

School-Wide Healthy Environmental Supports

Students at your school are participating in Steps to Health. To help support the Steps to Health nutrition and physical activity messages, consider these simple suggestions for creating a healthier school environment in the classroom, cafeteria, and with school staff. Share the list with other teachers, staff, and administrators to establish school-wide participation. Work together to choose a few items to focus on throughout the year. Contact your Steps to Health Educator for additional information.

Across the School

- Form a school health committee or team.
- Create, expand, or update written health policies.
- Complete the School Health Index Self-Assessment and Planning Guide. For more information see your Steps to Health Educator.
- Make water the beverage of choice. Increase access to free water throughout the day. Improve taste, quality, smell, or temperature if necessary.
- Incorporate farm to school activities such as hosting a farm day, offering field trips to local farms, or highlighting local/regional foods in the cafeteria or at events.
- Start a school garden.
- Allow for after-hours use of playgrounds and gyms.
- Promote the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs.
- Post bulletin boards and posters that promote healthy eating and increased activity.
- Implement guidelines for foods offered during events and celebrations.
- Conduct fundraisers or boosters that support good health through selling healthy foods or nonfood items.
- Join the Active Schools Movement. More information at: www.letsmoveschools.org
- Implement a walk or bike to school program such as Safe Routes to School.
- Hold a step or walking challenge. See how long it takes students to “walk” across their county, state, or the US.
- Conduct easy contests on a nutrition or health topic. Winners can read their entries during school assemblies.
- Offer professional development opportunities for staff related to health, nutrition, and physical activity.



In the Classroom

- Have a discussion each week of new foods students tried in the cafeteria.
- Encourage teachers to eat and drink only healthy snacks and beverages in front of students.
- Give students 1–2 minute activity breaks throughout the day.
- Avoid withholding physical activity opportunities as a form of punishment.
- Avoid using food as reward or punishment. Replace food rewards with other fun, inexpensive incentives like stickers.
- Promote fruit or vegetable-only snacks on certain days.

In the Cafeteria

- Give students an opportunity for menu input.
- Promote healthy menu items in locations and in lighting so they are visible and easy to choose.
- Join the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement. For more information see your Steps to Health Educator.
- Provide more whole grain and/or low sugar a-la-carte menu items.



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