



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 6th Grade Content Standards & Framework

Writing 2.0

- Have students write an invitation to their peers inviting them to a special physical event that can be done during recess (such as hikes and runs, walkathons, dances, volleyball matches, baseball games, basketball games and more). Students can also create a poster or flier for the event.

Writing 2.3

- Students can write a research report on the history of how a physically-active game became popular.

Written & Oral English Language Conventions 1.5

- Include grade-appropriate words related to physical activity on students' spelling list.

Number Sense 2.3

- Have students solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems that involve concrete physical activity examples.

Algebra & Functions 2.1 & 2.3

- Learn about converting one measurement to another while playing on the playground. Students can measure a specific distance in inches, feet and yards and then convert from one unit of measurement to another. Once distances have been measured, students can walk, run, skip or hop the different lengths. Students can also measure the time it took to go different distances. Once back in the classroom, they can solve problems involving rates, average speed, distance and time.

Statistics, Data Analysis, & Probability 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4

- Have students individually interview their friends and family members, asking questions such as "how many times were you physically active last week?" that will result in a range of numerical answers. Encourage them to ask as many people as possible. With this data, students can then compute the range, mean, median and mode. Have students guess what will happen to the results if additional data sets are added (e.g. if the class data are analyzed as one complete set). Students can also look at how the inclusion or exclusion of outliers affects the measure of central tendency and which measure provides the most useful information given the question asked.

Social Science 6.1.1

- Describe how the hunter-gatherer societies were physically active while obtaining their food. How does it compare to how we obtain our food today?

Physical Education 3.1

- Make a list of physical activities that the students find enjoyable. Keep this list up throughout the month and encourage students to be physically active each day.

Physical Education 3.5

- Have students keep track of the physical activities in which they participate, set new goals to increase their activity and chart their progress toward those goals.

Physical Education 5, Health Framework Expectation 1

- Discuss some of the barriers to increasing physical activity. As a class, can you come up with some ways to overcome these barriers?