



GUIDELINE 2

Parents, families and students are educated about healthy lifestyle choices.

BEST PRACTICES

- ★ St. Albert the Great Elementary School, Dayton, Ohio and Ascension Elementary School, Kettering, Ohio
- ★ Eat Well & Keep Moving, Baltimore, Maryland
- ★ Healthy Kids, Toledo, Iowa
- ★ Comprehensive Wellness for Life, Erie, Pennsylvania
- ★ Go the Extra Mile, State of Wisconsin
- ★ Healthy Kids Challenge, Dighton, Kansas
- ★ Program Energy, State of Colorado
- ★ Walter Kidder Elementary, Brunswick, Ohio
- ★ Monthly nutrition newsletters
- ★ Grocery lists
- ★ Positive thinking

“One of our favorite after-school activities for demonstrating good eating habits is to have each child bring in a recipe from home and substitute ingredients to make it healthier. Kids love to cook, and this hands-on approach is a great way to get them involved in making better nutritional choices.”

Leslie Moss, executive director, Ohio University’s Kids on Campus



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Both environment and adult role models have a powerful influence on whether students make healthy lifestyle choices. In order for students to develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime, they need to know and understand what choices to make, why those choices are important and how they can move from unhealthy habits toward healthier ones. Since parents and families can learn how to support and model these healthy choices, providing them with guidelines for incorporating healthier lifestyle options into daily routines can increase the likelihood that students will try new ways of eating, drinking and being active. School and family, therefore, can become partners in promoting healthy choices by enhancing student knowledge, values, beliefs and, ultimately, actions.

OBJECTIVE

Develop and implement a communication plan regarding healthy lifestyle choices for parents, families, students and school staff.

When implementing a wellness plan, a strategy for communication is critical. Sending a common message to school staff, students and families can elevate wellness as a priority and can provide an ongoing reminder of its importance. A communication plan should succinctly and clearly outline the best ways to reach each audience. The plan should also outline how communication will occur. With good planning, these common wellness messages will be conversation topics within the school community.

BEST PRACTICES

✦ 1. St. Albert the Great Elementary School, Dayton, Ohio, and Ascension Elementary School, Kettering, Ohio

Background: St. Albert the Great and Ascension Elementary Schools have created and provided opportunities for students and parents to learn about healthy lifestyle choices. Their approach allows students to learn healthy habits in the classroom and then practice those habits at home. The different programs the schools have developed include a health fair that provides students, parents and staff a fun opportunity to learn about healthy habits and behaviors; an armed forces day; holiday cafeteria decorating; and health-promoting special events. The schools have done an excellent job developing relationships with the students and showing that they actually care about their health and well-being. As a result, there are more choices and healthier options for students.

Success: The overall response of the program has been very positive. Parents are appreciative of the school staff and their continued efforts to “go the extra mile.” Students, parents and staff all enjoy their involvement in the various health programs.



✦ 2. Eat Well & Keep Moving, Baltimore, Maryland

Background: Initially designed as a joint research project between the Harvard School of Public Health and Baltimore City Public Schools, the Eat Well & Keep Moving program was launched in 1993 to give children the information they need to choose nutritious foods, be physically active, and reduce their risk of obesity and chronic diseases. During the 2001-2002 school year, the program was introduced to Boston public schools. Eat Well & Keep Moving is inexpensive, fits within the curriculum, and utilizes existing school and local facilities, such as classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, hallways, homes and community centers. The program also involves parents and family members in school activities and newsletter publishing and sponsors nutritional and physical activities with community-based health organizations.

Duration: Established in 14 Baltimore elementary schools during a four-year period.

Success: Feedback indicates that Eat Well & Keep Moving persuaded students to make healthier choices, like eating more fruits and vegetables, eating less fat, watching less TV and being more physically active. Students rated the program very highly. Principals gave it a high priority and 100 percent of teachers said they would teach the lessons again.

For more information:

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu>





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★ 3. Healthy Kids, Toledo, Iowa

Background: The Healthy Kids program brings students and their parents together once a week. While the children participate in aerobic exercises, crafts, nutrition lessons and eating healthy snacks, the parents are involved in parenting or nutrition discussions. Throughout the school year, the program is targeted to children ages 2 to 5. During the summer, it is offered to children ages 6 to 10 and their parents.

Success: Nutrition awareness improvement between pre- and post-tests.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=218

★ 4. Comprehensive Wellness for Life, Walnut Creek Middle School, Erie, Pennsylvania

Background: The Comprehensive Wellness for Life program involves demonstrations and role-plays to better educate students about healthy lifestyle choices. An annual “Wild for Wellness Day” includes physical activities for the entire school, nutrition presentations and a fitness-nutrition motivational speaker. Throughout the year community leaders offer classes on plyometrics, yoga and line dancing. Students get involved in essay contests. Preschool nutrition programs are presented throughout the school year as well.

Success: Student surveys taken at the end of the school year showed improvements when compared to surveys at the beginning of the school year. Sixth-grade teachers noticed an increase in healthy choices for students’ daily snacks. The PTA has also increased funding to assist the cafeteria in encouraging students to choose healthier foods.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=191

★ 5. Go the Extra Mile, Wisconsin Department of Education

Background: The philosophy behind Go the Extra Mile is that the family that plays together stays together, and that conducting daily fitness activities enhances family life. Children who exercise with their parents and other adults they know view exercise as a value. Therefore, education for students focuses on teaching different avenues of exercise and that equal parts of work and play are very important for a healthy lifestyle. The program began as an after-school program, but quickly was incorporated into the school day. Activities include field trips and class nature hikes.

Rewards and incentives make the program competitive among the school’s classrooms. For example, classrooms with the highest weekly average of walking miles logged receive the “Golden Sneaker Award” for the next week.



Success: One hundred percent of the students in kindergarten through grade four participated. Students constantly thought of activities that would count as “miles” for their class. The high participation suggests the students were absorbed with the leadership, incentives and overall philosophy of the program.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=206

★ 6. Healthy Kids Challenge, Dighton, Kansas

Background: Healthy Kids Challenge is a program designed to create opportunities for children and their families to learn about making healthy living a habit. The program provides a Web site, written materials, electronic newsletters, onsite consultation, workshops and training sessions, mentoring for children, and phone and e-mail assistance on healthy eating and physical activity. Services, teamed with corporate sponsors, provide all children with the necessary funding.

Success: A pilot survey of 900 adults reported that a majority increased their nutrition awareness and education, spent more family time discussing and practicing healthy changes, and chose healthy snacks. Regarding physical activity, 62 percent said they decreased their time spent in sitting activities, 57 percent recognized a positive impact upon their family and 91 percent wanted to continue their efforts. In the same survey, 91 percent of 1,400 students in kindergarten through grade five responded that they had fun in the program. In addition, 89 percent said they increased healthy eating both at home and at school, 85 percent reported they increased their level of physical activity and 89 percent noticed an increased number of opportunities to practice healthy choices at school.

For more information:

http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_profile.php?id=216

★ 7. Program Energy, State of Colorado

Background: Program Energy developed to prevent obesity among second graders in Colorado. This program has two parts. The first part, called “Scientists in the Classroom,” provides hands-on, challenging and fun lessons about how the body works. The second part involves researching how children communicate with their parents about maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active and eating a healthy diet.

Success: Tests showed meaningful increases in health and science knowledge and in positive attitudes and behaviors regarding good nutrition and physical activity. Parents increased their knowledge of diabetes and other health topics. Activity surveys showed an increase in moderate and total physical activity among parent participants.

For more information:

<http://www.the-aps.org/press/conference/eb03/9.htm>



★ **8. Walter Kidder Elementary, Brunswick, Ohio**

Background: Kidder Elementary has adopted healthy snack practices. Parents are requested to provide healthy snacks for birthday treats and holiday parties. Halloween parties are candy-free. This year, healthy snacks were served in place of candy. Straight “A” student parties have a new menu this year. Instead of pizza, chips and pop, straight “A” students enjoy pizza, salad, 100 percent fruit juice and an all-fruit bar for dessert. Only baked snacks are available in the cafeteria.

Success: Number of student participants: 405.

★ **9. Monthly nutrition newsletters**

Monthly newsletters that offer information about how to eat healthfully provide examples of how nutritious foods can be fun, enjoyable and delicious. The newsletter might offer delicious recipes, nutrition goals and ideas on how to replace refined food ingredients with healthier choices, such as whole-grain breads and cereals. The newsletter might promote how to make popular foods people enjoy healthier.

★ **10. Grocery lists**

Explain how grocery shopping for nutritious items doesn’t break the bank. Examples of nutritious budget shopping might include buying in bulk, buying at local produce or farmer’s markets and avoiding time-consuming recipes that require extensive preparation.

★ **11. Positive thinking**

Educate students and parents that nutritious food is not “rabbit food.” Teach them to stop thinking that healthful eating is expensive, boring, tasteless, unpleasant or unsatisfying.

RESOURCES

National PTA

This Web site includes resources for parents on how to encourage children to develop a healthy lifestyle. The Web site also provides information on finding and contacting one’s local PTA.
http://www.pta.org/pr_category_details_1117232379734.html

Parents can play a role in preventing childhood obesity

The Institute of Medicine addresses the interventions available to a parent for addressing childhood obesity. The document addresses best practices for each life stage of child development and includes key components that influence childhood obesity.
<http://www.iom.edu>



President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS)

Encourages, promotes and motivates physical fitness and sports participation for all Americans of all ages. The Web site includes information on the school-based President's Challenge Youth Physical Fitness Awards program.

<http://www.fitness.gov>

Nutrition and the health of young people

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention introduced a fact sheet of statistics regarding diet and disease among youth. The collection includes data regarding overweight youth, diet and academic performance, and eating behaviors of young people.

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/Nutrition>

Preventing childhood overweight and obesity: Parents can make a difference

Resources and information on how parents can take an active role in helping their child live a healthy lifestyle.

http://nutrition.psu.edu/projectpa/frames_html/frames_homepage.html

CartSmart: Get Rolling.

A newsletter found on the Ohio Food Industry Foundation's Web site that informs its audience about nutritional standards and options to promote health and wellness. The newsletter provides daily recreational activity ideas, balanced eating guidelines, tips for healthy snacking and "Smart Links" to other nutrition and wellness sites.

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

Powerful Girls have Powerful Bones

An interactive site geared toward young girls and their bone health, providing games to learn about calcium as well as information on exercise and weight-bearing physical activity. The site is animated and includes free icons and screensavers that are available for downloading.

<http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones/>

USDH Dietary Guidelines

United States Department of Health. (2005). Dietary guideline for Americans 2005. (Publication No.03-4082). Retrieved October, 19, 2005.

The executive summary of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 has recommendations for both students and adults on weight loss, physical activity, as well as caloric needs and information.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/>

BAM! Body and Mind

Designed for children 9–13 years old, BAM! Body and Mind gives them the information they need to make healthy lifestyle choices. Designed for children, the Web site includes information on health and nutrition, physical activity, safety, and diseases. The site provides games, quizzes and an activity calendar that can be specialized for each child.

<http://www.bam.gov/index.html>



American Academy of Pediatrics

Includes information on children’s health topics, such as ailments and weight control.
<http://www.aap.org>

American Dietetic Association

Provides information on finding local nutrition professionals. The Web site also includes nutrition fact sheets, nutrition tips of the day, and National Nutrition Month information.
<http://www.eatright.org>

Body Positive

Targets 6- to 18-year-olds and teaches how to have a positive body image and healthy relationship with food. The Web site gives information on how to have an education plan customized for one’s area, educational tools and information for parents.
<http://www.thebodypositive.org>

Diabetes Services, Inc.

The latest information on food, nutrition, food safety and health for diabetics.
<http://www.diabetesnet.com>

March of Dimes

Nutrition and information for newborns and pregnant women.
<http://www.modimes.org>

National Institute of Health

Information on why milk is important to teens and preteens. Aimed at parents, with fun games for the children.
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/kidsteens.cfm>

Nemours Foundation’s KidsHealth

Three individual sites targeting parents, kids and teens. Provides health-related information, including nutrition and fitness.
<http://www.kidshealth.org>

Pear Bureau

Information on pears: their nutritional value, recipes, activities, stories and recipes using pears. The just-for-kids site has interactive games and recipes for children.
<http://www.usapears.com/justforkids/default.asp>
<http://www.usapears.com/>



Rutgers University Cooperative Research & Extension

Links to resources dealing with nutrition. Information on the local extension office and their services; programs for children, community, gardening, nutrition and 4-H.
<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/health/nutritionlinks.asp>

Girl Power

Purpose is to encourage and motivate 9- to 13-year-old girls to live a healthy life. Includes games, resources, facts and other items aimed at the interests and challenges of girls.
<http://www.girlpower.gov>

