



Main Objective

Be physically active for at least 60 minutes on most, preferably all, days of the week.

Background

Physical activity burns calories, improves cardiovascular (heart) health, strengthens muscles (especially the heart muscle), promotes joint flexibility, improves bone density and helps maintain a healthy weight. Physical activity is good for the entire body, and even helps to keep the brain alert! People who are more active also tend to get sick less often than people who are inactive.

When it comes to physical activity, every little bit counts. So it is important to encourage your students to find ways to be more active – walk or bike to school (either part of the way or the whole way), take the dog on a walk every day, play with friends at the playground, join an afterschool soccer or softball league, etc. The goal for children and adolescents is to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. While it is important for students to be physically active at school, it is also important for them to start exploring out-of-school exercise options. What can they do on weekends or during holiday breaks?

Students of all ages can set realistic goals based on their own level of physical activity. It is important that students understand the difference between cardiovascular activities (those that are good for the heart and may make you breathe a little faster), muscular strength (those that will help to build muscle), and flexibility (activities involving various stretches) and find ways to regularly participate in all three. As students get older and continue to develop new skills, they can begin to participate in and enjoy different activities each year. With these new activities will come new challenges – but nothing you can't face together. Just get out there and keep moving

Take Home Activities

- 1) Complete the Walkability checklist available at <http://www.cawalktoschool.com> (English and Spanish handouts are included in the guide). This will help you determine a safe way to walk or bike to school. If there isn't a direct safe route, is there a closer direct safe route? It may be possible to drive only part way to school and walk the rest.
- 2) If possible, participate in Walk to School Day (Wednesday of the first full week of October).
- 3) Discuss other forms of physical activity that the family enjoys. Are there activities the family can do together?
- 4) Go for a walk together before or after dinner.
- 5) If possible, encourage your schoolchildren to participate in National School Lunch Week (the second full week in October).

School Activities

- 1) Kick off the month by participating in International Walk to School Week (the first full week in October). Encourage everyone to participate in Walk to School Day (Wednesday of that week). (See <http://www.cawalktoschool.com>)
- 2) Ask a police officer to come to the school for an assembly and talk about safety issues regarding walking or biking to school in that specific neighborhood.
- 3) Take an inventory of all items the school has to promote physical activity - balls, jump ropes, etc. – and increase the accessibility of these items during recess.
- 4) Promote school lunch during National School Lunch Week (the second full week in October). (See <http://www.schoolnutrition.org>)

Classroom Reward Ideas

Reward students with activities that will keep them active. Some examples include extra time on a Friday for fitness activities or allowing students to run the “ball room” at recess for a week.

Resources

California Walk to School Headquarters

P.O. Box 997413 – Mail Stop 7211

Sacramento, CA 95899-7413

Phone: 1-888-393-0353

<http://www.cawalktoschool.com>

This is the main website for the California Walk to School Program. It is full of wonderful materials, resources, activity ideas, stickers, and balloons. Many materials are available in a number of different languages as well. Register your school for the event for a chance to win prizes!

Official USA Walk to School Website

<http://www.walktoschool-usa.org>

This site provides more resources and information about what is going on across the U.S. to promote Walk to School Month.

Official International Walk to School Website

<http://www.iwalktoschool.org>

Students can learn what is going on around the world for Walk to School Week. Also see: Canadian Walk to School – <http://www.goforgreen.ca/walktoschool>

U.K. Walk to School – <http://www.walktoschool.org.uk>

MyPyramid.gov

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/sp-index.html> (site in Spanish)

This is the main website of the MyPyramid.gov food guidance system which will be discussed more thoroughly in November. However, this site does provide a lot of information about physical activity – what it is, why it is important, how much is needed, the number of calories burned during various activities, and tips for increasing physical activity.

Resources

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk>

The CDC website has more resources and information, including activity downloads, community presentations (to increase awareness and participation), train the trainer information, brochures, fact sheets, safety information and more.

Shape Up America – 10,000 Steps a Day

<http://www.shapeup.org/shape/steps.php>

If pedometers are available, this site provides information and resources on the 10,000 Steps a Day challenge. This is a great way for teachers and school staff to become better role models for the students.

Healthy Trails Challenge – Santa Clara County Parks

www.parkhere.org

SCCP has partnered with Kaiser Permanente, SCC Public Health Department, and Steps to a Healthier Santa Clara County to provide a Healthy Trails Challenge to combat the increase in type 2 diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease and cancer; as well as to increase participation in nature. The free Healthy Trails Challenge invites families to visit 5 different trails in the County's 21 parks by registering, receiving a detailed park guide, and a gift for Challenge completion in one year.

Additional Resources

National School Lunch Week

American School Food Service Association

<http://www.schoolnutrition.org>

Go to *Meetings and Events* to learn more about activities during National School Lunch Week.

Team Nutrition School Meals

<http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov>

More information can be found here regarding activities during National School Lunch Week.

Eat Better, Eat Together

Washington State University (WSU)

<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/ebet>

October is also Eat Better, Eat Together month. Information can be sent home with the students to encourage families to eat meals together. A toolkit to encourage families to eat together has been developed by WSU. Most of the materials can be downloaded free of charge from this site. Some materials are also available for purchase (stickers, bookmarks and more).



Activities Linked to 4th Grade Content Standards & Framework

**Writing 1.0 & 2.0,
Listening & Speaking
1.0 & 2.0**

**Written & Oral
English Language
Conventions 1.7**

**Measurement &
Geometry 1.1**

**Statistics, Data
Analysis, & Probability
1.1 & 1.2**

Physical Science 1.f

**Life Science
2.a, 2.b & 2.c**

**Social Science
4.1.4 & 4.4.7**

Physical Education 3

**Physical Education 5,
Health Framework
Expectation 1**

- Students can practice their writing, researching and penmanship skills by writing about their favorite types of physical activities. They can then share these stories out loud.
- Include grade-appropriate words related to physical activity on students' spelling list.
- As a class, determine the shape, and measure the size, of the different areas of the playground; or tape out different, predetermined shapes and sizes. Add some physical activity into this lesson by having students walk around the edges or cut through the center to better visualize the geometry concepts that they are learning in the classroom.
- Students can set up an interview for their families, friends or classmates to ask about exercise habits. Once they have collected the data, they can use that information to identify the modes and medians and graph the data to explain it to others.
- Students can be physically active while learning about magnets. They can be told to magnetize towards (face) a certain object outside or in the classroom and then demagnetize (face in a different direction). Students can also be divided into two poles/groups and act out what would happen when they get close to each other (outdoor activity in a confined space). Eventually, all of the north and south poles will be grouped together.
- Students can learn about the food chain and be physically active by playing "food chain tag." Students are grouped as animals at the bottom, middle or top of the food chain and must move accordingly (e.g. those at the bottom of the food chain must crawl, while those at the top can run). When someone at the top/middle of the food chain "eats" someone at the middle/bottom, they must hold hands and continue to eat together. This activity also teaches cooperation.
- Identify waterways in California in relation to where people participate in water sports or activities.
- Make a list of physical activities that the students find enjoyable. Keep this list up throughout the month and encourage students to participate in these activities regularly.
- Discuss some of the barriers to increasing physical activity. As a class, can you come up with some ways to overcome these barriers?