Move More in Schools

Happy Kids, Happy Teachers and Improved Performance

Resource Guide for Educators Pre-K - 12
Healthy for Life Project • Spring 2017
Did you know...?

Healthy for Life Project
Eat Well + Move More = Live Better

The Healthy for Life Project is working to make your community a healthier place to live, work, learn, and play. We are a coalition of organizations, agencies, and community members from the Greater Norwalk, CT area. Our Project originated from a 2012 community health assessment and improvement plan conducted by Norwalk Hospital and Norwalk Health Department. Our mission is to reduce and prevent obesity and chronic disease by promoting healthy lifestyles in our communities, and our goals are simple: Help people of all ages Eat Well and Move More! To learn more, visit www.healthyforlifeproject.org.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About Move More in Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Tools</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Have the Moves!</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPARK Early Childhood Instructional Units</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move, Play, and Learn at Home</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart from the Start</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School Tools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoNoodle</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnetic: Move, Eat, Learn</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-School Activity Breaks</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC for Fitness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Activity Task Cards</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train Like an Astronaut</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle and High School Tools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit For a Healthier Generation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Academics</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Classroom Physical Activities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Activity Breaks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Recommendations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Further Reading</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References: Full URLs of Resources Mentioned</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note: This toolkit includes dozens of links to valuable online resources. The Healthy for Life Project does not maintain these sites, is not endorsing the entirety of their content, and is not responsible for links that break or move over time.*
Healthy Kids, Happy Teachers, and Improved Performance!

Want to help your students improve their focus, concentration, and academic performance?

Interested in reducing behavior problems and disruptions in your classroom?

Want to see your students happier, healthier, and less stressed?

Then get them moving!

Demands on your time in the classroom are ever increasing, but a small investment of time for physical activity can have impressive results, including higher academic performance, improved behavior — and happier, healthier students!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Activity Practice</th>
<th>Related Academic Achievement Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students who are physically active</td>
<td>Have better grades, better school attendance, and better classroom behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher physical activity and physical fitness levels</td>
<td>Improved cognitive performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More participation in physical education class</td>
<td>Better grades, standardized test scores, and classroom behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in recess</td>
<td>Improved cognitive performance and classroom behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in brief classroom physical activity breaks</td>
<td>Improved cognitive performance, classroom behaviors, and education outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in extracurricular physical activities</td>
<td>Higher GPAs, lower drop-out rates, and fewer disciplinary problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Healthy for Life Project created this toolkit to help you achieve these results. You can incorporate these quick, no-cost, fun, heart-pumping physical activities into your daily classroom routine without special equipment or set-up. Most can be done on the spot, beside the desk, in the classroom setting. Many link movement to core curriculum objectives so students learn while being active.
The toolkit has 3 main sections:

1. **Tools**: Your most direct route to tools, ideas, handouts, and links to help get kids moving in class, organized by age group.
2. **Recommendations**: A list of public health recommendations about physical activity for kids.
3. **Additional resources**: For people who’d like to dive deeper, learn more, and think outside the box.

We hope this information helps you and your students move more, learn more, and succeed!

Tell us what you think, or share how you’ve used this toolkit to give students more opportunities to be active at school. Visit [www.healthyforlifeproject.org](http://www.healthyforlifeproject.org) or [facebook.com/healthy4lifect](http://facebook.com/healthy4lifect), or email targondezzi@norwalkct.org.

For more information on how physical activity can improve outcomes in your classroom, read the [CDC’s report](http://www.cdc.gov/).
We Have the Moves!

A helpful resource from Sesame Street® that outlines more than a dozen activities for young children (ages 2-5) to incorporate physical activity and movement into everyday activities.

Why should I use it?
We Have the Moves activities are quick, require minimal equipment and space, help add active play and learning into everyday activities, and link movement to literacy, math, science, nutrition, and more. The guide provides suggestions to modify the activities for different audiences, including babies and school-age children.

SPARK Early Childhood Instructional Units

SPARK is a research-based program of San Diego State University Research dedicated to promoting lifelong wellness. Early Childhood Instructional Units are sample lesson plans that help instructors create a positive learning environment while children learn behavioral expectations, motor and social skills, and classroom procedures.

Why should I use them?
Activities include adaptations and variations for the classroom, as well as reinforcing family activities. These 11 free sample lessons give a snapshot of the larger curriculum and supplies that are available for purchase.
Move, Play, and Learn at Home

Shape America created about 25 different activities to help families incorporate more physical activity and learning into their young children’s daily routine.

Why should I use it?
Activities follow a simple curriculum, require limited equipment, and include an accompanying “Nutrition Nugget” with every physical activity to connect healthy eating and physical activity. Activities are available in English and Spanish.

Smart from the Start

Smart from the Start is a customizable program for preschoolers, teaching kids ways to eat healthy and exercise. The program is separated into two units, Me and My Choices and Give it a Try!, which are each organized into 10 days of activities. Users can download individual activities or the whole program, all for free. All activities are available in English and Spanish.

Why should I use it?
Smart from the Start provides a comprehensive lesson plan for preschool students that can be customized to best fit classroom needs. The program focuses on the unique strengths of each student and encourages them to explore and try new things.
GoNoodle®

GoNoodle is an online collection of short, desk-side physical activities designed to channel and stimulate learning for all age groups, help manage classroom behavior, increase students’ physical activity, and improve academic performance. Requires an internet connection and projector or SMART Board.

Why should I use it?
GoNoodle offers activities of varying duration, energy level, and category (e.g., calming, dance, kinesthetic learning). The activities include other kids and/or colorful, animated characters. The basic app is free and includes dozens of activities. For a fee, GoNoodle Plus can further enhance student engagement, behavior, and achievement with customizable and core curriculum-aligned physical activity breaks.

Kidnetic: Move, Eat, Learn®

An online educational resource aimed at inspiring kids and their families by promoting active living and healthy eating in ways that are fun and relevant. The website includes physical activity games, healthy recipes, and interactive educational resources.

Why should I use it?
Activities are created by kids for kids (ages 9-12). Encourages children to integrate healthful habits into all aspects of their lives. Students can customize some activities and educators have access to lessons on how the body works, “bright papers” and other educational tools. Includes a recipe section to help educate about eating right to properly fuel the body.
In-School Activity Breaks

Available through the American Heart Association, these 135 In-School Activity Breaks are 3- to 5-minute activity bursts that can be completed in the classroom with minimal supplies and space.

Why should I use them?
Short activity breaks help students get moving during the school day, and use their energy in productive ways. Activities can be customized to reinforce concepts taught in class.

ABC for Fitness

ABC (Activity Bursts in the Classroom) for Fitness is designed to help teachers offer short activity bursts over the course of the day during transition times to help channel students’ energy and keep them calm, alert, and on task. Spreading the activity out over time helps students accumulate at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity without cutting into valuable instruction time.

Why should I use it?
Activity bursts encourage physical activity and constructive movement. The activities are free and require very little equipment, and the website includes helpful flyers, program set-up tips, and a teachers’ manual. ABC for Fitness was created and tested by Dr. David L. Katz, Director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center.
Physical Activity Task Cards

Developed by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, these Task Cards outline 21 examples of physical activity in the classroom that require little or no equipment or teacher preparation.

Why should I use them?
Activities are quick, simple, and incorporate math, science, geography, weather, sports, and animals.

Train like an Astronaut

Developed by NASA and the Let’s Move campaign, Train like an Astronaut provides creative physical activities for kids. Each activity is a Mission complete with videos from NASA astronauts, briefings, assignments, purposes, and NASA facts. And, every Mission utilizes the same body parts that astronauts use when training for real space missions! Although many of these activities require a bit more space and some common physical education equipment, they also include educational lessons to accompany each physical activity.

Why should I use it?
This program provides free, educational material, through a creative outlet, to help kids get excited about physical activity. All material is available online and classroom materials can be printed out in both English and Spanish. All lesson plans have modifications to accommodate students’ different abilities, a variety of settings and time constraints.
**Fit For a Healthier Generation**

A series of short (3-9 minutes) physical activity videos that improve basic skills in Taekwondo, yoga, Zumba, dynamic exercises, etc. Requires a SMART board or other system.

**Why should I use it?**
Videos are quick and effective and aimed at getting kids up, moving, and having fun throughout the day. Famous fitness instructors, such as Billy Blanks and Bob Harper, lead the video instruction.

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**Active Academics**

The website offers a wide variety of ideas for incorporating physical activity into the school day. Activities are submitted by teachers that have implemented these lessons on a daily basis, so rest assured they are detailed and organized.

**Why should I use it?**
These activities can be used as short energizers or customized to supplement an existing lesson plan. Activities are arranged by grade level (Pre-K, K-3, 6-8, etc.) and content area (math, science, classroom energizer, etc.), and are all submitted by teachers across the United States.
Secondary Classroom Physical Activities Website

Quick breaks used to help facilitate processing, encourage movement, and allow students to share learning to demonstrate understanding. Developed by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Why should I use them? These simple activities not only promote physical activity throughout the school day, but can be customized to reinforce the lesson topic and allow students to identify concrete learning concepts.

Middle School Activity Breaks

Middle School Activity Breaks are developed by CATCH, the Coordinated Approach To Child Health. These activity breaks provide short bursts of physical activity for middle school students, which have been shown to promote academic achievement. Activity breaks only take 5-10 minutes to perform and some are available in specific subject areas.

Why should I use them? These activity breaks can be used in a variety of settings and with minimal equipment. All Activity Breaks can be modified to fit specific classroom space and time available, and almost all activities can be tailored to fit a specific subject.
“Walk to School Day Events Engage Community, Get Families Moving”

The Healthy for Life Project provided information, guidance, and technical assistance to schools in the Greater Norwalk CT area to promote Walk to School Day (WTSD). This event, coordinated by The National Center for Safe Routes to School, encourages students to walk to school on the same day, promoting healthier habits, a cleaner environment, safety, and a sense of community.

Between October 2013 and May 2015, the Healthy for Life Project promoted four WTSDs. Schools received basic information about WTSD, where to go for more information about the national event, and alternative ideas to increase physical activity at schools that didn’t think WTSD was a good fit for them. In addition, they received a 2-page guide providing step-by-step recommendations for planning an event, including areas where the Healthy for Life Project could help. This promotion resulted in 11 school events with a total of about 1,250 students, staff, and families walking.

“Dance, Dance, Dance!”

With only an iPod and some music gift cards, Little Fort Elementary School in Waukegan, Illinois established “Morning Music” as part of their commitment to “Move in the Morning” program.

- After the Pledge of Allegiance students and staff alike participate in the new (mandatory) five minutes of activity every morning.
- Students request songs to be played on the loud speaker and then the entire staff and student body would dance away when played.
- Teachers noted that getting active in the morning helped students focus for the day and catalyzed a cultural shift around incorporating activity into the school day.
- Music teacher also incorporated more movement and dancing into class.

“Wilkerson Wins with Wellness”

Wilkerson Elementary School in El Monte, California adopted the Healthy Schools Program and has since seen increased attendance rates and their Academic Performance Index by almost 100 points (the highest in the district).

- Adopted SPARK (best practice physical education curriculum training for all classroom teachers: “Coordinated School Health Initiative.”)
- School hosted Walk to School Day, after school Farmers’ Markets and taste testing events so families can become familiar and more comfortable with healthier foods.
- Walking before tests has become common practice throughout the school.
- Staff can participate in a Weight Watchers group that meets at the school and Zumba classes that were made available for both staff and parents.
Kids of all ages should get at least 60 minutes of active time each day, but only about a third of kids get that much. Educators can play a big part in giving kids opportunities to be active, even for a few minutes at a time—whether it’s dancing during music time at daycare, 5-minute activity bursts during transition time in elementary school, or anything that gets kids up out of their chairs and moving.

Health and education officials offer several recommendations for physical activity during the school day. This list below doesn’t capture every recommendation, but we encourage you to work toward one (or more) goals to incorporate in your classroom, your school, or your district. Even small improvements could make a difference in health, happiness, behavior, and performance in your classroom.

**Early Childhood**

- Give toddlers (ages 1 and 2) at least 30 minutes of structured activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity every day. Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) should get at least 60 minutes of structured activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity every day.
- Don’t allow toddlers and preschoolers to be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping.
- Provide children with outdoor time at least twice daily, weather and air quality permitting.
- Avoid screen time (e.g., television, video games and computers) for infants and children under 2 in the school setting. Limit screen time for kids older than 2 to less than one hour per day (not during meals or snack time) and only include quality educational activities or programs that get kids active.
- Limit time in confining equipment (e.g., strollers, exersaucers, bouncy chairs) for toddlers to less than 30 minutes while they are awake.
School-age Children

- Provide daily physical education (150 minutes/week for elementary students, 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students).
- Provide daily recess (20 or more minutes per day, and avoid withholding recess as a punishment or to allow for academic make-up time).
- In addition to PE and recess, offer physical activity breaks throughout the school day by building activity into classroom lessons and/or transition time.
- Offer a variety of competitive and noncompetitive physical activity opportunities before, during, and/or after school hours, including opportunities for students of all skill and ability levels.

For Everyone

- Find healthy discipline strategies. Avoid withholding active time to punish a child, unless his/her behavior is dangerous. Exercise (e.g., pushups, laps) shouldn’t be used as a punishment.
- Get moving. Model an active life by leading and/or participating in physical activities, whenever possible.
- Get outside. Develop guidelines around how weather will impact outside recess or other outdoor time. Send guidance home to parents about the proper clothing and outerwear for outside play, whatever the season.
- Stay on schedule. Schedule active times and recess before mealtimes to encourage better meal consumption, better behavior, and a more positive mealtime environment.
- Keep learning! Offer or ask for training opportunities at least twice a year on strategies for promoting developmentally appropriate structured physical activity.

Sources:


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity. MMWR 2011;60(No. 5):1-76
Even more resources for physical activity, healthy eating, and beyond for those who want to dig deeper.

**Healthy Schools Program – Framework of Best Practices**[^24]
Utilizes same framework as Let’s Move! Active Schools:
- Comprehensive guide to best practices for health policies and education, physical education and physical activity programs, nutrition services, health promotion for staff, family and community involvement.
- Schools can sign up to participate. Free registration is required.

**Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)**[^25]
US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s multicomponent approach guiding schools and districts to use all opportunities for students to be physically active, meet national recommendations and develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.

Key Components:
- Quality physical education as the foundation
- Physical activity before, during and after school
- Staff involvement
- Family and community engagement

CDC also partnered with SHAPE America ([shapeamerica.org](http://shapeamerica.org)) to develop a step-by-step guide for schools to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school physical activity programs. Good resource for those who want to take a systematic approach to developing a CSPAP.

**The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model**[^26]
This expansion and update of the Coordinated School Health (CSH) approach incorporates the components of CSH and the tenets of the ASCD’s whole child approach to strengthen a unified and collaborative approach to learning and health. The WSCC model focuses its attention on the child, emphasizes a school-wide approach, and acknowledges learning, health, and the school as being a part and reflection of the local community.

Great resource for a school or district looking for guidance on comprehensive, coordinated school health centered around the student.

**Eat Smart, Move More NC**[^27]
Promotes active living and healthy eating for people of all ages and abilities. Tools and resources target the community, school, worksite, faith-based, after-school programs and more. Includes a compilation of useful sets of energizers for elementary, middle, and after school audiences.
Let’s Go! Developed by the Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital at Maine Medical Center with the goal to increase physical activity and healthy eating for children from birth to 18 through policy and environmental change.

Offers free-to-download, comprehensive toolkits for promoting wellness, including guidance on food, beverages, screen time, physical activity (with ideas for physical activity breaks), staff wellness, and family involvement, for several audiences:
- Early Childhood
- K-5 School
- Middle/High School
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Sciences
Emphasizes the strong link between physical activity and improved academic focus and behavior.
- “Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School”
- “Creating Equal Opportunities for a Healthy Weight”
- “The Current State of Obesity Solutions in the United States”

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- “Leaps and Bounds: The Many Rewards of Physical Activity”
- “Increasing Physical Activity through Recess”
- “The State of Play”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Great resources for overall health initiatives, not just physical activity.
- Tips for Teachers
- Engaging Parents
- Engaging Parents specifically in physical activity
- Youth Physical Activity: The Role of Schools
- CDC Healthy Schools Website
- CDC Healthy Schools: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
Full URLs for Resources Mentioned in this Toolkit

2. http://www.norwalkct.org/1352/Healthy-for-Life-Project

Early Childhood

Elementary School

Middle School/High School
14. https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/physical_activity/physical_activities/fit_for_a_healthier_generation/

Case Studies

**Recommendations**


**Further Reading**

27. http://eatsmartmovemorenc.com
30. http://nap.edu/read/18553/chapter/8
31. http://nap.edu/read/21680/chapter/1#3
33. http://activelivingresearch.org/increasing-physical-activity-through-recess
34. http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/surveys_and_polls/2010/rwjf53884