School Wellness Guide

Maricopa County
Department of Public Health
Office of Nutrition and Physical Activity

Here are easy and fun ways to encourage your staff, students, and parents to live healthier lives. Tons of exciting ideas are waiting to be used!!

Introduction

Welcome to your school's wellness guide!
This guide was designed to help you find quick and creative ways to improve your school's overall health. Statistics show that overweight and obesity in Arizona adults is 65.4% and 30.6% for Arizona children. These shocking statistics show the desperate need for wellness toolkits and how valuable they will be to our communities.

Through the wellness guide you will be able to show your students, faculty, staff, and parents how fun and easy it can be to include physical activity and good nutrition in their everyday lives.

For more information on any of the listed topics, please contact Maricopa County Department of Public Health, Office of Nutrition and Physical Activity by email, phone, or mail.

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Local Wellness Policy

What is the Local Wellness Policy?

Congress passed the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 to ensure schools join the fight against obesity and focus on sound nutrition and physical activity education during school days. Within the Act, the Local Wellness Policy requirement was introduced to help combat childhood obesity and improve children's health.

Is a Local Wellness Policy required?

Yes, as of the 2006 school year, a Local Wellness Policy has been required of every Local Educational Agency which participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), or Special Milk Program.

Who creates the Local Wellness Policy?

Since schools play a critical role in creating a healthy environment, the law places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs are met.

Where can we get more information on Local Wellness Policies?

For more information on Local Wellness Policies, visit the USDA website at www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome and search "Local Wellness Policies." Choose the link "Local Wellness Policy: 2004". Here you will be able to find information on policy requirements; how to create, implement, and evaluate policies; examples of local wellness policies; and much more!

School Wellness Ideas

The next 4 pages provide ideas to help your district become more focused on wellness. Take a look through the list to find areas where you could use improvement and celebrate the areas that are your strengths!

In the cafeteria:

____Is recess scheduled before lunch? (See page 9)

____Are lunch schedules set at reasonable times so lunch line wait time is as short as possible?

____Do students have adequate time to purchase and eat their breakfasts and lunches?

____Does your cafeteria serve wholesome, nutritious meals which support and reflect the nutrition education provided in the classroom?

____Are all foods presented in an attractive way on the students' trays?

____Are there choices available in the form of salad bars, fresh fruit bars, yogurt parfait stations, baked potato bars, and deli bars allowing students the opportunity to practice making wise food choices?

____Are lunch room monitors present to help keep noise levels down, while still providing a relaxed and comfortable eating experience for the students?

School Wellness Ideas

In the classroom:

____Do students receive health and nutrition classes regularly?

____Do teachers use healthy celebration activities for birthdays or other classroom festivities? (see pages 14 & 15)

____Is physical activity incorporated into the classroom by using physical activity breaks or physical activity curricula? (see pages 12 & 13)

____Does your school have up-to-date nutrition and health videos, curricula, and references available?

At recess and break time:

____Do students have the opportunity to be physically active during recess such as walking, running, jumping, skipping or climbing on playground equipment?

____Are there resources available to encourage physical activity such as basketballs, jump ropes, or kick balls?

____Are physical activity breaks encouraged in the classroom? (see pages 12 & 13)

____Are there walking trails around the school that classes can use for activity breaks?

____Do the water fountains work and are they accessible?

____Are the vending machines in the hallways and teachers lounge stocked with healthy choices? (see pages 20-22)

____Are teachers and staff practicing healthy role model behaviors by exhibiting healthy eating and exercise habits? (see pages 18 & 19)

School Wellness Ideas

In the gym:

____Do all children have regularly scheduled P.E. classes?

____Do P.E. classes offer a wide variety of physical activities to show students the different ways physical activity can be creative and fun for everyone?

____Are there posters or artwork in the gym celebrating students of all shapes and sizes being physically active?

In before-school and after-school programs:

____Do special programs exist to encourage students to walk or ride bikes to and from school such as a parent-supported walking school bus?

____Does the school have a variety of sports teams, such as basketball, soccer, hockey, volleyball, or dance team for students to join?

____Is well-maintained equipment available for students to use before and after school, such as basketballs, soccer balls, or jump ropes?

____Are free exercise classes, such as Pilates, aerobics, or calisthenics available before or after school for students and faculty to participate in?

____Is transportation available, such as a late bus, for students who wish to participate in after-school programs?

____Are school facilities available for after-school programs and on weekends for recreational use by the community?

School Wellness Ideas

In other areas throughout the school:

____Are healthy and tasty food choices served at conferences and parent/staff meetings? (see pages 21-22)

____Do concession stands at school sporting events serve healthy foods?

____Does the PTO, PTA, PTSA, or PTSO choose healthy fundraising activities? (see pages 16 & 17)

____During times that students are measured and weighed, can they be screened with utmost sensitivity and not in front of one another? This can be accomplished by understanding that, "every body is different and different is a good thing!"

____Does the school sponsor multi-cultural days or health fairs so that foods and activities from different cultures can be celebrated?

____Does the school sponsor activities such as fun runs, walk-a-thons, or bike-a-thons in which students, parents, and staff can participate? (see pages 16 & 17)

Benefits of Recess before Lunch

Why recess before lunch?

- Once at lunch, students eat at a more leisurely pace because the cafeteria atmosphere is more relaxed, which aids in them consuming more food and nutrients and wasting less food.
- Students behave better on the playground, in the cafeteria, and in the classroom.
- Students are more ready to learn, have focused attention, and perform better in the classroom due to increased nutrient intake.

Not sure how to make the change? Follow these steps!

1. Inform school faculty and staff, parents, students, and the community of the reason for the change in order to build support. Anticipate some resistance at first, but stay committed and stick with it!
2. Schedule adequate time (25-30 minutes) for students to eat.
3. Provide hand sanitizer as the students come in from recess.
4. Realize that change takes time, but students and faculty will quickly adapt to the new schedule.

The National Food Service Management Institute found that when recess was before lunch, students…

- Consumed ***35%*** more calcium
- Consumed ***13%*** more vitamin A
- Wasted ***30%*** less food by weight

Snacks

Snack time provides a great opportunity to give your students a quick break and re-fuel their bodies and minds. Here is a list of nutritious snacks kids will love!

- Fresh fruit (apples, banana, cuties/orange slices, grapes)
- Dried fruit mix (raisins, mango, pineapple, banana and apple chips)
- Sugar-free cinnamon applesauce
- Individual canned or cupped fruit packs and low fat yogurt
- Yogurt parfaits (low fat yogurt, banana, granola with no nuts)
- Low fat cheese cubes/sticks and whole wheat crackers
- Fresh veggies (baby carrots, celery, sugar snap peas, broccoli) with low fat ranch dip
- Hummus with whole wheat pita chips, pretzels, or veggies
- Popcorn (low fat)
- Pretzels (regular, honey wheat, honey mustard)
- Teddy grahams, graham crackers, vanilla wafers
- Fat-free pudding
- Frozen yogurt with fresh fruit

Need to provide a snack for your whole class?
Contact your school's foodservice department. Not only will you be getting a nutritionally analyzed snack, you will be supporting another department in your district!

Non-Food Rewards

We all want to celebrate students' achievements, and rightfully so, but is rewarding them with high sugar, high fat foods in their best interest? Serving the typical inexpensive treats like bubble gum filled lollipops or red licorice not only have low nutritional value but go against the nutrition education that is being provided to your students. Also, these treats add up over time.

See the chart below for sugar intake if these sweet treats are consumed for a day, week, month, or year!

	1/day	5/week	20/ month	185/year
Chocolate chewy rolls	1 1/4 tsp.	6 1/4 tsp.	1/2 cup	5 cups
Bubble gum filled lollipop	3 tsp.	5 tbsp.	1 1/4 cup	12 cup
Red Licorice (1 twist)	3 1/3 tsp.	5 1/2 tbsp.	1 1/3 cup	12 3/4 cup

Non-Food Reward Suggestions

For student:

- Stickers with affirming messages
- Erasers
- Prize box
- Pencils
- Coupons: first in line, sit with a friend, read to class, sit in teacher's chair, give spelling test to class, homework pass

For class:

- 5 minutes extra recess
- Holding class lesson outside
- Listen to music while working
- "free choice" time at end of day
- A book read aloud to the class by teacher

Physical Activity in the Classroom
A+ = Activity

Math:

Divide the class in half to review math problems. The students can stand at their desks (paper and pencil on desk). Call out a math problem such as "4+5=". One half of the class jumps 4 times and the other half jumps 5 times. Each student writes down their answer. Continue with other math problems. Vary movements.

Have students practice their measurement skills by measuring the distance covered while jumping, leaping, and hopping.

Call out math problems – when the answer is less than 20, have kids answer in jumping jacks, pushups, hops, twists, kicks, or marching.

Have students do two minutes of physical activity (jumping jacks, jogging in place, etc) and then ask them to take their pulse. Don't stop there…graph your results!

Science:

Take nature walks around the school yard. Encourage students to do reports on the benefits of physical activity, how physical activity effects health, and the human body.

Geography:

Give students pedometers and track their steps or mileage on maps of geographical interest, such as famous land marks, state capitols, national parks, etc. One mile = about 2,000 steps.

Spelling:

Have a spelling bee with a physical activity theme. Ask students to act out verbs such as skip, hop, march, dance.

Language Arts:

Ask students to journal the amount of time they spend watching TV, playing video games, and being active – and what activities they enjoyed most and why.

Quick, Easy Classroom Ideas

Pencil Jumps

For a quick movement break, in between lessons have each student place a pencil on the floor. Jump over the pencil a designated number of times.

Race in Place

When reviewing material, have the students stand up and run in place by their desks. On the teacher's signal, students stop running in place, listen to the questions, and write down the answer on paper.

Daily Rule

Establish a daily rule every day that includes physical activity, i.e. walk backwards to water fountain, tiptoe to the bathroom, stretch before sitting in chair.

Walking Worksheets

Tape worksheets on the wall, easel, chalkboard. Students move from work-sheet to worksheet and answer different questions.

Why Choose Healthy Celebrations?

Benefits

Healthy Kids Learn Better: Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance.

Provides Consistent Messages: Providing healthy classroom celebrations demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment: In order to change eating behaviors, students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy celebrations promote positive lifestyle choices.

Creates Excitement About Nutrition: Healthy celebrations show how positive lifestyle choices and nutrition are fun ways to spend time together.

Where to start…

- Try something new. Children like adventure - try new games and food.
- Plan creative experiences such as art, music, and cooking.
- Involve children in planning the party - let them make decorations and place them around the room.
- Put food in its proper place. Refreshments should enhance the party, not be the main event.

- Don't use food as rewards or prizes.
- Choose foods for fun, good taste, and health. Parties that feature healthful foods provide opportunities for children to practice making wise food choices.

There are so many fun and creative ways to celebrate students! Try some of these awesome ideas for your next celebration.

Celebration Activities

- Create a special birthday package - The child wears a sash and crown, sits in a special chair, and visits the principal's office for a special birthday surprise (pencil, sticker, birthday card).
- Birthday child is the teacher's assistant for the day, and gets to do special tasks like make deliveries to the office, lead the line, choose a game or activity.
- Create a "Celebrate Me" book. Have classmates write stories or poems, and draw pictures to describe what is special about the birthday child.
- Instead of food, ask parents to purchase a book for the class-room or school library in the birthday child's name. Read it to the class or invite the child's parents to come in and read it to the class.
- Instead of a party, organize a special community service project, e.g, make "curechiefs" for chemotherapy patients, blankets for rescue dogs, etc.

Food Ideas

- Flavored/sparkling water (without added sugars or sweeteners), sparkling punch (100% fruit juice and seltzer)
- Fruit and cheese kabobs
- Whole grain crackers with hummus or string cheese
- Turkey or chicken sandwich wraps
- Quesadillas with salsa
- Low-fat yogurt, squeezable yogurt, yogurt smoothies, yogurt parfaits
- Fruit with low-fat whipped topping
- Banana splits (topped with frozen yogurt, fruit, and granola or crushed graham crackers)

Healthy Fundraisers

Why go healthy?

- **Promotes a healthy school environment:** Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Selling unhealthy foods contradicts nutrition messages taught in the classroom. Finding healthy alternatives to fundraising is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

- **Healthy kids learn better:** Research demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.

Things to Sell...	
• Books, calendars • Brick/stone/tile memorials • Bumper stickers, decals • Buttons, pins • Coffee cups, mugs • Cookbooks (from teachers, school families) • Football seats • Graduation tickets • License plate holders with school logos • Parking spot in preferred location	• Raffle for front row seats to a special school event • Rent a special parking space • Scarves • School spirit gear • Silly bands/rubber bracelets • Souvenir cards • Stationary • Student directories • T-shirts, sweat shirts

More Things to Sell...

Holiday items

- Candles
- Christmas trees
- Cookbooks
- Coffee cups, mugs
- Gift wrap
- Gift baskets (basket with candles, mug, hot cocoa, apple cider)
- Greeting cards
- Holiday ornaments
- Holiday wreaths
- Mistletoe
- Stationary
- St. Patrick's day buttons, necklaces
- Valentine flowers

Food

- Frozen fruit kabobs (banana, grapes, strawberries, etc)
- Fruit and yogurt parfait

- Fruit smoothies
- Trail mix
- Popcorn (low fat)

Things to Do...

- Auction (ex: teacher does something for kids)
- Bike-a-thon, walk-a-thon, bowl-a-thon
- Fun run
- Read-a-thon
- Car wash (pre-sell tickets as gifts)
- Carnivals (Fall and Spring Festivals)
- Dances (Father/ Daughter, Sadie Hawkins)
- Gift wrapping
- Golf tournament
- Magic show
- Raffles
- Science fair
- Singing telegrams
- Skate night
- Spelling bee
- Talent shows (teachers and parents)
- Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt
- Workshop/Classes

Teachers - Are You a Healthy Role Model?

Ask yourself this...	Yes	No	If no, Why not?	**This is my goal.** **I will:**
Do your students see you being active at school?				
Do you encourage your students to be physically active at recess time?				
Do you give your class activity breaks or go for a walk around the school throughout the day to encourage physical activity?				
Do you help your school create a healthy school environment?				
Do your students see you eat and drink nutritious food?				
Do your students see you drink low fat/fat free milk or water instead of coffee, soda, or energy drinks?				

Teachers - Are You a Healthy Role Model?

Ask yourself this...	Yes	No	If no, Why not?	**This is my goal.** **I will:**
Do you refrain from talking about dieting in front of your students, as well as likes or dislikes?				
Do you serve only nutritious foods in your classroom (snacks, birthdays, celebrations)?				
Do you use non-food rewards in the classroom?				
Do you incorporate nutrition and physical activity messages into the curriculum you are teaching?				
Do you encourage your students to eat school breakfast and lunch?				
Do you eat school meals (breakfast/ lunch)?				

Healthier Workplace Environment for Staff

Healthy teachers are a key component for healthy students. Create a healthy workplace environment for teachers celebrating them as the essential resources they are. Do this by providing nutritious support during their days, and encouraging them to be physically active along with their students.

- Send out daily encouraging messages to teachers reminding them how important they are to the community.
- Celebrate National Teacher Day!
- Encourage physical activity breaks throughout the work day.
- Encourage teachers to take classes on nature/adventure walks.
- Support teacher intramural sports teams, such as softball, volleyball, or basketball.
- Create district-wide health challenges with pedometers or weight loss.
- Provide free group fitness or yoga classes in the gym before or after school.
- Encourage teachers to participate in events such as fun runs or bike-a-thons held by the school.
- Educate staff on topics such as “Think Your Drink” to avoid excess calories from sugar sweetened beverages.
- Encourage teachers to eat school lunches from the school foodservice. Remind them that these meals have been nutritionally analyzed and support another area of the school district.
- Provide recycling bins for teachers to use in their classrooms and break rooms.

Healthier Food and Beverage Environment for Staff

The following provides a list of food and beverage guidelines to help your staff live their healthiest lives while at work!

1. Provide beverages such as water, tea, or coffee when food is served.

2. Avoid beverages with more than 50 calories per 12 ounces, such as soda, sweetened teas, and juice drinks that are not 100% real fruit juice.

3. Provide fresh fruits and vegetables when food is served.

4. When serving milk or yogurt, only serve low-fat or fat-free options with no added sugars.

5. When serving bread, pasta, or rice, provide whole grain options such as whole wheat bread, whole grain cereal, whole wheat pasta brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, or barley.

6. Keep portions small, cut bread and sandwiches into halves or quarters.

7. Focus on serving lean meat and vegetable proteins such as turkey, chicken, tuna, nuts, nut butters, edamame, and tofu.

8. Limit mayonnaise-based salads, such as egg, tuna, or potato salad.

9. Do not serve deep fried foods such as French fries, fried chicken, or potato chips.

10. Stock vending machines with snacks that contain 200 calories or less per package.

Healthier Food and Beverage Environment for Staff

Here are examples of food items that could be served at each meal

Breakfast:

- Mini whole wheat bagels, pre-sliced and quartered
- Fruit spread, low-fat cream cheese and peanut butter on the side
- Low-fat plain Greek yogurt with low-fat granola
- Fresh fruit platters
- Coffee, tea, low-fat milk, 100% fruit juice (6 ounces or less), and water

Lunch:

- Turkey, lettuce, tomato sandwiches on whole wheat bread
- Whole wheat pita sandwiches stuffed with grilled vegetables
- Chopped salad of mixed greens, red peppers, cucumbers, and chickpeas with a light vinaigrette
- Place all condiments and salad dressings on the side
- Bite-sized chocolate chip cookies
- Coffee, tea, low-fat milk, seltzer, water

Celebrations:

- Mixed vegetable platter with spicy salsa, hummus, and herb yogurt dip
- Air-popped popcorn
- Assortment of three cheese served with small, whole grain crackers
- Fresh fruit
- Coffee, tea, low-fat milk, seltzer, water

Other Available Resources

Active and Healthy Schools Program: school wellness program
www.activeandhealthyschools.com

Animal Trackers: preschool curriculum
http://www.healthy-start.com/prog_anim.html

Bridges to Wellness: free curriculum to connect cafeteria and classroom
http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/educators/lessons/bridges/bridges-partnering-sfs.asp

Colorado Department of Education: free curriculum K-12
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdenutritran/
nutriTNandCOConnectionslessons.htm

Create Healthy Active Celebrations: free classroom celebration ideas
http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/
QuickandEasy/celebrations.pdf

Eat Well & Keep Moving: nutrition and physical activity curriculum
http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/nutrition-news/ewkm/
http://eatmovelearn.com/

Empowering Youth with Nutrition and Physical Activity: free high school curriculum
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/empoweringyouth.html

Farm to School: Arizona farm to school programs
http://www.farmtoschool.org/AZ/programs.htm

Food Science: free curriculum
http://www.foodscience.psu.edu/Outreach/Fun_Food_Science.html

Kids Health in the Classroom: free curriculum K-12
http://classroom.kidshealth.org/

Lifecycle Nutrition: free curriculum
http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?
in-
fo_center=4&tax_level=2&tax_subject=257&topic_id=1354&placement

The wellness toolkit guide was adapted by the following sources:

- Action for Healthy Kids: "Local Wellness Policy, Facts Sheet"
- FoodPlay Productions, LLC: "School Wellness Checklist"
- South Dakota Department of Education, Child and Adult Nutrition Services: "The Benefits of Recess before Lunch, Creating a Healthier Classroom"
- American Dietetics Association: "Nutrition Facts Sheet, 25 Healthy Snacks for Kids"
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/Schools Partnerships: "What Schools Can Do - Ideas for Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward"
- Ventura Unified School District Healthy Schools Project: "Say it Without Candy: Non-Food Rewards"
- CanDo - Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity: "Active Classrooms Rock! Kids CanDo It!"
- Your Therapy Source, Inc: "10 Simple Activities to Encourage Physical Activity in the Classroom"
- CanDo - Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity: "Promoting Wellness in Your Classroom! Tips for Teachers"
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/Schools Partnerships: "Healthy Celebrations, Promoting a Healthy School Environment"
- Action for Healthy Kids, Ohio: "Fundraising Alternatives"
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/Schools Partnerships: "What Schools Can Do - Ideas for Healthy Fundraising Alternatives"
- Team Nutrition: "Teachers - Are you a FitKid Role Model?"
- NYC Department of Health: "Food and Drink at Meetings and Events: What to Serve"
- NYC Department of Health: "Simple Steps Your Workplace Cant Take for a Healthier Food and Beverage Environment"
- NYC Department of Health: "Active8 Kids! New York State School Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practices Toolkit"
- State Health Facts: www.statehealthfacts.org

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