very familiar with and to use as a guide for your work is your District Wellness Policy.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 mandated all local school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program to have a school district wellness policy in place by July 1, 2006. This legislation was in response to overwhelming concern about the rising rate of child obesity. School wellness policies must include nutrition education goals, physical activity goals, and nutrition standards for all foods available on school campus during the school day. Goals for other school-based activities should be designed to promote student wellness.

The law required that the wellness policies be developed and implemented by “local parents, teachers, administrators, school nutrition services,

school boards and the public”. Many schools included students and school nurses in this list. The law clearly articulated that the wellness policies were to be developed locally as a means of allowing schools and districts to customize the policy based on local needs and resources.

It is clear that there are targeted areas in which parents can help with implementation and support of changes that will provide support and education for children to establish healthy habits for eating and physical activity.

Before your team selects the area of the school to focus on make sure your project aligns and helps develop your district wellness policy.

To access a copy of your school/district wellness policy either log onto your school Web site or contact your school directly.

Resources:

S. 2507 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdoc.cfm?index=5518&type=0&sequence=0>

Colorado Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Guide

http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/CO_CO-%20School%20Wellness%20Guide-Web.pdf

Some final considerations regarding school policies

Respect the hierarchy.

Most administrators dislike surprises and want to know about policy and program initiatives being planned, especially if the matter might come to the school board. Focus and involve local school leaders first (principal, school nutrition director, physical education teacher, etc.).

Stay focused on the ultimate goal.

As the fine points of a proposed policy or program are being worked out, it can be difficult to find an acceptable balance among competing objectives. It can help to refocus the discussion on overall goals and the best interest of the children and youth.

Compromise does not mean defeat.

Parents who feel strongly about the proposed

program might be upset when policymakers implement it piecemeal, institute only a modest pilot program, or otherwise fail to fully adopt best-practice recommendations. Rather than considering it a defeat, view compromise as a partial victory that lays a foundation for future efforts.

Do not expect quick or easy success.

School health supporters who have successfully implemented new policies or programs routinely report that their accomplishments took more effort than they anticipated – and much more time. Be patient, yet persistent.

Sustain the effort.

Skeptical school personnel are familiar with programs that are instituted one year and eliminated the next. After the initial push for implementation of a new policy or program, attention may flag as compelling new issues arise. To sustain the effort, periodically note how well the policy is being managed and enforced. Bring lapses to the attention of appropriate school officials. Note unanticipated problems – and benefits - of the policy. Help ensure that evaluation and feedback processes built into the policy work smoothly.

For more information please refer to the resource: *How Schools Work and How to Work with Schools* found at www.nasbe.org.

Position Statements

Positions, which consist of a position statement and a support paper, are based on sound scientific data. Position statements are very helpful to review and use as support as you begin work to create change in your child’s school. Below is a list of nationally credible organizations, which have position statements that will assist you to make changes in your school nutrition and physical activity/education environment.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education
- Position statements that describe and support quality physical education, recess, after-school physical activity programs, and interscholastic and youth sports.
www.naspeinfo.org

American Dietetic Association – ADA Position Papers explain the Association’s stance on issues that affect the nutritional status of the public.
www.Eatright.org

School Nutrition Association – Position statements on Nutrition Programs and Services in Schools.
<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Index.aspx?id=1058>



Conduct a Needs Assessment

Section 3



**“The future depends on what we do
in the present.”**

Mahatma Gandhi

Conduct a Needs Assessment

The next step for your parent team is to identify areas of the school environment that need improvement. In this section you will find a sample needs assessment as well as where to find others to choose from.

How Healthy Is Your School?

Use this survey as a tool to get a quick idea of how successful schools are in supporting student nutrition and physical education/activity.

Note: You may find that your school excels in certain areas but is surprisingly lacking in others. Some standards may not be appropriate for your school, given its particular financial situation, geography or demographics. But making even small changes as a result of what you find through the survey may not be as difficult as you imagine, and will go a long way towards promoting the student body's health and wellness.

1. Ask different team members to volunteer to complete different sections of this survey. They will be responsible for:
 - Finding out the answers to questions by approaching the principal or other appropriate people, talking to students, and taking a look at the school environment.
 - Marking each question with yes or no and writing relevant notes.
2. Have your members reconvene to discuss results and to make plans for action.
3. Act on your findings. If the survey reveals areas in which your school can make improvements, use the next section of this toolkit, "Follow the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process" to find the action steps to create positive change.

*If you would like to do a more in-depth assessment of your school's wellness environment, you may obtain a copy of the School Health Index and a detailed self-assessment form, using one of the following options:

- Download from CDC websites: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash> or <http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa>
- Request by email : cdcinfo@cdc.gov
- Call the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health Resource Room: 770-488-3168
- Request by toll-free fax: 888-282-7681

When ordering, please specify either elementary school version or the middle school/high school version.



Part 1: Nutrition

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. Is nutrition education part of the school curriculum?
Yes No
2. Does your school participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast and/or After-school Snack programs?
Yes No
3. Do students in your school have enough time to eat (i.e., at least 20 minutes for breakfast and at least 30 minutes for lunch)? Are the food lines efficient enough to allow students adequate eating time?
Yes No
4. Are the vending machines on campus stocked with only healthy beverage or snack items (i.e. milk/dairy, bottled water, 100 percent juice, and low-fat snacks)?
Yes No
5. Are healthy snacks served at PTA events, in the classroom and at school parties?
Yes No
6. Do students generally like the food offered at school?
Yes No
7. Are only nutritious foods used a fund raiser items?
Yes No

Note: If you answered “No” to any of these questions, refer to the “Follow the P.A.R.E.N.T. Processes” section of this toolkit for an explanation of different projects you can pick to make change in the area of nutrition in the school environment.

Part II: Physical Education and Activity

QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. Do all students participate in daily physical activity at school (including recess and at least 30 minutes a day of physical education)?
Yes No
2. If physical education is available, do the classes teach skills and behaviors promoting lifelong fitness (as opposed to competitive sports only)?
Yes No
3. Are school recreational facilities adequate (e.g., upkeep of gym equipment and grounds)? Are there no safety concerns?
Yes No
4. Are school recreational facilities (e.g., gymnasium, pool, fields, and tennis and basketball courts) available for use by students before and after school hours?
Yes No
5. Are students taught the importance of physical activity to health maintenance?
Yes No
6. Are teachers encouraged to incorporate fitness breaks or physical activity to reinforce classroom learning?
Yes No
7. Is the privilege of recess available to all students, including those that are being disciplined?
Yes No
8. Is physical activity encouraged before/after school (walk/bike to school, active after-school programs)?
Yes No

Note: If you answered “No” to any of these questions, refer to the “Follow the P.A.R.E.N.T. Processes” section of this toolkit for an explanation of different projects you can pick to make change in the area of physical activity/education in the school environment.

Developed from information and resources at the following websites www.pta.org and www.parentsaction.org.



Follow the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Section 4



“There is no limit to what we can achieve when we combine with the right people. Together we can really make a difference in the health of our nation’s children.”

**Dr. David Satcher, MD, PhD, Former U.S. Surgeon General,
Action for Healthy Kids Founding Chair**

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

At this point, your parent team has learned a lot! You are now ready to select an area in your school and begin to create change. To assist you in doing so we will use the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process.



The P.A.R.E.N.T. Process is designed to help guide parents through the basic steps needed to help advocate better wellness practices in their local schools. Follow the steps of the P.A.R.E.N.T. Process to forward a topic in this guide or use the structure to help guide a matter of your own choosing.

P – Pick a Project

One that is accomplishable and excites passion in parent advocates

A – Assess the Situation

Find out what the current situation is in the school and the need for the project

R – Research

Learn as much as possible about the project of choice

E – Educate

Bring awareness to key stakeholders about the issue and the project

N – Network

Connect to and rally support from school administrators, staff and parents

T – Take Action

Develop action steps and begin to implement the project

Food Groups to Encourage

Foods are classified in food groups based on their nutritional properties. Each of the basic food groups supplies a different combination of nutrients, vitamins and minerals. Eating a variety of foods is the key to good nutrition.

Increased intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and dairy products are likely to have important health benefits for most Americans, according to the Dietary Guidelines. They are encouraged for a healthful diet and are sources for specific nutrients of which many Americans are not getting enough – calcium, potassium, fiber, magnesium, vitamins A, C and E.

It is recommended that growing kids consume more of the food groups to encourage.

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – Encourage intake of a food group that tends to be lacking in your specific population.

Assess the Situation

1. Choose the food group(s) in which parents and teachers can make an impact positively in children's diets.
2. Evaluate the food choices available in the cafeteria. Are the amount of fruits and vegetable, dairy and whole grain selections adequate? Is the nutrition service staff able to increase the number of servings offered?

Research

1. Investigate national food consumption surveys to determine the extent of the nutritional problem in the age group of your children.
2. Find the success stories, use the resources listed below to get started.

Educate

1. Inform the school administration of your concern, the current situation, some possible alternatives and success stories.
2. Educate children on nutrition and the food groups using the teacher's current curriculum. There are ideas in the Resource list on how to do this.
3. Put nutrition-related posters up in the cafeteria. Encourage the Nutrition Service Director to provide nutrition tips on the menu that goes home to the families.

Network

1. Gather the support of teachers, parents, nutrition service staff and concerned citizens.
2. A network will allow you to offer the school volunteers, research options, raise funds and further promote change.
3. Work with industry-based groups to get the educational or financial support needed to increase the intake of the identified food groups.

Take Action

1. Ask the school/administration to add a policy on the importance of meeting the food group requirements to the school's/district's existing wellness policies.
2. Ask the nutrition service personnel to encourage children's intake by asking them which fruit and/or vegetable they would like for lunch. Studies show that children are more likely to eat food when they are encouraged.
3. Suggest that the cafeteria manager order fruits, vegetables, dairy products and whole grains as part of the "snack cart."
4. Help raise awareness of the "missing food groups" by providing nutrition information on the school website.
5. Offer to help nutrition services personnel with sampling of new fruits and vegetables, flavored milks and whole grain products.

Ideas for Success

- As a reward, children are given tokens that they can save for a monthly "Market Day." On this day, the kids can purchase fruit, vegetables and yogurt drinks with their tokens.
- Plant a Produce Plot. Have classes sponsor their own vegetables garden. Children are responsible for planting, tending to and harvesting vegetables.
- Sponsor Taste Tests for kids to try new and different fruits and vegetables. Discuss the health benefits of those foods during the session.
- Have Cooking Classes or a "Salad Assembly Program" for kids to learn how to prepare and serve more fruits, vegetables and dairy.

Resources

Western Dairy Council – New Look of School Milk; 3-a-Day of Dairy Lessons; Dairy Vending; Flavored Milk
www.wdairyCouncil.com

Dairy Posters for Cafeteria
www.milkdelivers.org

Fruit and Vegetables – Ideas and Kid Games to Increase Consumption
www.5aday.com

Colorado’s Harvest of the Month
<http://www.cssd11.k12.co.us/fns/harvest.htm>

Michigan Team Nutrition – Family Tip Sheet to Increase Fruits and Vegetables, Recommended Children’s Nutrition Books and More
www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/resources.html

Fruit and Veggies More Matters
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Wheat Food Council
<http://www.wheatfoods.org/>

Making It Happen! “School Nutrition Success Stories”
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MIH/MainPage.aspx>

Ohio Action for Healthy Kids – Incorporating Nutrition Education into Other Subjects, General Nutrition and More
www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org

General Nutrition – Overall Information on Nutrition, Kids Games, Tips and More
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>
<http://www.nutritionexplorations.org>

National Dairy Council – Healthier Eating: Getting Where you Need to Be (Food Groups to Encourage)
http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/NR/rdonlyres/C2FE6804-C800-499D-A010-DFB37969EE34/0/DMIHealthierEatingHOE_4.pdf

Beef Council – Live Well! Enjoy Nutrient Rich Foods Toolkit
<http://www.beefnutrition.org/matedownloadsforpatientsandclients.aspx>
<http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/NationalDairyCouncil/Health/Materials/Live+Well+Enjoy+Nutrient+Rich+Foods+tool+kit.htm>



Breakfast

Breakfast plays an important role in the day of a child. Studies show that students who eat breakfast have higher math and reading scores, improved memory on cognition tests and are at less risk for being overweight. Children that participate in the SBP have demonstrated improved standardized test scores, attendance, classroom participation and decreased tardiness. Despite the benefits of eating breakfast, the meal is commonly skipped by students. According to the USDA, an estimated 90 percent of children, ages 1 to 5, eat breakfast. This number severely declines as children get older. A mere 14 percent of high school students eat breakfast. Advocating for school breakfast at your child's school will result in children receiving much needed nutrition to start the day off right.

The federal government assists schools by providing USDA funds to support the cost of a school breakfast program. This program assists children from low-income homes by offering free or reduced-cost school breakfasts to qualifying children. A variety of breakfast options are available to schools to operate a school breakfast program in cost-effective ways so all students have access to a healthy meal to start their day.

On May 15, 2007, Colorado Governor Ritter signed into law Senate Bill 07-059, the Start Smart Nutrition Program. The legislation effectively eliminated the co-payment for reduced price breakfast and instead the district will receive this money. Historically, the co-pay has been one of the major barriers for the children of many eligible families to consistently participate in the breakfast program. Shifting the co-payment to the state will have a positive effect, and increase participation of eligible children.

In addition, Colorado provides breakfast expansion funds available to academically low-performing at-risk schools.

* Adapted from National PTA and Parents' Action for Children. Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School Notebook. What's the Big Deal about Breakfast? p.43-44.

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Assess the Situation

1. Find out if your child's school participates in the National School Breakfast Program (SBP). Do all grades have access to the program?
2. If your local school does participate in the SBP:

- a. What types of breakfast program is offered?

Traditional (in the cafeteria before school);
Breakfast in the Classroom; Grab 'N Go or
Breakfast after 1st period.

- b. Learn the types of foods served. Do the meals meet nutrition guidelines? Does the school have additional nutrition guidelines? If breakfast does not meet the requirements, find out why.
 - c. What is the student participation rate? If low, why are students not taking advantage of the meal program? What can be done to increase participation?
3. If your school does not participate in the SBP:
 - a. Contact the school's principal and ask why the SBP is not offered. Find out how many students qualify for free or reduced lunch eligibility and advocate that these children should have access to breakfast each day.

Research

1. Look into SBP options, serving methods, innovative ideas for participation and school success stories. Many preassembled resource toolkits and fact sheets are available. Use the resources below for additional help.
2. Explore healthy breakfast options that appeal to students. Research foods that have had success.
3. Identify advocates within the school (teacher, principal, food director, nurse).
4. Observe other school breakfast programs.

Educate

1. Share with school administrators and key stakeholders the advantage of school breakfast and the academic research supporting the program.
2. Inform the school of your concern, current situation, options, and financial potential and

success stories. Let them know the program can help bring federal dollars into the school to assist with the financial coverage of the program.

3. Ask about obstacles that may need to be addressed before change can take place.

Network

1. Gather the support of parents, teachers, nurse and concerned community members.
2. A network allows you to offer the school volunteers, research more options, and/or further promote change.

Take Action

1. Petition schools to add SBP policy including healthy meal standards to the district's and/or school's existing wellness policies.
2. Start serving breakfast and/or healthier options at your school. Pilot an Expanding Breakfast program.
3. Offer to have parent volunteers assist with starting the SBP at the school. Have special days where parents come to school and eat with their children.
4. Frequently report at PTA meetings the progress of the program.

Ideas for Success

- Invite parents to eat breakfast with their children
 - First Wednesday of every month
- Special Breakfast Guests once a month. Principal, Coach, School Mascot, etc.
- Fresh fruit options are offered daily to students
- A Grab'N Go School Breakfast kiosk available for high school students
- Develop, organize and implement PSAs over the intercom to promote healthy school breakfast

Resources

Western Dairy Council – Expanding Breakfast Program Resources, Benefits of Breakfast, Start-up Grants!

www.wdairyCouncil.com

Colorado Action for Healthy Kids - Breakfast = Achievement Flyer

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Breakfast First: Healthy Food for Hungry Minds - SBP Information, Parent Advocacy and Research

www.breakfastfirst.org

Action for Healthy Kids - Improving and Expanding School Meal Programs

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/resources_topic.php?topic=20

FRAC - School Breakfast Program: SBP Information, Facts and Figures

www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/programs/sbp.html

USDA - The School Breakfast Program: Fact Sheet

www.fns.usda.gov/end/Breakfast/AboutBFast/FactSheet.pdf

Changing the Scene - Improving School Breakfast: SBP Resources, Guides and Research

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html

CDE Nutrition Unit

303.866.6661/888.245.6092

Snacks

Did you know snacking is healthy...that is if you snack on the right foods. A healthy snack is nutrient-rich. Nutrient-rich foods give you the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for the fewest calories. A good snack provides energy for school work and recreational activities. Also, a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack has been shown to improve concentration and memory.

Many schools provide snacks or ask parents to send snacks to school. Schools may be eligible to receive federal reimbursement funding for after-school snacks from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). USDA also has a special milk program that can be applied for which provides reimbursement for morning milk break snacks. If parents are asked to send snacks, many times parents need not only guidelines, but also suggestions for healthy, creative, and appropriate snacks for school. Also, snacks do not need to be expensive; many can fit into any budget.

P.A.R.E.N.T.. Process

Pick a Project – Snacks

Assess the Situation

1. Find out if your child's school provides snacks. If they do, find out what is provided.
2. Find out if parents are asked to send snacks to school. Individual or for the whole class?
3. Is the school enrolled in the USDA or CACFP after-school snack federal reimbursement program?
4. What types of snacks/food are provided in the school store?

Research

1. Look into healthy alternative snack options.
2. Is the nutrition service department able to prepare snacks?

Educate

1. Provide an article about nutrient-rich snack food ideas to be placed in your school newsletter.
2. Provide healthy snack ideas at parent night.
3. Share the USDA or CACFP after-school snack federal reimbursement program forms with your Nutrition Service Manager.

Network

1. Gather the support of teachers, parents, nutrition service staff and concerned citizens.
2. A network will allow you to offer the school volunteers, research options, raise funds and further promote change.
3. Work with industry-based groups to get the educational or financial support needed to increase the intake of the identified food groups.

Take Action

1. With parent and teacher input, create guidelines for snacks. Example: snacks must be nutrient-rich and from the food groups to encourage. Create a list of snacks that can provide, not a list of "don'ts." Also consider clean-up, storage and cost for your snacks.
2. Give some time for "learning." If you want to implement criteria that are to be followed, give parents and students "learning" time. Time to identify what a healthy snack is, time to shop, and time to change. Example: After Christmas break; we will be encouraging our children to eat healthy snacks while at school. Any snacks brought to school after this date, must meet the following criteria..."
3. If your school is not enrolled in the USDA or CACFP programs encourage your school staff to apply or provide school staff with the application.

Ideas for Success

1. Teach students what healthy snacks are. Let them taste the snacks, model by providing healthy snacks for several days.
2. If you have a school store, encourage the sponsor and club to offer healthy choices.
3. Have a healthy snack awareness week or day.
4. Ask for classroom donations of snacks, so parent are required to provide two snacks each semester.



Resources:

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) – Federal Food Programs
– Including information regarding the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

www.frac.org

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service - Nutrition Assistance Programs (after-school snack program and special milk program)

www.fns.usda.gov

Western Dairy Council – Healthy Snack Ideas

www.wdairyCouncil.com

New Mexico Fact Sheet – Classroom Snacks

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

All it Takes is Nutrition SENSE (Students Encouraging Nutritious Snacks Everyday) – Toolkit for your School Store

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/nutritiousense.htm>

Action for Healthy Kids - Alabama Guide to Healthy School Stores

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

National Dairy Council – Healthier Eating: Getting Where You Need to Be (Food Groups to Encourage)

http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/NR/rdonlyres/C2FE6804-C800-499D-A010-DFB37969EE34/0/DMIHealthierEatingHOE_4.pdf

Beef Council – Live Well! Enjoy Nutrient Rich Foods Toolkit

<http://www.beefnutrition.org/matedownloadsforpatientsandclients.aspx>

<http://www.nationaldairyCouncil.org/NationalDairyCouncil/Health/Materials/Live+Well+Enjoy+Nutrient+Rich+Foods+tool+kit.htm>

Nutrition Education

Our country has educated parents and students on the detrimental effects of smoking on children and adult health. Now it is imperative that we do the same to address eating habits that are contributing to the rising rate of obesity and health-related problems of millions of America's children. Through our school communities and local wellness policies we have the opportunity to educate and provide tools to students and their families for establishing eating and exercise habits that will enhance their lifelong health.

Nationally only 2 percent of children meet all the dietary guidelines for the Food Guide Pyramid, while 16 percent of students do not meet a single one.¹ Children need to understand the importance of nutrition. Proper diet helps students perform better academically, increases attendance, and decreases disruptive classroom behavior.² Nutrition education can ensure children are adequately equipped to make healthy choices. Studies indicate that healthy behaviors children learn today positively affect their adult food choices.³

The key to success is a wellness policy nutrition education implementation plan that coordinates efforts of parents, classroom and physical education teachers, school health services and nutrition service staff. Selecting current and scientifically sound nutrition education implementation resources that reinforce core standards for reading, writing, math and science as well as coordinate with the school meal programs are a time-saving place to start. There are numerous curriculums, nutrition promotion programs and audiovisuals that are developed for implementation in the classroom. Messages on the morning announcements, posters around the school, after-school programs and wellness fairs can promote and reinforce classroom and home nutrition education.

¹ United States Department of Agriculture. Team Nutrition. www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/sebrochure.pdf

^{2,3} Nutrition Explorations. Why Teach Nutrition. www.nutritionexplorations.org/educators/whyteach.asp

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – Nutrition Education

Assess the Situation

1. Find out how and where your child's school promotes nutrition education (curriculum, lunchroom, announcements, parent newsletters,

staff wellness and wellness fairs).

2. In what school venue could students, parents/caregivers and staff be more actively engaged and learn more about nutrition choices for a healthy lifestyle? In the cafeteria, classroom or after-school program?

Research

1. Look into nutrition education curriculum options, promotions, and success stories. Use the resources listed below to get started.
2. Examine materials needed for programs of interest. Estimate the cost involved.
3. Identify advocates within the school (teachers, principal, nurse, nutrition service staff).

Educate

1. Inform the school of your concern, current situation, options, success stories, and possible costs.
2. Ask about obstacles that may need to be addressed before change can take place.
3. Work with the school and administration to come up with creative ways to implement nutrition education opportunities for students, parents/caregivers and staff.

Network

1. Gather the support of parents/caregivers and concerned community members.
2. A network will allow you to provide school volunteers, research more options, raise funds, and/or further promote change.

Take Action

1. Petition the school to develop a nutrition education implementation plan for the school district's existing wellness policies.
2. Implement changes the school and parents have agreed upon. If parents and the school have not yet come to an agreement, be persistent. Work with schools to make small changes that can lead to more dynamic changes in the future. Work

to have an implementation plan that provides coordinated and consistent messages throughout the school, not just in classroom nutrition education.

Ideas for Success

- Parent volunteers lead nutrition lessons and make healthy snacks at an after-school program
- Teachers incorporate planned and sequential nutrition activities into their classroom curricula
- School staff model nutrition messages being taught in classroom curricula
- Each morning announcement includes a short message about healthy lifestyle choices students can make each day

Resources:

Western Dairy Council - Free Resources and Nutrition Education Programs for Schools
www.wdairyCouncil.com
<http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/>

Colorado Department of Education Nutrition Unit –Nutrition Literacy Toolkit
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/nltk/default.asp>

Teachfree.com - Preschool through 12th grade educators with high-quality educational materials that supplement the curriculum. Resources can also be downloaded for use in the classroom.
www.teachfree.com

USDA Food and Nutrition Services - Links to Nutrition Education Resources for Schools, Parents and Children
www.fns.usda.gov/fns/nutrition.htm
www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/mypyramidclassroom.html

Food and Nutrition Information Center - Curriculum and Resources for Schools, Parents and Children
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/etext/5adayresources.html
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/bibs/edu/preschool.html



Non-Food Rewards and School Parties

Food is very effective at motivating students, and therefore is commonly used as an incentive in the classroom. Unfortunately, some food rewards undermine nutrition education and can encourage over-consumption of foods high in fat or sugar.

An estimated 16 percent of children (age 16-19) in the U.S. are overweight.¹ Adults need to be more conscious than ever of the foods and rewards offered to children. Unhealthy food rewards can send mixed messages when healthy eating habits are taught in the classroom but not followed. School parties centered on food may also contribute to poor diet. Foods of minimal nutritional value may lessen a child's ability to learn positive nutrition habits while young. As teachers and parents, we need to be mindful of our position as role models to students. We need to set positive examples for our children and students. This can be accomplished through advocating healthy birthday celebrations in the classroom and not rewarding students with items that contribute to unhealthy lifestyles. If food is going to be used as a reward or offered at a school party choose nutrient-rich foods from Food Groups to Encourage.

¹ National Center for Health Statistics. Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2002. www.cdc.gov

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – Rewards and School Parties

Assess the Situation

1. Find out the various types of rewards frequently offered in your child's school. In what situations do the teachers provide reward systems for students? Collect information on school celebrations. Do the rewards and/or celebrations involve food? What types of food?
2. Decide whether the rewards and celebrations promote health and/or reinforce the lessons of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles.
3. Choose an area where parents and teachers can make positive changes in the reward systems or sponsored celebrations.

Research

1. Investigate alternatives to offering food as a reward and food-centered parties. Find success

- stories. Use the resources listed below to get started.
2. Compile a list of non-food rewards and healthier celebrations. (A starter list is already provided in the following pages)
 3. Would the parents and teachers be willing to combine student birthday parties into a once-a-month event that incorporates physical activity as well as healthy snacks?
 4. Is the nutrition service department able to make healthy party trays, such as fresh fruit, cheese, whole grain crackers, for classroom holiday celebrations?

Educate

1. Inform the school administration of your concern, current situation, possible alternatives and success stories.
2. Discuss this topic at the PTA meeting. Can parents alter the items they bring into the classroom? What type of parameters should be put on the food served at the celebration? For example, "All party food must meet the nutritional guidelines with exception of one sweet snack offering."
3. Ask about obstacles that may need to be addressed before the change can take place.
4. Explain how this topic can be implemented into the school wellness policy.

Network

1. Gather the support of teachers, parents, nutrition service staff and concerned citizens.
2. A network will allow you to offer the school volunteers, research more options, raise funds and/or further promote change.

Take Action

1. Ask the school/administration to add a non-food rewards and healthy celebrations policy to the school's/district's existing wellness policies.
2. Provide parents a list of ideas for healthy party snacks. This allows for a healthy party atmosphere and encourages parents to be mindful of good nutrition.
3. Remind parents to consider ethnic and medical food restrictions and allergies when providing classroom snacks.

4. Distribute lists of non-food rewards and active party games that are age-appropriate and can get the kids moving.
 5. Help raise funds to support healthier rewards and parties.
-

Ideas for Success

- School nutrition services provides fresh fruit, cheese and whole grain crackers as party trays for classroom celebrations.
- Parents are provided a healthy recipe book from which to make birthday treats.
- Teachers reward students with physical-activity breaks when school work is accomplished (rather than offer candy).
- Keep school parties simple: games, snacks and favors. Children are excited and active on celebration days. A simple and familiar party structure works best for everyone.

Resources

Making It Happen! "School Nutrition Success Stories"
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MIH/MainPage.aspx>

Action for Healthy Kids - Alternative Rewards and More
www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Michigan Team Nutrition - Common Allergies, Snack Ideas and More
www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/resources.html

Alternatives to Food as Reward, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships, September 2004:
www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm

Connecticut Team Nutrition - Alternative Rewards and Celebrations: Tips and Facts
www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm#Healthy

Center for Science in the Public Interest - Alternative Rewards and Celebrations: Tips and Facts
www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf
www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options_healthycelebrations.html

Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego - Alternative Rewards and Celebrations: Tips and Facts
www.ccwsd.org/resourcesfundraising.htm

National Dairy Council – Healthier Eating: Getting Where You Need to Be (Food Groups to Encourage)
http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/NR/rdonlyres/C2FE6804-C800-499D-A010-DFB37969EE34/0/DMIHealthierEatingHOE_4.pdf

Beef Council – Live Well! Enjoy Nutrient Rich Foods Toolkit
<http://www.beefnutrition.org/matedownloadsforpatientsandclients.aspx>
<http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/NationalDairyCouncil/Health/Materials/Live+Well+Enjoy+Nutrient+Rich+Foods+tool+kit.htm>

Fund Raising

Tight operating budgets often make school fund raising necessary. We support the work parents, teachers and students accomplish to raise additional funds for their school programs. But many schools sell beverages and foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as fund-raiser items. This sends mixed messages to students as nutrition education classes are promoting healthy food selections and then adults are supporting the sale of FMNV. Parents can help schools move toward choosing healthier and/or non-food money making projects which will avoid negative effects on student health while still maintaining school funding.

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – Fund Raising

Assess the Situation

1. Find out the types of fund raising commonly used in your child's school. Focus on the healthiness of food and drinks sold.
2. What groups in your community are involved with fund-raisers? Who organizes these events and how can you work to educate them on this topic?
3. Decide whether a healthy fund-raising initiative is needed in your child's school.

Research

1. Look into the effectiveness of healthier fund-raising options and success stories. Use the resources listed below to get started.
2. Assemble a list of healthier and/or non-food fund-raising activities. (A starter list is already provided).
3. Investigate and identify advocates within the school (teacher, principal, nurse).

Educate

1. This topic will involve working with athletic boosters and many other associations that involve parent and student groups.
2. Inform the school of your concern, current situation, possible alternatives and success stories.
3. Distribute a copy of your healthy and/or non-food fund-raising activities.
4. Ask about obstacles that may need to be addressed before change can take place.

Network

1. Connect to and gather the support of parents and the many associations involved with fund raising.
2. A network will allow you to offer the school volunteers, research more options and/or further promote change.

Take Action

1. Petition the school/administration to add a healthy and/or non-food fund-raising policy to the school's/

district existing wellness policies.

2. Promote your list of healthy and/or non-food fund-raising activities to groups that raise funds in your child's school/district.

Ideas for Success

- School fund-raisers do not sell candy bars to students and the community, rather spring flower bulb sales and magazine subscriptions are sold.
- Local gym memberships are raffled off at school events.

Resources

Making It Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories
<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MIH/MainPage.aspx>

Action for Healthy Kids – Fund-raising Ideas & Resources
www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/resources_topic.php?topic=13

Richland County School District One – Fund-raising Ideas and More
www.richlandone.org/departments/student_nutrition/fundraising_ideas.htm

Connecticut State Department of Education – Fund-raising Facts, Resources, and Ideas
www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Healthy_Fundraising_Color.pdf

Louisiana Action for Healthy Kids and Team Nutrition – Fund-raising Ideas and More
www.doe.state.la.us/lde/nutritioned/1861.html

California Lean – Fund-raising Ideas and More
www.californiaprojectlean.org

Healthy Fund-raisers for PTAs
http://www.pta.org/pr_magazine_article_details_1127491576078.html

Cooking with MyPyramid – Fund-raising Program
<http://www.cookingwithmypyramid.com/CWM%20Fundraiser.htm>

Physical Activity and Physical Education

Over the past 20 years, the prevalence of overweight children has tripled.¹ The Center for Disease Control estimates a third of children born in 2000 will develop diabetes unless serious nutrition and exercise changes are made.² Despite these figures and as a result of numerous demands upon schools, physical activity (PA) and physical education (PE) in schools continue to decline. In the United States, only 32 percent of children participate in a daily PE class, and many schools have eliminated or reduced recess time.^{3,4}

Advocating an increase in PA and PE can have a big impact on your child's school. Less than 25 percent of children participate in 30 minutes of daily physical activity.⁵ It is recommended children participate in 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Intense PA programs have demonstrated increased concentration and reduced disruptive behavior among students in addition to improved academic achievement in mathematics, reading and writing test scores.⁶ A study by the California Department of Education had similar results linking levels of higher physical activity to higher academic achievement.⁷

- ^{1,2,4,5} National PTA and Parents' Action for Children. Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School. Fact Sheet: The Need for Physical Education and Physical Activity in Our Schools. 47-48.
- ³ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 60:Play. every day. any way. Tips for Parents. <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/materials/adults/pdf/tip-for-parent.pdf>
- ⁶ Action for Healthy Kids. 2004. The Role of Sound Nutrition and Physical Activity in Academic Achievement. <http://206.145.43.118/files/pdf/AcademicPerformanceActivity.pdf>
- ⁷ California Department of Education. 2002. State Study Proves Physically Fit Kids Perform Better Academically. <http://206.145.43.118/files/pdf/AcademicPerformanceActivity.pdf>

P.A.R.E.N.T. Process

Pick a Project – Physical Activity (PA) and Physical Education (PE)

Assess the Situation

1. Find out what types of PA your child's school offers (walking programs, PE, recess, etc.).
2. Is PE offered daily? Does PE meet for the recommended amount of time? (The National Association of Sports and Physical Education [NASPE] recommends schools provide 150 minutes of PE to elementary students a week and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students).
3. Do elementary schools schedule time for daily recess?
4. Is physical activity incorporated into academic subjects?
5. Decide whether increased PA and PE are needed.

Research

1. Look into the importance of PE and PA in school, evidence-based PE and PA program options and success stories. Many prepackaged programs exist to assist in implementing developmentally appropriate programs.
2. Use the resources below for additional help.
3. Identify advocates within the school (PE teachers, coaches, principal, nurse, intramural organizers, after-school program directors).

Educate

1. Share the research you have found and ideas for school success.
2. Inform the school of your concern, current situation, options, success stories and possible costs.
3. Ask about obstacles that may need to be addressed before change can take place.
4. Use position statements to help support your cause. Refer to the Position Statement information in the Understanding the School Environment section of this toolkit for more information.

Network

1. Gather the support of parents, committed school staff and concerned citizens.
2. A network will allow you to offer the school volunteers, raise funds for new PA and PE equipment, research more PA and PE options and/or further promote change.

Take Action

1. Petition the school/administration to add a physical activity, physical education and/or recess requirements to the school's existing wellness policy.
2. Implement changes the school and parents have agreed upon (increased PE and/or recess time, additional developmentally appropriate programs and structured activities, and/or short PA breaks).

Ideas for Success

- A survey of Colorado PE teachers indicated their number one need was equipment. PTA funds could be used to purchase balls, pedometers, after-school program kits and other materials to promote physical activity.
- Physical activity in the classroom can be combined with academic subjects.
- Forming a “walking school bus” and gathering volunteers to walk groups of students to school on a rotating basis.

Resources

Action for Healthy Kids- Numerous Ideas, Resources and Facts on Physical Activity

http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/resources_topic.php?topic=19

Action for Healthy Kids – ReCharge! Energizing After-School Kit

http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/special_after.php

Action for Healthy Kids’ Fact Sheet, Building the Argument: The Need for Physical Education and Physical Activity in Our Schools

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Michigan Team Nutrition - Physical Activity Information and Links for Parents, Teachers and Children

<http://www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/physicalactivity.html>

Take 10: Getting Kids Active 10 Minutes at a Time - Classroom Based Physical Activity and Curriculum Tool

<http://www.take10.net/>

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

<http://www.aahperd.org/>

Colorado Governor’s Council for Physical Fitness

www.shapeupchallenge.org

PE Links 4 U - Physical Education Resources and Links for K-12th Grades

<http://www.pelinks4u.org/>

Rescuing Recess - Advocacy Information for Parents, Teachers and Kids

<http://www.rescuingrecess.com/>

OPI Recess Before Lunch Policy: Kids Play and then Eat

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html>

KidsWalk-to-School - CDC’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Information and Resources on Increasing Awareness of Walking Programs, Encouraging Students to Participate, Walking School Buses, Pre-Packaged PowerPoints and More
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/

Walking School Bus - “How to” Guides, Basic Information, Evaluations, Walkability Checklist, Program Examples and Pedestrian Safety
www.walkingschoolbus.org



Success Stories

Section 5



**“How wonderful it is that nobody
need wait a single moment to
improve the world.”**

Anne Frank

Parent Team Success Stories

Parents can make change. Here you will read about Colorado parent teams making successful changes in their schools in the area of nutrition and physical activity/education.

Project: Bennett Bronco's Stampede

Parent Team Leader Name: Diane Wenzel
Phone: 970-482-2374
Email: diane_wenzel@msn.com
School: Bennett Elementary IB World School
District: Poudre School District
Target Area: Fund raising

Background:

1. Why as the effort needed?

Bennett was looking for a successful fund raiser that promoted healthy attitudes and that involved physical activity and nutritious foods. We were replacing a school-wide merchandise fund raiser.

2. What was the environment like?

The parents involved in organizing the fund raiser felt fortunate that it was supported by the school's principal and staff.

Situation:

1. What challenges did you encounter?

The event is held in the spring and working around CSAP schedules is a challenge. Getting 5th and 6th grade students interested in the prizes was a challenge.

2. How did you overcome them?

The second year of the Stampede we set the date for the fall so the staff could plan around it. We worked hard the second year of the Stampede to find prizes that motivate the older students to collect donations – Ipod shuffles, Heeley shoes, gift certificates.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?

The Bennett Bronco's Stampede is a school-wide running/walking event held in the spring, now in its second year. Our major sponsor provides a T-shirt for every student and school staff member, regardless of whether they raise money. Every

student in the school runs or walks laps on a designated course, at the same time as other students in the same grade. They compete for the most laps and for the most money raised. Teacher participation is optional; however, teachers recognize the importance of physical activity and modeling, and almost every teacher exercised with his or her class. Fruit and cheese sticks are provided after the kids run. Medals are given to the top lap runners in each grade. The class raising the most money in grades K-3 won a field trip to Pump-it-Up, and the class raising the most money in grades 4-6 won a field trip to an indoor sports center for a party. Individual prizes were earned for pledges, depending on the total amount of the pledge.

Results:

1. What difference did it make?

Students look forward to Stampede day and energy levels are high. Parents have made very positive comments about their preference for this type of fund raiser over merchandise or junk food fund raisers. They would rather see the money go directly to the school rather than to a third party. Overall, we feel the Stampede supports the wellness environment at the school.

2. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

Kids are proud of their achievement and the healthy things they have done for their body. The PE teacher works with the students in the spring before the Stampede, "training" them for the event.

3. What kind of data do you have to support your success?

The first year of the Stampede, the fund raiser grossed about \$8,000. This second year grossed almost \$18,000. We think these numbers substantiate the success. The size of the laps changes from the first year to the next so we do not have that data unfortunately.

Project: Recess Before Lunch

Parent Team Leader Name: Mary Englick

Phone: 720-570-8975

Email: maryenglick@comcast.net

School: Governors Ranch Elementary

District: Jefferson County School District

Target Area: Recess

Background:

1. Why was the effort needed?

Parents and teachers were complaining that children were gulping down their foods in order to be the first to go to recess. Children were throwing more than half their lunches away as "there was no time" before recess. Teachers were complaining that children were not as attentive in the afternoon. They questioned whether it was because they did not eat enough at lunch. Also, teachers complained that it took on average 10-15 minutes to get kids to settle down after recess to start the learning process.

2. What was the environment like?

The cafeteria (especially for the younger grades) is chaotic. Kids were jamming food into their mouths, eating maybe one third of their food and throwing the rest away. In addition, conflicts between children normally happen on the playground. When lunch precedes recess, children leave recess and go into the classroom. When there are conflicts, the teachers must step in and resolve the conflicts, otherwise learning does not take place. When recess precedes lunch, the children are able to take the conflict into the cafeteria and have time to resolve the conflict themselves. The thought is they leave the cafeteria and enter into the classroom in a much calmer atmosphere. They are ready to learn right away.

Situation:

1. What challenges did you encounter?

We have a large school with a fairly small cafeteria. As a result, there have to be five lunch periods to get all the kids fed. Each lunch period is 20 minutes at length. We needed to plan for necessary schedule changes. Morning recess and "Specials" (art, music and PE classes) had to coordinate with the cafeteria schedule change. The cafeteria manager was concerned regarding sanitation issues. We choose sanitation wipes (versus the lotion) as they can wipe the dirt away. Unfortunately, they cost more. The cafeteria manager was concerned regarding the cost of the sanitation wipes. People in general don't

like change. There needed to be a great deal of education of parents and school staff as to the importance of implementing Recess Before Lunch.

2. How did you overcome them?

We had three meetings with a group of teachers, aides and parents to discuss and iron out the schedules. In addition, I needed to educate the parents on Recess Before Lunch as we needed to get complete support from the parent community. So I surveyed principals who had made the change to Recess Before Lunch in order to report their concerns. The six principals I interviewed had nothing but praise regarding the program. I wrote about my conversations with the principals in the monthly school newsletter that goes out to parents.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?

I wrote three articles about nutrition changes in the food service and Recess Before Lunch (RBL) in the monthly school newsletter. We did a Milk Wastage study in the spring (prior to the initiation of the program). We will do a follow-up study in the fall in order to compare whether children were wasting less food when recess is positioned before lunch. I did a Children's Behavior Study with the teachers this spring and plan to provide the same questionnaire to the teachers in the fall once RBL is initiated. The idea is to compare pre- and post-program afternoon behaviors of the children to see if the incidence of conflict and learning problems with RBL decreased. We also composed a brochure, specific to our school, listing the benefits of RBL and what to expect with the schedule change. Parents will be receiving this brochure at school registration in August.

Results:

1. What difference did it make?

We are excited to see the results as the program will be introduced this fall!

2. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

I have received numerous e-mails from parents and teachers telling me how excited they are to start the program.

3. What kind of data do you have to support your success?

- Milk Wastage Study
- Teacher Survey on Afternoon Behaviors
- Information on the Internet about Recess Before Lunch Program

Project: Jog-a-Thon

Parent Team Leader Name: Nanci Kalamaya
Email: Kalamaya_Nanci@stvrain.k12.co.us
School: Central Elementary
District: St. Vrain School District
Target: Fund-raising

Background:

1. Why was the effort needed?

This event had two purposes. One was to show children the benefits of exercise and the second was to raise money for CLIP which is Central Elementary's PTO Organization. Each student collected pledges, either flat-rate based or based on the anticipated amount of laps the student was trying to do. They trained during PE with Mrs. Kalamaya to help them reach their goals. What was the environment like? The event was held at Central Elementary in the school yard over the lunch hour and early afternoon. The students ran a figure 8 course which was one-fourth mile long and had their hands marked for each completed lap. We had parent and staff volunteers who assisted with the event.

Situation:

1. What challenges did you encounter?

Organization was the biggest challenge. Scheduling the event while staff was trying to prep students for CSAP and normal day educational activities.

2. How did you overcome them?

With help from parents and teachers we coordinated the event without any interference to the normal school day which helped sell the idea to staff and parents.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?

The kids realized that effort and practice help you achieve goals. For students who did not reach their target goals I think that it showed to them that trying is the most important thing. That in itself is, at least at their age, is the real accomplishment. CLIP also raised several thousands of dollars that we in turn use to help fund activities including field trips, class room materials and a multitude of other things that this school would not have if it were not for the fund-raising efforts by the students and parents.

Results:

1. What difference did it make?

The difference was huge, the amount of money was used to support the school and, most importantly, it showed the students that working together and encouraging each other to complete each lap helps the group achieve all the goals that as individuals they set for themselves.

2. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

Very Positive

3. What kind of data do you have to support your success?

While we as a PTO organization have data to support the financial benefits the larger success can only be seen over time. Too many districts are cutting PE and sport activities for a variety of reason in the early years when they need them most but as these students continue to have opportunities to be active the long term benefit to them physically will be seen.

Project: Encourage consumption of nutrient-rich foods outside of the Cafeteria

Parent Team Leader Name: Rainey Wikstrom
Phone: 303-750-1191
Email: LMWIKSTROM@msn.com
School: University Park Elementary
District: Denver Public School District
Target: Snacks, Parties/Events & Food Groups to Encourage

Background:

1. Why was the effort needed?

We wanted to make University Park a leader in the District. We believed that how kids feel/performance is connected to what kids eat and their level of physical activity. Our objective was to maximize opportunities for physical activity while increasing opportunities for kids to consume healthy foods. We noticed that our kids were barraged with unhealthy food offerings that in isolation seemed small but throughout the year added up to be a whole lot. Unfortunately, these were also the very foods most health professionals would recommend kids avoid for optimum health and learning.

2. What was the environment like?

We lacked guidelines, recommendations for what parents and teachers could offer kids during the school day. Unhealthy foods had become synonymous with the school parties, events, rewards and other activities during the school day. We needed to shift our paradigm from the top

down to create a healthy school culture. We felt a shift would have the opportunity to support our entire community, not only our students but staff and parents as well.

Situation:

1. What challenges did you encounter?
There was some pushback from a few vocal parents who felt strongly the school should not take a strong stand on this issue. Also, a few teachers resisted the changes.
2. How did you overcome them?
 - a. Put out surveys to parents/staff asking for their input. The surveys demonstrated a majority interest in making schoolwide changes. This gave us what we needed to move forward.
 - b. Made it easy for teachers to implement the changes.
 - c. The Wellness Committee worked closely with the PTA and CSC - our governing body
 - d. Asked the principal to support our work and he did.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?
We are very happy to say that we have accomplished a lot. Here are just some of the things we have done, specifically in the areas of Snacks, Parties/Events and Food Groups to Encourage:
 - a. We now have a school policy on snacks that is fruits and vegetables only (patterned after a success story of a school in Grand Forks, North Dakota).
 - b. School Parties and Functions have taken a healthy turn. More fruits and vegetables are included in all of our functions. For example, our ice cream social was turned into a watermelon social. We have gone to non-food birthday celebrations, where we still celebrate each child but in healthier ways. We've found creative ways to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables during the school day and at school functions and events.
 - c. Our front desk has a fruit basket and many kids enjoy fruit from this during the day (donated by Wild Oats/Whole Foods)

Results:

1. What difference did it make?
 - a. Kids are consuming hundreds of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables in the lower grades (these grades receive snacks). This is our

biggest success.

- b. Parents are also noticing their kids are eating more fruits and vegetables at home since beginning the program and taking an interest in healthy foods. The school culture is shifting and parents, students and staff are helping to make the school a healthier learning environment.
- c. Parties and functions have taken a healthy turn.
- d. Less junk food is making its way into the school.
- e. We now have the buy-in of not only the principal but most of the staff and parents as well as the CSC & PTA.
- f. Our programs are bringing a positive value to our school and community.
- g. We have developed strong partnerships with other schools, community members and local businesses that are all supporting our efforts.
- h. There is a growing awareness of health and wellness and it is reflected in the foods and beverages brought to school for parties and functions.

We still have more we want to accomplish!

3. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?
Our school is really proud of what we've accomplished. Parents are surprised when they discover that other DPS schools aren't necessarily implementing the same programs. We really want to see other schools move in similar directions and would like to support any school wanting to do so. That is our mission.
4. What kind of data do you have to support your success?
Great question. I have done surveys in the past when launching our program and the majority of parents wanted to see changes made in the school. It was on this basis that we made the changes we now have in place. However, we haven't done a survey since making the changes. This is a great idea.

Project: Vegetable Garden – maintained by Parents and Students

Parent Team Leader Name: Norma Vazquez

Phone: NA

Email: NA

School: Eagleton Elementary

District: Denver Public School District

Target: Food Groups to Encourage

Background:

1. What was the environment like?
Eagleton Elementary School is a Denver Public

School with a high percentage of native Spanish speaking families and free lunch-qualified students, as well as a 21st Century After-School Program. In April, Eagleton had one parent leadership training for 15 mothers. From this wonderfully successful training a parent leadership team was formed.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?

This parent team created a vegetable garden at Eagleton Elementary with the help of the Denver Learning Landscapes Alliance. This activity was done just after the 2005-2006 school year was over. This vegetable garden is unique because is the first one planted and taken care of by a group of parents and their children. In August, when the students come back to class they will be involved in the vegetable garden as a learning activity. Parents feel proud of this wonderful activity.

Results:

1. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

Parents feel proud of this wonderful activity.

Project: Food Groups to Encourage – Dairy, New Look of School Milk Program

Parent Team Leader Name: Merrill Bohaning

Phone: NA

Email: NA

School: District Wide

District: St. Vain Valley

Target: Food Groups to Encourage

Background:

1. Why as the effort needed?

Parent and School Board member Merrill Bohaning often volunteered in her son’s school cafeteria and noticed an extensive amount of milk waste, visually she could see the waste because children dumped leftover milk from their paper board milk cartons into buckets next to trash receptacles. It bothered her that the children were not drinking their nutrient-rich milk. Merrill noticed at a Colorado Association of School Board conference the New Look of School Milk program, which is milk in trendy plastic single serve containers, in a variety of flavors, served icy cold and merchandised well.

2. What was the environment like?

Extensive milk waste was recognized. Milk was served in outdated paperboard cartons, kids had difficulty opening the paper cartons, and milk was being discarded. Also there was fierce competition of other beverages being offered especially at the high school level. Since milk is considered a nutrient-rich choice the district felt milk had to be served in a more attractive manner so that it would compete with all the other drinks offered. The district also revamped its beverage offerings and eliminated beverages of minimal nutritional value and decided to serve 100 percent fruit juice, milk (1 or 2 percent milk fat, white or flavored) or water.

Situation:

1. What challenges did you encounter?

Cost of the trendy plastic single serve containers was more than paperboard cartons. District was facing financial challenges and Merrill was not sure if district could afford the New Look of School Milk.

2. How did you overcome them?

Merrill worked closely with the new school nutrition director and helped form a districtwide and community School Nutrition Advisory Committee (SNAC), she encouraged and supported the New Look of School Milk program adoption in all schools as well as a move to make over the entire school nutrition program. The district also partnered with the Western Dairy Council. Western Dairy Council purchased new milk cooler merchandisers to help keep the milk cold and attractively display the New Look of School Milk plastic single-serve containers. The district had not raised lunch meal prices for 10 years. Merrill supported and approved a meal price increase to cover the extra cost of the plastic milk bottle.

Achievement:

1. What did you accomplish?

With the implementation of the New Look of School Milk program the district reported a 27 percent increase in milk sales and a 38 percent increase in milk volume. Reimbursable meal sales also soared, with an increase of 14 percent in Breakfast and 29 percent at lunch. The extra revenue from reimbursable meals helped pay for the new plastic milk containers.

Results:

1. What difference did it make?

Kids are taking more nutrient-rich milk with meals and drinking more of the milk they take, thus less waste. Plus they are getting more calcium and other nutrients from milk that are often missing

in children's diets. Students loved the New Look of School Milk containers and reacted with great enthusiasm -- comments such as "this is so cool" were common among students.

2. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

See above in number one.

3. What kind of data do you have to support your success?

Milk sales and meal sales were tracked over the course of one year and compared with baseline year (before New Look of School Milk was implemented).

For more information on this Success Story please access the New Look of School Milk section under the Schools tab at the following website www.wdairyCouncil.com.

For more success stories log onto <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MIH/MainPage.aspx> to access "Making it Happen: School Nutrition Success Stories". FREE hard copies of Making It Happen! are still available to order at: <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/makingithappen.html>.

Project: Frontier Healthy Schools Committee

Parent Team Leader Name: B.J. Campbell, Parent and Assistant Principal

Phone: 719-234-4600

Email: bj.lcampbell@asd20.org

School: Frontier Elementary School, Pre-K - 5

District: Academy School District Twenty

Target: Parties/Events, Food Groups to Encourage, Physical Activity/Education

Background:

1. Why was the effort needed?

Awareness that our students were unable to spend as much time outside doing activities these days due to the security risks that are so prevalent in today's society. Also an awareness that students consume a lot of food at school and it seemed like the food that was provided was not as nutritious as it could be.

2. What was the environment like?

Our community is a middle-to upper middle-class community that is really into the education of their students. We are an older school in this district and are now starting to get more and more students who are from single parent and lower

socio-economic homes and more are coming unprepared for the day.

Our committee is comprised of parents (5), teachers (8), administrators (2) Sodexo Rep – Food Service (1) Nurse (1), Nutritionist (1). We are thinking about adding a student to the committee this year.

Two years ago our school went to recess before lunch. Last year the district took on Wellness as a priority districtwide. Our committee has been going about a year and a half and we have had great support from parents who are the supporting healthy snacks for parties and fund raisers.

Situation:

3. What challenges did you encounter?

Change! The first year the students practically rebelled at the change in recess before lunch. We talked to them and the parents. Sent home information about the positives related to this change, and went with the flow. Now the students are used to it and so are the parents.

Money! We did fund-raisers to help purchase a track for our school and we also applied for grants to help purchase a schoolwide curriculum on nutrition.

4. How did you overcome them? See #1 above.

Achievement:

2. What did you accomplish?

Year 1

- We worked very hard on just changing how students went to recess and then came in to lunch. It was a long process because we had to educate people on the research that made the change a positive for their students.

Year 2

- We created a committee that provided a vision and set goals for the year in reference to the health of our students. This committee also did several fund-raisers and wrote grants to help us meet our goals.

- We began having monthly taste tests giving students the opportunity to taste a new fruit and vegetable. We also put out fact sheets and queried students during lunch on what they read about the food. This was a raging success, especially in grades K-3 where students are still anxious to try new things.

- We raised funds through restaurant fund-raisers,

garage sales and, PTA Fun Run to purchase a track so that students in K-5 would be able to walk during lunch and recess with their pedometers.

- We wrote grant applications to Colorado Department of Education to purchase a curriculum and to pay two science teachers and a nutritionist to help us set up a two-week condensed course. Our PE teacher also emphasized how nutrition helps them to do the physical activities necessary to stay healthy. This course will take place during right after Labor Day followed by a schoolwide health fair with vendors and knowledgeable people who can help our parents help kids stay healthy.
- In conjunction with Sodexo we have gone to a peanut-free lunch program and students can purchase only healthy snacks provided by Sodexo.

Results:

3. What difference did it make?

Students are more aware of nutrition and how it helps them learn better.

Students are become competitive with each other to reach physical goals.

Parents are telling us tales of shopping trips where students are reading the backs of boxes and asking about ingredients.

4. How do kids/people involved or affected by the situation feel about the achievement?

The students can't wait for the monthly taste testing and staff is using their pedometers to add up miles to a "virtual vacation location." Parents are giving us ideas and helping us to make the committee the best it can be with all types of ideas and volunteer time.

5. What kind of data do you have to support your success?

This is our first year for pre-and post-surveys. Our surveys will not be finished until after the September events.



Evaluate

Section 6



“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”

Robert Thurman

Evaluate

There are many good reasons for a parent group to evaluate its efforts. When done properly, evaluation can improve efforts to promote health and development at any level. Evaluation offers the following advantages for groups of almost any size:

Collecting information about how things are done and the results help us understand how community initiatives develop, offering lessons other groups can profit from.

Providing ongoing feedback can improve community work by encouraging continuous adjustments of programs, policies, and other interventions.

By involving community members, people who haven't had a voice may gain the opportunity to better understand and improve local efforts.

Finally, evaluation can help hold groups accountable to the community and to the grant makers who provide funding. It can also help hold grant makers accountable to the communities that they serve.

The Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas, developed and maintains the *Community Tool Box* at <http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp>. The Tool Box provides over 7,000 pages of practical information to support your work in promoting community health and development.

The core of the Tool Box is the "topic sections" that include practical guidance for the different tasks necessary to promote community health and development. For instance, there are sections on leadership, strategic planning, community assessment, grant writing, and evaluation to give just a few examples. Each section includes a description of the task, advantages of doing it, step-by-step guidelines, examples, checklists of points to review, and training materials.

As your team makes changes always review your progress – recognize your successes and resolve problems that arise. Your team may need to revise the plan as you go along to make sure you accomplish your goals.





Communicate

Section 7



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

You did it! You created change.

Congratulations! Your team is ready to tell your story and celebrate your success. The resources below have great tips and templates for sharing your story with the media.

Telling Your Story: Getting Others to Hear About Your Success

This “Telling Your Story” toolkit was developed by the American Heart Association in conjunction with Ohio Action for Healthy Kids. This guide can help State Teams include media advocacy into their local action plan by discussing the meaning of media advocacy, providing background tips for working with the media, and providing tools and resources for conducting effective local media advisory activities.

Access the “Team Member Center” and then the “Tools for Teams” section of the website:
www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

Changing the Scene – Improving the School Nutrition Environment

This tool kit addresses the entire school nutrition environment, including a commitment to nutrition and physical activity, pleasant eating experiences, quality school meals, other healthy food options, and nutrition education and marketing the issue to the public. This kit can help local people take action to improve their school’s nutrition environment. The kit includes a variety of tools for use at the local level to raise awareness and address school environment issues that influence students’ eating and physical activity practices. You will also find sample letters, sample scripts and tips on how to share your story.
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html>



Additional Resources

Section 8



“Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.”

Garrison Keillor

Resources

Listed are a few more organizations that are working towards improving the nutrition and physical activity/ education environment in schools. Check out the following websites for the information.



The Biggest Generation - CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/healthtopics/connect.htm>

IOM Recommended Standards for All Foods Offered in the School Environment

<http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181/42502.aspx>

Alliance for a Healthier Generation Recommended Standards for Physical Activity, Nutrition Education, School Meals and all foods offered in the school environment

<http://www.healthiergeneration.org>

www.ActionForHealthyKids.org

