

What Works in . . . Schools

healthy eating • physical activity • healthy weight



Schools provide a unique setting to improve physical activity and nutrition habits. School activities should be integrated with other community groups to have an even greater impact. As school time gets tight with competing priorities, schools need to protect the often overlooked value that physical activity and nutrition play in the overall success of students.

Where to Start:

1. Make the connection with community activities to strengthen buy-in. Examples include:
 - Join or form a local coalition to address nutrition & physical activity in a coordinated manner.
 - Integrate school activities with community, business and healthcare initiatives. Form partnerships with community organizations to support or develop programs. Tie into existing promotions, media campaigns and special events (i.e. walk-to-school day, Governor's Challenge, etc).
 - Set-up a school plan that ties into summer programs & other initiatives for year round activity.
2. Complete the School Health Index assessment. <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/SHI/Default.aspx>   
3. Apply for the Governor's School Health Award. <http://www.schoolhealthaward.wi.gov/>   
(Some components to win the award are proven strategies)
4. Use the local school wellness policy (Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act 2004) to guide physical activity and nutrition policy changes, including establishing nutrition standards for foods and beverages offered in school vending machines, school stores, a la carte lines and on campus.
5. Join or help form a School Wellness Council to ensure a comprehensive school health program.
6. Provide a staff wellness program & train teachers on healthy eating & physical activity concepts.
7. Integrate nutrition and physical activity instruction into lesson plans for multiple school subjects; link curriculum to school food service, teacher, and family involvement.
8. Ensure that all school meals meet USDA guidelines and are appealing to students.
9. Provide student health services including health information, screening, and referrals.
10. Begin working with pre-adolescent children; interventions targeted towards this age group are more likely to have a lasting impact.

Suggested Intervention/Program Strategies:

Experts agree that the causes of childhood overweight are multidimensional. To address this, the following page outlines strategies representing the existing evidence for change at the individual, environmental, and policy levels based on six focus areas that CDC has outlined for overweight and obesity prevention. Effective interventions are intense, longer-term and employ both nutrition and physical activity strategies. Use these to help design interventions or programs in a school environment.

Evidence Level for Each Strategy:	CDC Evidence-Based Focus Areas:
Items with white backgrounds are proven strategies.	 Increase fruit & vegetable consumption
Items with light gray backgrounds are promising strategies.	 Decrease sweetened beverage consumption
Items with dark gray backgrounds are expert opinion strategies.	 Decrease food portion size (portion control)
	 Increase physical activity
	 Decrease TV and other "screen" time
	 Increase Breastfeeding

for more information: Department of Health and Family Services • Division of Public Health
 Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Program • PO Box 2659 • Madison WI 53701-2659
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/index.htm> • 608.267.3694

Nutrition Strategies

Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

1. Increase healthy food options in lunchrooms, a la carte, vending and school stores; make options appealing
2. Reduce or eliminate foods of minimal or low nutritional value that are sold on campus; limit access, portions, or hours of sale
3. Use peer-to-peer marketing strategies to promote healthier food choices
4. Use point of decision prompts to highlight fruits and vegetables
5. Provide taste testing opportunities to introduce new fruits & vegetables
6. Teach food preparation skills
7. Use competitive pricing; price non-nutritious foods at a higher cost
8. Increase availability of fruits and vegetables; incorporate student preferences (i.e. salad bar)
9. Start a school fruit and vegetable garden
10. Use farm-to-school initiatives to incorporate fresh, locally grown produce into meals

Sweetened Beverage Consumption

1. Increase healthy food options in lunchrooms, a la carte, vending and school stores; make options appealing
2. Reduce or eliminate foods of minimal or low nutritional value that are sold on campus; limit access, portions, or hours of sale
3. Use peer-to-peer marketing strategies to promote healthier food choices
4. Use of point of decision prompts to highlight healthier alternatives
5. Make water available; promote consumption
6. Modify vending contracts to increase healthy choices; identify alternative revenue sources needed to replace existing incentives schools receive from current sales.
7. Use competitive pricing; price non-nutritious foods at a higher cost
8. Reduce or eliminate food advertising of non-nutritious foods.

Portion Control

1. Set age-appropriate serving sizes for foods and beverages available in the school.
2. Incorporate portion-size estimation into age-appropriate curriculum (i.e. math)
3. Label food to show serving size and calories.

Breastfeeding

1. Provide an appropriate place for breastfeeding
2. Adopt policies that support breastfeeding
3. Provide age appropriate education on breastfeeding integrated into academic curriculum (i.e. biology, psychology, etc.)

TV & Food Advertising

1. Reduce or eliminate food advertising of low nutrient foods in the school and in school-based TV Programs (i.e. Channel One)
2. Limit TV viewing during school meals/snacks
3. Use school-based curricula to teach adolescents media literacy

Other Nutrition Strategies

1. Provide age-appropriate, comprehensive nutrition education at each grade level 
2. Provide sufficient time for students to eat during meal times
3. Ensure school fundraising supports student health; encourage sale of non-food items or healthier foods

Physical Activity Strategies

Physical Activity

1. Make sure that school physical education (PE) meet, at a minimum, the State requirements and standards
2. Institute school policies that increase activity. Examples include:
 - PE Curriculum emphasizes active time (track actual time students are active)
 - PE Curriculum emphasizes lifetime activities (e.g. Physical Best)
 - PE Curriculum has proven benefits (i.e. CATCH, Planet Health)
 - Fitnessgram or standards-based evaluation
 - Active recess
 - PE Homework and extra credit are used to supplement PE time
 - Walking or biking vs. school busing
 - Safe Routes to School Program
3. Allow maximum access to recreation facilities.
 - Offer and encourage participation in after school sports or intramurals
 - Allow after school and evening access to school recreational facilities
4. Institute environmental changes to increase activity. Examples include:
 - Walking school bus
 - Physical activity integrated into other classes
5. Set up programs that have strong support systems and incentives. Examples include:
 - Buddy or "team" physical activity goals
 - Programs that involve child & family
6. Provide established programs that increase activity such as Movin' and Munchin' Schools