

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Physical Activity



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Physical activity during the school day helps students focus better in the classroom, increases social skills and encourages an active lifestyle. Activity in the classroom is also a great way to get students' minds moving. During class time, teachers can integrate physical activity into lessons.

Why is This Important?

Physically active students are better prepared for school and for life. Research shows that physical activity benefits children's cognitive health. It affects perception, memory, judgment, focus and reasoning as well as scores on verbal and mathematics tests. In fact, the Institute of Medicine recommends that all children participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity during the school day. The new CPS Wellness Policy states that schools should discourage extended periods (two hours or more) of time when a student is not physically active and that schools should provide all students with additional daily opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity before, during and after school in addition to recess and PE.

Students are more successful in learning new information

when they're able to actively participate. Using movement in lessons, or sensory-based learning, helps students retain and understand information.

Physical activity helps improve:

- Motor skills
- Academic performance
- Academic readiness
- Learning
- Cognition (mental processes of perception, memory, judgment and reasoning)
- Scores on verbal and mathematics tests
- IQ
- Concentration
- Perceptual skills (identification, spatial awareness, visual-sensory integration)

Get Started

Meet with school staff and have the school principal agree to encourage teachers to incorporate 10 to 15 minutes of daily physical activity in the classroom by following these guidelines:

- Choose developmentally appropriate and safe activities, modifying for students with disabilities.
- Portray physical activity in a positive manner and never as a punishment.

- Be engaged and model healthy behavior.
- PE teachers and classroom teachers should work together to come up with safe, developmentally appropriate breaks of physical activity.
- Be consistent and have a set plan for your in-class physical activity breaks.



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Try These Quick Tips

- Practice spelling words while getting some exercise! Have students spell words aloud, doing one jumping jack for each letter. This works with reciting the alphabet, too.
- Review any subject in a fun, active way! Have students form a circle, with one holding a playground ball. Ask a review question. The student will have to answer correctly before tossing the ball to a classmate of their choice.
- Turn a true-false quiz into an activity! Line students up opposite you. State a fact you have studied. If students think the fact is true, they will take one step forward; if they think it is false, they will take one step back. Alternatively, you could have students do jumping jacks or hop on one foot to indicate true/false or yes/no
- Incorporate walking breaks! Take your class for a walk while discussing with students what they learned during the previous lesson.
- Transition with activity! After long, sedentary periods, transition to a new lesson with an activity break.
- Incorporate exercise! Use a weekly calendar with different morning and afternoon exercises for each day.

Learn from Success Stories

Rufus M. Hitch Elementary School, Chicago: Yoga

A first-grade teacher incorporates yoga into the classroom. For example, the teacher leads students in yoga stretches while they are waiting in line.

McCormick Elementary, Chicago: Active Math

One kindergarten teacher found countless ways to bring activity and healthy messages into the classroom. The teacher leads students through their math exercise by using movements. Students happily jumped through different movements to match different sets of numbers, exercising their brains and their bodies at the same time. The teacher explained that students are more open to doing work and finishing their tasks after they are physically active and found that students have more energy and get through the problems more quickly.



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Physical Education at Chicago Public Schools

PE Policy

In 2017, CPS adopted a PE Policy that states schools shall offer physical education programming in accordance with CPS Physical Education Policy of 150 of PE per week. The updated Wellness Policy also requires the integration of

physical activity on a daily basis, instead of a weekly basis, and a provision to to increase opportunities for physical activity.

CPS Resources

The CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness has compiled a variety of resources to help your school provide daily quality PE.

the quality of PE. Please contact the PE Help Desk at physicaleducation@cps.edu or 773-553-3560.

Resources include:

- CPS PE Toolkit. This toolkit provides practical tips and ideas. Available in the CPS Knowledge Center.
- CPS Physical Education Scope and Sequence. This guide illustrates the range of topics and skills to be taught and in what sequence for grades pre-K-12. The Scope and Sequence can be modified to meet the needs of each CPS school's student body and personnel as well as issues with facilities and equipment. Available in the CPS Knowledge Center.
- Physical Education Section on the Knowledge Center. Visit the PE page on the Knowledge Center to download the Physical Education Policy Manual and access short webinars, best practices and communications templates. Teachers can log into the CPS knowledge center at kc.cps.edu for more information.
- Specialized assistance can be provided to individual instructors and/or administrators in an effort to improve

Beyond PE

Schools can also develop a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), a roadmap for increasing students' physical activity before, during and after school. The CSPAP approach recommends five components of school-based physical activity: Physical Education, Physical Activity During School, Physical Activity Before and After School, Staff Involvement and Family and Community Involvement. Learn more at letsmoveschools.org.



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CONNECT TO RESOURCES

Chicago Organizations + Resources

The following resources have been reviewed and approved by the Health and Wellness Materials Review Board convened by the Office of Health and Wellness at Chicago Public Schools. Please note; this list of resources is constantly being updated as more nutrition education resources and providers undergo the review and approval process set forth by CPS.

The Office of Student Health and Wellness aims to remove health-related barriers to learning such that students may succeed in college and career. To learn more, please contact the Office of Student Health and Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.

Active Transportation Alliance

activetrans.org

312-427-3325 / admin@activetrans.org

Education plays a vital role in the mission of the Active Transportation Alliance. It aims to give teachers and parents the tools needed to educate children about biking and walking, and also to guide communities to implement smarter school policies and safe routes to school. Active Transportation can provide technical assistance to schools on a variety of topics and can advocate for policy changes that promote walkable and bikeable schools.

America Scores

americascores.org/affiliates/chicago

312-666-0496 / chicago@americascores.org

Founded in 2000, America SCORES Chicago inspires urban youth to lead healthy lives, be engaged students, and have the confidence and character to make a difference in the world. America SCORES partners with urban schools to provide a high quality, team-based program that integrates soccer, poetry, and service learning. Its innovative approach improves students health, academic achievement and civic engagement.

Calm Classroom

calmclassroom.com

Jai Luster / 847-748-7482 / jai@calmclassroom.com

Luster Learning Institute provides its school-wide “Calm Classroom” program training and year-round support services and materials to CPS. Teachers are trained to facilitate short breathing, stretching, focusing and relaxation techniques in the classroom, three to four times daily. Students and teachers develop the habit of using these self-reflective, self-regulatory techniques when needed in school and beyond. Student outcomes include: improved academic success, focus and stress management, and reductions in overall code of conduct violations and misbehavior.

Chicago Safe Routes Ambassadors

.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/ped/svcs/safe_routes_ambassadors.html

Cody McChane / 312-744-3019 / cody.mcchane@activetrans.org



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Chicago's Safe Routes Ambassadors are Chicago's pedestrian and bicycle safety outreach team. Ambassadors meet with thousands of Chicago students each year, teaching kids about safe walking and biking behavior, talking about the benefits of active transportation, and helping communities implement Safe Routes to School activities. The Safe Routes Ambassadors are a free city service through the Chicago Department of Transportation, and are available to visit any elementary school in Chicago.

Chicago Run

chicagorun.org

773-961-8470 / info@chicagorun.org

Chicago Run works with schools on an individual basis in order to help them increase the amount of physical activity their students receive on a weekly basis. Chicago Run uses physical fitness, nutrition education, and digital learning as a means to get students excited about their over-all health and wellness, as well as provide them with the opportunity to learn about surrounding communities and to take pride in their own!

Dancing with Class

dancingwithclass.org

Margot Toppen / 773-635-3000 / margot@dancingwithclass.com

Dancing with Class introduces students to different forms of ballroom/partner dance. Programs bring together dance, cultural learning and character education into one seamless package.

Enlace

enlacechicago.org

Simone Alexander / 773-703-9272 / salexander@enlacechicago.org

Enlace Chicago is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of the residents of the Little Village Community by fostering a physically safe and healthy environment in which to live and by championing opportunities for educational advancement and economic development.

Girls in the Game

girlsinthegame.org

Allison Liefer / 312-633-4263 / aliefer@girlsinthegame.org

Girls in the Game provides and promotes sports and fitness opportunities, nutrition and health education, and leadership development to enhance the overall health and well-being of girls.

Girls on the Run

girlsontherun.org

Kristen Kainer-Turner / 773-342-1250 / kristen@gotrchicago.org



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Girls on the Run is a transformational physical activity based positive youth development program for girls in 3rd-8th grade. It teaches life skills through dynamic, interactive lessons and running games. The program culminates with the girls being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5k running event. The goal of the program is to unleash confidence through accomplishment while establishing a lifetime appreciation of health and fitness.

JumpBunch

jumpbunch.com

Ali Anjum / 312-835-7724 / aanjum@jumpbunch.com

JumpBunch provides an experienced coach and necessary equipment to make it easy for schools to add structured sports and fitness to their curriculum or to round out after-care programs. The curriculum introduces the rules and skills through hands-on exercises, so kids begin playing and improving right away. The goals are to help make every student comfortable trying new sports, to give them a basic understanding of popular sports and to help them appreciate the fun and rewards of regular physical activity.

Mindful Practices

mindfulpracticesyoga.com

708-408-0393 / admin@mindfulpracticesyoga.com

Mindful Practices offers innovative professional development, after-school and recess programming in yoga and wellness strategies. Mindful Practices works with schools across the country to honor the needs of the whole child through mindful classroom management practices that bring relaxation, movement and breath work to the classroom. Programming offerings for early elementary, elementary, middle school and high school include Hip-Hop Yoga, Cool Corps, Kindness Lab and Cool Down Club, which is a specialized program for students with aggressive behavior and/or special needs. All programs are offered as options for recess, after school or embedded day programs. Mindful Practices also offers effective and engaging professional development workshops for faculty, staff and parents.

Playworks Chicago

illinois.playworks.org

Colleen Harvey / 312-324-0280 / charvey@playworks.org

Playworks is a national nonprofit organization that transforms schools by providing play and physical activity at recess and throughout the school day. Through on-site direct service and trainer-led professional development workshops, Playworks restores valuable teaching time, reduces bullying, increases physical activity and improves the school and learning environment. Playworks teaches children to resolve their own conflicts that arise at recess and carry over to the classroom, improving school climate both on and off the playground. Playworks helps transform recess into a safe, fun and inclusive time that gets students active and engaged so they can return to the classroom focused and ready to learn.

Stretch-n-Grow

stretchngrownorth.com

773-486-3540 / sngrow@yahoo.com



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Stretch-n-Grow is a fun fitness and nutrition program for children ages 2-13. Kids work up a sweat to upbeat music as they learn about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. The Stretch-n-Grow Program covers health topics including proper nutrition, hygiene, sleep and more.

Urban Initiatives

urbaninitiatives.org

April Lillstrom / 312-715-1763 / info@urbaninitiatives.org

Urban Initiatives offers sports-based youth development programming including a health and education soccer program, structured recess program and a four-week soccer camp. The mission of Urban Initiatives is to motivate Chicago's children to improve their academic performance, physical fitness, health, and character through collaborative programs.

Action for Healthy Kids

actionforhealthykids.org

Heidi Knoblock / 312-878-2712 / hknoblock@actionforhealthykids.org

Action for Healthy Kids addresses childhood undernourishment, obesity and prevention by working with schools to help kids learn to eat right and be active every day. This focus is because of the unique position and influence that schools have on children and their families, in addition to their responsibility to provide nutrition and physical education and their many opportunities to promote healthy eating and active living.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

schools.healthiergeneration.org

Erin Rasler / 773-857-1276 / erin.rasler@healthiergeneration.org

Alliance's Healthy Schools Program takes a comprehensive approach to helping schools create healthier environments by working with them to improve access to healthier foods; increase physical activity opportunities before, during and after school; enhance nutrition education; and establish school employee wellness programs.

University of Illinois Extension

web.extension.illinois.edu/cook

Michele Crawford / 773-768-7779 / mcrawfrd@illinois.edu

University of Illinois Extension Cook County is an outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Illinois Nutrition Education Program (INEP) staff work with a variety of community organizations to ensure that low-income families have access to information on good nutrition and physical activity. INEP staff provide classes that teach participants how to use their food dollars wisely, select healthy foods for their families, prepare and store food safely, and balance food intake with physical activity. INEP offers nutrition education for pre-K through 5th grade youth and adults.

Westside Health Authority



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healthauthority.org

Morris Reed / 773-378-1878

The Health Promotions Program at Westside Health Authority (WHA) focuses on seven health priorities to enhance the overall health and well-being of the community: Active Lifestyles, Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating, Breast Health, Sexual Health, Health Literacy, Diabetes and School Health. The Move “N” Crunch program is a model fitness and nutrition program for schools. The “move” component is led by a partner organization, Chicago Run, which implements free running programs with the help of on-site school staff. The “crunch” component is led by WHA and includes 12 nutrition classes focused on how a specific fruit or vegetable is grown, why it benefits our bodies, and how it tastes.

McCormick YMCA

ymcachicago.org/mccormicktribune

Adriana Stanovici / astanovici@ymcachicago.org

The McCormick Tribune YMCA’s Active Green Space seeks to impact health and wellness with a focus on childhood obesity and diabetes in the Logan Square, Humboldt Park and Hermosa neighborhoods of Chicago. The Active Green Space has created a “hybrid space”, combining a physical activity area, an outdoor classroom, a community garden and a green energy education component. The Active Green Space project is critical to positively impacting health and wellness now and in the future.

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

ymcachicago.org

312-932-1200

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is an inclusive, charitable association, founded on Christian principles and dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programs that develop spirit, mind and body. Initiatives include: nutrition education, physical activity/fitness, health education, family life, diabetes, character development; values-based leadership development.

National and Online Resources

Take 10!

take10.net

Try out a searchable database of classroom-based physical activity lessons for K-5.

Active Academics

activeacademics.org

Gain practical ideas for integrating physical activity in K-5 math, reading/language arts, health/nutrition, and physical education classes.



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Activity Bursts for the Classroom

davidkatzmd.com/abcforfitness.aspx

Elementary schools can learn how to restructure physical activity into multiple, brief episodes throughout the day without taking away valuable time for classroom instruction.

Energizers

letsgo.org/toolkits

Find classroom-based physical activities for grades K-8 that integrate physical activity with academic concepts.

Winter Kids Outdoor Learning Curriculum

winterkids.org

Discover lessons aligned with national education standards that are interdisciplinary and in a variety of subjects for grades K-12. The site features an adapted component for disabled children.

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Nutrition Education



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Good nutrition can go far beyond the cafeteria—into the classroom! Nutrition education can be a separate curriculum or it can be woven into existing standards-based curricula.

Why is This Important?

By teaching the value of healthy eating, nutrition education helps kids grow healthy and stay healthy as adults.

Get Started

The CPS Wellness Policy provides the following requirements for schools:

- All students K-8 must receive nutrition education at all grade levels
- Middle schools must provide nutrition education in at least two grade levels
- High schools must provide nutrition education in two required courses

CPS encourages schools to use resources provided by the USDA and encourages schools to integrate nutrition into other school subjects, including math, science and language arts. Messages about nutrition should be consistent across classrooms and cafeterias.

Teachers can incorporate nutrition education into math, science and language lessons. Additional resources may consist of handouts or worksheets, posters throughout the room or class discussions and presentations.

Cafeterias can display posters, featuring a “food of the month” or “menu item of the week” and conduct taste tests with students to help expand their palates.

School gardens are another way students can learn about nutrition. Fruits and vegetables grown in the school garden can be served in the cafeteria, for taste testing, or even for parents! Serving food grown in school gardens requires training and district approval.

Try these Quick Tips

- Make school lunch a teachable moment.
- Praise children for making healthy choices.
- Challenge students to make their plates nutritionally balanced.
- Eat lunch with your students and encourage them to try new fruits and vegetables.
- Engage students in creating visual representations such as graphs of the number and types of healthy foods eaten during lunch.
- Decorate classrooms, hallways, cafeterias and other common spaces with healthy eating messages. Invite your students to help create these materials.
- Partner with local nonprofit organizations to provide in-school or after-school opportunities for nutrition education. For example, some organizations can help you get started with a school garden and others can help teachers integrate lessons about healthy food.
- Integrate nutrition education into academic lesson plans. Read about how food is grown, learn about healthy food in different cultures or swap out a flash card featuring French fries for one that features fresh fruit. Work with the school principal to have classroom teachers weave lessons into daily subjects about specific food-related behaviors such as portion size and mindless eating. For example, have students learn about different food groups in science class and then have them create their own healthy meal using MyPlate resources.
- Think about ways you can extend nutrition education into the community. Start a healthy cooking club, partner with local organizations that can provide dietary advice, or host an annual health fair.



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Learn from Success Stories

Calmecca School, Chicago

Calmecca School in Chicago took part in Chef in the Classroom, an initiative inspired by Michelle Obama's call for chefs to get involved in schools. Through this program, a local chef visited Calmecca School and shared a fun veggie-tasting session with students. Since the chef's visit, students have embraced the fresh fruits and veggies they tasted that day. The school has been inspired to form a nutrition education partnership with a local community program to reinforce students' newfound appreciation for healthy eating. A special event can have a long-lasting effect!

Manuel Perez Elementary, Chicago

Manuel Perez Elementary in Chicago extends opportunities for healthy living to students and their families. Through its Bilingual Parent Resource Center, Perez is able to utilize one of its greatest strengths and resources: its engaged parents and community members. Ongoing health, fitness and nutrition workshops presented by the Bilingual Parent Resource Center give parents and community members the knowledge, resources and ability to support Perez in creating a school culture that recognizes the value of student health and its connection to academic success.



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Connect to Resources

The following resources have been reviewed and approved by the Health and Wellness Materials Review Board convened by the Office of Student Health and Wellness at Chicago Public Schools. Please note: This list of resources is continually updated as more nutrition education resources and providers undergo the review and approval process set forth by CPS. To learn more, please contact the Office of Student Health and Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.

Angelic Organics Learning Center

learngrowconnect.org

Martha Boyd / 312-243-5151 / martha@learngrowconnect.org

Empowers people to create sustainable communities of soils, plants, animals and people through educational, creative and experiential programs. The Learning Center, a nonprofit organization, is the educational partner to Angelic Organics, a vibrant biodynamic community supported farm.

American Cancer Society

cancer.org

Tanya Kimber / 312-279-7251 / tanya.kimber@cancer.org

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy and service.

Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion

uic-cphp.org

Daylan Dufelmeier / 312-355-3659 / daylan@uic.edu

CPHP, founded in 2002, is a unit of the UIC Great Cities Neighborhoods Initiative representing a network of community based interventions designed to improve nutrition and reduce disparities in outcomes associated with nutritional diseases. CPHP provides high quality, age, gender and culturally tailored nutrition education in a variety of venues across the city.

Common Threads

commonthreads.org

312-329-2501 / classes@commonthreads.org

Common Threads is a national nonprofit organization that is committed to educating communities about healthy food choices through the power of cooking. For 10 years, we have been teaching school-based nutrition and health education programs to under-served communities.

Cooking Matters Illinois

ilmaternal.org/cookingmatters

Lilah Handler / 312-491-8161 / lhandler@everthriveil.org

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters program empowers families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. Through hands-on classes taught by volunteer culinary and nutrition experts, course participants learn how to select nutritious and low-cost ingredients and prepare them in ways that provide the best nourishment possible to their families. Cooking Matters play a critical role in Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign, a national effort to end childhood hunger in America by 2015.



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The Gardeneers

gardeneers.org

Adam Zmick / 847-421-7074/ adam@gardeneers.org

Gardeneers is an exciting new school gardening program that brings professionals into your school to work with students to start and maintain a school garden. Gardeneers seeks to close the achievement gap by improving student nutrition and engaging students in social emotional learning.

Grow Your Giggle™

growyourgiggle.com or viviledish.com

Lori Lynes / 815-630-4552 / lynes@viviledish.com

Grow Your Giggle is a wellness education program for teachers of elementary-aged children that can be used to complement any nutrition education program being executed in schools. The program helps children establish healthy relationships with food by identifying “sometimes,” “anytime” and “everyday” foods while teaching moderation and portion control. Children learn how to make healthy choices by sharing a daily adventure with Miss Vivi LeDish™! Teachers can utilize information in the daily program or they may have the flexibility to customize their own lesson plans.

The Kid’s Table

kids-table.com

Elena Marre / 773-235-COOK (2665) / elena@kids-table.com

The school programs are designed to promote healthy eating by teaching age-appropriate culinary skills, exposing kids ages 4-18 to a variety of wholesome ingredients and encouraging good food choices. Students get to participate in every part of the process – from chopping, grating and rolling, to enjoying the fruits of their labor. With lots of smelling, touching and tasting along the way, even the pickiest students are tempted by their creations!

The Kitchen [Community]

thekitchencommunity.org

Steve Clark / 773.339.7642 / steve@thekitchencommunity.org

Established in 2011 as the philanthropic arm of The Kitchen restaurants to connect kids to nutritious food by creating Learning Gardens in schools and community organizations across America. Jen Lewin Studios designed the Learning Garden as an easy, affordable, scalable school garden solution; it is an attractive outdoor classroom and experiential play space with edible vegetables. Learning Gardens are designed to be places kids want to play and teachers want to teach, thereby helping to decrease childhood obesity, improve academic performance, and strengthen communities.

Midwest Dairy Council®

midwestdairy.com

Sandra Brown / 773-994-0531 / sbrown@midwestdairy.com

Midwest Dairy Council, an affiliate of National Dairy Council, is dedicated to dairy nutrition research and education, and is committed to child health and wellness through our collaborative program, Fuel Up to Play 60, an in-school nutrition and physical activity program, designed to engage and empower youth to take action for their own health by implementing long-term, positive changes for themselves and their schools.



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Purple Asparagus

purpleasparagus.com

773-991-1920 / info@purpleasparagus.com

Purple Asparagus educates children, families and the community about eating that's good for the body and the planet. We bring delicious, nutritious hands-on adventures to schools, community organizations and farmers' markets throughout Chicagoland.

Seven Generations Ahead

sevengenerationsahead.org

708-660-9909 / act@sevengenerationsahead.org

Founded in 2001, Seven Generations Ahead's mission is to promote the development of ecologically sustainable and healthy communities. SGA works with local government, community and private sector leaders to help communities make the changes they need to create a healthy and sustainable future. Through community-wide sustainability planning and implementation, educational conferences and consulting, and school-based zero waste and farm to school programming and consulting, SGA is a catalyst for local community solutions to global environmental issues.

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Garden- Based Learning



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School gardens allow students to participate in hands-on activities. School gardens can strengthen academic and social skills as well as allow students to develop life skills in areas such as nutrition, leadership and decision-making. Through a school garden, students can learn about and practice healthy behaviors in an exciting, hands-on way. Chicago Public Schools supports more than 400 schools with a school garden through various initiatives.

Why is This Important?

Studies link green space with better health and wellness—and even improved grades. Additionally, a host of research shows that green space makes neighborhoods safer and communities healthier. When secondary outcomes are considered, such as more creative play, physical activity and community engagement, the list of benefits grows.

Time spent in nature has also been linked to decreased stress, mitigated attention deficit disorders, better eyesight, less asthma and improved Body Mass Index. People are happier in nature; sometimes just looking at nature can reduce stress.

Try These Quick Tips

- Decide what type of garden would work with your school environment (container, raised beds, modular garden beds)
- Establish a garden team that includes teachers, students, parents, administration, kitchen staff and partners
- Consider reaching out to local businesses for donations to offset the cost of establishing a garden or search for grants
- Visit other school gardens to get ideas

Best Practices

- Recommended touchpoints for students is two to three times per month
- Use authentic learning experiences connected to the school garden
- Connect multiple core subjects to garden learning such as science and math



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School Gardens at Chicago Public Schools

CPS School Garden Policy Recommendations

The Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW) recommends that all school gardens are well-maintained and fully integrated into the classroom and school culture. Additionally, schools should:

- Review the CPS Food Safety requirements if you plan to serve garden produce in the dining center
- Integrate your garden into every grade level and content area to create as many learning opportunities for your garden as possible
- Maintain a garden team of at least three staff members to coordinate the upkeep of the garden

- Use your garden for community engagement
- Ensure staff attends at least two school garden-related professional development opportunities annually
- Allocate resources for garden upkeep on an annual basis
- Weave the garden into the school culture

Learn more about resources CPS offers at cps.edu/OSHW/Documents/GrowWELL_Toolkit.pdf

CPS Resources

The CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness has compiled a variety of resources to help your school provide access to school gardens:

- CPS LearnWELL Toolkit. With practical tips and ideas. Available at cps.edu/oshw/Pages/LearnWell.aspx.
- CPS Eat What You Grow! This food safety program provides guidance that certifies schools to eat garden produce with their students. To learn more and register for future trainings, contact Student Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.

- The Green Teacher Network is a partner of CPS and offers access to teacher-training sessions and special events focused on the use of plant-based learning. Visit its website for more information chicagobotanic.org/education/teacher_programs/gtn

Gardens and Meeting Wellness Policy Requirements

Effective use of the school garden can help schools become LearnWELL and align with CPS wellness policies through:

- Physical Education (movement required for garden maintenance)

- Nutrition Education (incorporating into any garden activity)
- Outdoor Learning (teaching a lesson outdoors)
- School Food (becoming an Eat What You Grow school)



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Additional Ideas

Celebrations and Fundraising

Hold planting and harvest celebrations and raise money by growing and selling seedlings.

Movement Minutes

Take your students to the garden for at least one movement break a month (weather permitting) to move around and maintain the garden—all at the same time!

Nutrition Education

The garden is a nature place for nutrition education. You can regularly incorporate nutrition education into any garden activities.

Outdoor Play and Learning

Teach in the garden, enjoy recess in the garden—the garden is part of a larger outdoor space that should be explored.

Parent Engagement

Have at least one non-staff volunteer on the garden team.

Physical Education

Discuss the muscles and movements required for turning soil, getting near the ground, weeding and other garden activities.

Rewards

Cultivate the garden as a space seen as a reward to be in.

School Food

Eat from the garden! Become Eat What You Grow certified and serve garden produce in the dining center or for snack.

School Leadership

Connect your garden team with your wellness team.

Garden -Based Learning Classroom Book List

Book Title	Age Range	Author
How Did That Get In My Lunchbox?: The Story of Food	5-8 yrs	Chris Butterworth
The Omnivore's Dilemma: Young Readers Edition	11 yrs +	Michael Pollan
Tops and Bottoms	4-7 yrs	Janet Stevens
Gardening Lab for Kids: 52 Fun Experiments to Learn, Grow, Harvest, Make, Play, and Enjoy Your Garden	5 - 12 years	Renata Brown
From Seed to Plant	4 - 8 years	Gail Gibbons
The Curious Garden	4 - 7 years	Peter Brown
Carrots Grow Underground	4-8 yrs	Mari Schuh
Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth	4-8 yrs	Mary McKenna Siddals
The Summer My Father Was Ten	5-9 yrs	Pat Brisson
Wiggle and Waggle	5-8 yrs	Caroline Arnold

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Healthy Celebrations and Rewards



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Celebrations and rewards are a big part of school culture. Help students make nutritious food choices all day long! Beyond regular meals, snacks are sometimes offered during in-class celebrations or as rewards from a teacher. When schools reinforce healthy habits in the classroom, students learn consistent lessons that can last a lifetime.

Why is This Important?

Snacks offered as part of celebrations and rewards are part of a category called “competitive foods”—foods and beverages outside the regular school meal program. (This category also includes foods sold in vending machines, school stores and as part of fundraisers.) Competitive foods matter because they send a strong message about food choices and offer an opportunity to model healthy behavior. Students who receive consistent messages about good eating are better able to put those lessons into practice. Providing students with regular access to unhealthy foods at school undermines school-wide efforts to promote healthy eating. Studies show that students who do not have regular, easy access to unhealthy options at school are more likely

to develop healthy eating habits—before, during and after school. A CDC report states that it’s important for students to receive a “strong, consistent message” from adults as well as “access to healthy food and the support of persons around them.” In the fall of 2012, CPS passed a Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy, which establishes nutritional standards for food available to students outside the school lunch program, including a la carte items sold in the cafeteria, vending machines, fundraisers and school stores. This policy is necessary because these “competitive foods” include snacks high in sugar, salt, or fat, and students often will choose these foods instead of the school lunches that adhere to nutritional standards.

Get Started

Learn about your school wellness policy requirements around school celebrations and rewards. The CPS Wellness Policy:

- Prohibits taking away recess, PE or physical activity time as a consequence
- Prohibits the withholding of food as a punishment
- Requires teachers, staff and administration to use creative positive incentives instead of food to reward student behavior
- Recommends offering physical activity as a reward for good behavior
- Each school is now required to limit celebrations where food and beverages of minimal nutritional value are served or sold to two per school year. Schools are expected to ensure all foods sold as part of school fundraisers adhere to the Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy nutrition guidelines.



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Try these Quick Tips

Encourage healthy celebrations:

- Focus on fun rather than food: Plan activities and themes to keep kids excited without snacks being the main event.
- Celebrate creatively by setting up craft stations and playing music in the background.
- Have a scavenger hunt for items or information in the classroom or around the school. Have children search for items related to the party theme.
- Have a dance party, such as learning an Irish step dance for St. Patrick's Day.
- Instead of a party, organize a special community service project. Invite senior citizens to lunch, decorate pillowcases to give to a homeless shelter, or make holiday cards for hospital patients.

Try non-food rewards:

- Buy inexpensive pencils in bulk, saying "Mr./Ms. ____'s All Star!" or another personalized message. Students will love getting them as a reward, and they can be used in class! (Thanks to Shaina Vincent of Ogden International School for this tip.)

Learn from Success Stories

Consider some of the ideas that teachers and school nurses have shared! Many thanks to Phyllis Powell Pelt, RN, MS, ILCSN and the teachers who have shared their great ideas on healthier rewards that still keep kids engaged and excited.

- Try a new kind of birthday cake: Take a watermelon, cut it in half, and stick candles inside instead of using a cake. It's a fun and healthy way to celebrate!
- Keep it consistent: Healthy changes will be most successful when everyone in the school is ready to do their part in creating a culture of wellness. Share the message in a positive way and celebrate the seemingly small changes that staff are making. For example, office staff can switch out candy jars for stickers or other items; and parents and community members can serve healthy snacks at their meetings in the school.

- Make leadership a reward. One teacher made each student a shirt that said "School Leader" with each student's name on the back. Students who had good behavior all week got to wear their shirts on Friday and read to preschoolers in the afternoon. A great way to reward your students while giving them a chance to practice their reading skills!
- Make phone calls home for good behavior. You can make calls home to tell parents about their kids' great behavior; or consider creating opportunities for children to make calls home telling their parents about their good work. (Thanks to KIPP Ascend Charter School for sharing this tip, which they put in practice every Friday to reward students.)
- Set up a photo recognition board and reward children by displaying their photo on the board.
- Lunch with the teacher! Reward children by inviting them to eat lunch with you. This is a great chance to also set a good example and communicate messages about good nutrition.

- Make it fun: How about a fresh fruit tasting, or a dance party for students? As you make healthy changes, be sure to emphasize fun.



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Learn from Success Stories

Skinner North Elementary School, Chicago

Skinner North is making changes to take on the challenge! Where did this school find the motivation to meet high standards for food, fitness and nutrition education?

“We want our kids to be healthy,” said principal Ethan Netterstrom. He explained that as educators, he and his staff realize that children’s needs are not only academic but also emotional, social and physical. “If kids only learn to be academically fit, it is not enough. They have to be thoughtful members of society and have active lifestyles.”

Since the school opened in 2009, school staff has felt strongly about rewarding kids with things other than sweets or pizza. Instead, teachers will celebrate children’s birthdays at morning meeting

circles and in the classrooms by requesting children to share compliments about the birthday child. Children are able to bring school supplies for goodies for their classmates.

For parent and Wellness Committee Chairperson Hemlata Kumar, it was about making sure that what kids learn at home is reinforced at school and vice versa.

“I want the children to learn about good nutrition at our school so they can understand how to make good choices and learn better. This is about creating long lasting habits that will ensure they will live healthy lives at school as well as at home,” she said.

Hitch Elementary School, Chicago

Principal Debby Reese at Hitch Elementary School explains that she makes it a priority to offer opportunities for all students to develop their mind, body and spirit. Principal Reese explains: “Aristotle knew that the greatest thinkers and learners were those who understood that mind, body, spirit worked together.”

As part of this commitment, Hitch School promotes healthy lifestyles by implementing a non-food birthday celebration policy. Instead of having parents bring in cupcakes as a birthday treat for the class, the school asks parents to instead consider visiting their child’s classroom to read a story of their choice or donate a book in honor of the child’s birthday. Parents may also share non-food treats such as stickers or pencils. By focusing on the child rather than the food, the school is fostering healthy habits.

Principal Reese thought she would have an initial uproar from parents but has instead seen a positive response. “I was surprised by the overwhelming support,” she said. Teachers also supported the change, especially because stopping class 25-30 times a year to have a birthday party has a negative impact on student learning time. Teachers explained that having a school-wide no-food policy made it much easier for them to enforce the rule and not be seen as “the mean teacher.”

Teachers have their own lists of recommended ideas for rewards and celebrations. Principal Reese said, “We give parents a list of recommended items that students can have. Stickers, erasers, pencils—we have a whole list of things.” This list helps minimize confusion and maintain consistent messaging about healthy habits.



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Example Letter: Healthy Celebrations + Rewards

[Insert date here]

Dear **[insert school name]** parents, guardians, and staff,

As you might know, our school is part of a nationwide movement to create healthy school environments for our children. We are committed to making continual improvements to **[insert school name]'s** school culture and curriculum in areas of food and nutrition education, physical activity, and physical education to support each child's health and achievement. To this end, we are implementing the following guidelines regarding food in classroom celebrations and rewards. At **[insert school name]**, we recognize that a child's health and wellbeing is the result of a team effort between parents, teachers, and the community, and we greatly appreciate your support with these changes.

Classroom Celebrations and Rewards Guidelines

[Insert school name] asks that all classroom celebrations for birthdays, holidays, and student achievement during the regular or extended school day involve activities that make a positive contribution to children's diets and health with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snack and water as the primary beverage. We also strongly encourage celebrations with non-food focused activities.

If a snack is to be served it must:

- Feature at least one of the following: fresh fruits and vegetables, a low-fat protein item, low-fat dairy item, or a 100 percent whole-grain food
- Have minimal or no added salt and sugar
- If a beverage is to be served it can either be:
 - Water
 - Up to 8 ounces of 100% fruit or vegetable juice

Please see the following page for ideas on healthy classroom celebrations and suggestions for snacks that meet these guidelines. Do not hesitate to contact **[insert contact name]** at **[email or phone number]** should you have any questions or concerns regarding the new school guidelines. Again, we appreciate your support in making **[insert school name]** a healthy, successful school.

Sincerely,

[insert school principal or classroom teacher name]



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Bright Ideas

Healthy Celebrations

- At the beginning of the year, have students help create a “birthday menu” of healthy celebration ideas.
- Refreshments should complement the fun, not become the main event, and should be chosen for fun, good, taste and health.
- Celebrate creatively by setting up craft stations and playing music in background. Ask parents to provide the supplies such as clay, craft paper, pencils, markers, paints and stickers.
- For a holiday theme celebration, host a scavenger hunt for items or information related to the theme in the classroom or around the school.
- Let kids bring music and balloons for a class party after a big test or before winter vacation.
- Play Olympics: Have teams pick a country to represent and then compete with academic or physical games.
- For birthdays, children can select a favorite activity or invite a special guest to read a book.

Healthy Rewards: Alternatives to Food

Recognition

- Recognizing a child’s achievement on the school-wide morning announcements or the school’s website
- A photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school
- A phone call, email or letter sent home to parents or guardians commending the child’s accomplishment

Privileges

- Lunch with the teacher or principal
- “No homework” pass
- Reading to a younger class

Tangible Rewards

- School Supplies: pencils, pens or bookmarks
- Toys/Trinkets: puzzles, playing cards or flashlights
- Sports Equipment and Athletic Gear: frisbees, water bottles or jump ropes



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Healthy Rewards: Food and Beverage Ideas

Ideas that Meet Criteria for Classroom Celebrations and Rewards

Fruit

Can be served whole, cut into pieces or wedges. The recommended daily intake of fruit for children ages 4-13 is 1-1.5 cups. While fresh fruit is preferred when available, frozen, canned, or dried fruit without added sugars can be served.

- Fruit salads with grapes, apples, berries and melon
- Dried fruit trail mixes
- Applesauce
- Fruit-based popsicles
- Party Idea: Make your own fresh fruit kabob or smoothies with fruit, milk/soy milk and ice.

Vegetables

Cut into sticks or bite-sized pieces. The recommended daily intake for vegetables for children ages 4-13 is 1.5-2.5 cups.

- Fresh vegetables with dip (carrots, sugar snap peas, bell pepper with yogurt based dips, guacamole and hummus)
- Veggie Pockets (whole-wheat pita pocket or tortilla, vegetables, and hummus)
- Party idea: Make-your-own salad bar

Whole Grains

Whole grains can be a great snack with nut butter spreads and other healthy dips. The recommended daily intake of grains for children ages 4-13 is 2.5-3 oz.

- Whole grain pretzels and crackers with toppings like low-fat cheese
- Rice cakes made from brown rice
- Popcorn with little or no added salt or butter
- Baked whole grain tortilla chips with salsa or guacamole

Protein

Nuts, seeds, peas and beans are healthy sources of protein and make easy classroom snacks. The recommended daily intake of protein foods for children ages 4-13 is 4-5 oz.

- Bean dips with vegetables or whole-grain crackers
- Trail mix with assorted nuts and seeds
- Party idea: Make-your-own trail mix

Low-Fat Dairy

These products can be switched out for calcium fortified alternatives like soy milk if children are lactose-intolerant. The recommended daily intake of dairy for children ages 4-13 is 2.5-3 cups, depending on age, sex and physical activity level.

- Low-fat cheese stick
- Yogurt: individual servings of low-fat yogurt with moderate or no added sugars (No more than 30 grams of sugar per 8 oz. serving)
- Party idea: Build-your-own parfaits with fruit, yogurt and granola

Healthy Alternatives to Junk Food and Dessert

These items can be swapped in for popular junk food and dessert items such as cakes and cookies.

- Cakes without icing or topped with fruit and reduced fat whipped topping
- Oatmeal raisin cookies
- Fig bars
- Reduced-fat popcorn (light, air-popped popcorn with low salt and little oil)
- Whole grain crackers and cheese cubes

For additional suggestions of healthy school snacks, see the Center for Science in the Public Interest: cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/healthy_school_snacks.html

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Healthy Fundraising



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Schools have many options for successfully raising money while keeping school wellness a priority—without relying on sales of unhealthy foods. Learn more about easy ways to hold healthy fundraisers in your school that send consistent, positive messages that wellness really matters.

Why is This Important?

Research shows that fundraisers can make an impression on students and, if they are not in line with wellness goals, can reverse some of the progress being made by school-wide wellness efforts. When schools provide healthy choices for fundraising, they send positive, consistent messages about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.

Get Started

In the fall of 2012, CPS passed a Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy, which established nutritional standards for food available to students outside the school lunch program, including a la carte items sold in the cafeteria, vending machines, fundraisers and school stores. This policy is necessary because these “competitive foods” include snacks high in sugar, salt or fat, and students often will choose these foods instead of the healthy school lunches that adhere to nutritional standards. The CPS Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy established guidance for CPS schools regarding school fundraisers:

- All CPS non-food fundraisers require approval from the network Chief and all food fundraisers require approval from Nutrition Support Services.
- Schools that implement the sale of non-approved food or beverages will have to forfeit the revenue to the district.

1. Learn about the requirements

Foods sold as fundraisers are also called “competitive foods” because they are outside the regular school meal program. To learn about the requirements for healthy competitive foods that are in line with the CPS Wellness Policy, visit learnwellcps.org. With fundraising, a good rule of thumb is to focus on fun, rather than on food.

2. Create a team

Some people to contact may include the school principal, school dining manager, school nurse, parents and

fellow teachers. Make sure to state your case for healthy fundraising. Questions to ask the group include: What does current fundraising look like, and how could it be healthier? What programs do we need to fundraise for and how much do we need to raise? How many fundraisers should we host? How do we determine the success of a fundraiser? (For example, is it measured by dollars raised, student involvement, community involvement?) Brainstorm a list of potential team members, their names, and the ways they can help on the next pages.



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Healthy Fundraising Team

Category	Who?	How can they help?
Principal	_____	_____
School Dining Manager	_____	_____
School Nurse	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____
Athletic Coaches	_____	_____
Student	_____	_____
Representatives	_____	_____
Who Else?	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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4. Analyze previous school fundraising

Interview those who've been involved in the school's fundraising efforts in the past. Questions might be:

- How far in advance do you plan your fundraisers?
- How do you decide what fundraisers you will conduct?
- Do you only continue fundraisers historically connected to the school?
- Are they based on a need for money for particular programs?
- Are they based on ideas from the PTA or teachers?
- Do you choose fundraisers that will reinforce school policies?
- For each of the sources of income in the chart from Step 3, note briefly what has worked well to bring in money that you want to do again. What hasn't worked? How can you improve or modify these strategies to make them work?

5. Choose a fundraiser

See the following pages for ideas to make your fundraiser successful. A good rule of thumb is to focus on fun instead of on food: Plan activities and themes to keep kids excited without food being at the center. Ideas include walk-a-thons, car washes, academic contests and much more.

6. Spread the word

Reach out to parents, teachers, school staff and, of course, students! Work with your team to create a plan about how you will make sure the school community knows about your health-promoting fundraiser. Set realistic goals—but make sure they are high enough to inspire success.

7. Some things to keep in mind:

- All fundraising should be voluntary, safe, and should not distract students from learning.
- Fundraisers should be accountable and transparent and should have a specific goal and a set plan of how the funds will be distributed. Make sure to set clear expectations and outcomes.
- A healthy fundraiser is a great way to spread school pride. Make sure participants know they're improving wellness as well as raising money.

Remember!

If using a fundraising company, make sure to select a CPS vendor-approved company. Questions? Contact the Office of Student Health Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.



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Learn from Success Stories

Ana Roqué de Duprey Elementary, Chicago

Flower-Grams. Selling student-made “Santa-grams” for Christmas and “Flower-grams” for Mother’s Day are two of the most successful fundraisers. The school also hosts a no-candy **Halloween Fall Festival** where the eighth graders create different stations with activities and games, such as face painting, hula hooping, bean-bag toss and a scarecrow photo station. Students buy tickets for the different activities or a wristband which will give them unlimited access to all the activities.

Madero Middle School, Chicago

Students can wear casual clothes instead of their uniforms for the day with a donation of \$1. Other non-food fundraisers at this school include rummage sales.

Manuel Perez Elementary, Chicago

At Perez fun festivals, the school gym becomes a carnival with games, activities and prizes. Parents create baskets for a raffle.

Chicago International Charter School Prairie Campus

The school invites students’ families to participate in fun reading and math skills-based games that teachers create and families can take home during the school’s “family game night.” Families are asked to pay \$3 to participate. The school also hosts book fairs either through a vendor or by asking families to donate old books and inviting students to purchase “new” books for 25 cents each.

Westwood Elementary, Illinois

At Westwood’s Reading Challenge Academic Fundraiser, students find five people to pledge \$10 for the student to read 15 minutes per day. For every \$2,000 raised, the principal pledged to spend an hour on the roof reading to students!

Walsh Elementary, Chicago

Walsh hosts candle sales. Students sell candles for \$10, and \$5 of the profit goes to the school.



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Bright Ideas

[Fill in the blank!]-a-thon

From Walk-a-thon to Sled-a-thon or even Math-a-thons, students could get a sponsorship for each lap, sled trip down the hill or math problem solved. For example, students could raise \$1 for every lap walked (up to eight laps).

Fun with Digital Photography

Rent a digital photo booth for your next school event or set up a station with a digital camera and different homemade props. Try to find a community photographer volunteer. Charge \$2 per session to offset cost (depending on the size of the event) and post photos online.

Cookbook Fundraisers

Create a cookbook of healthy recipes. The school spends about \$3 to \$5 per book for a basic cookbook. Groups can charge whatever they choose. Typically, books are sold for \$10 each.

Student Art

Everyday items (T-shirts, mouse pads, cups and tote bags) can be turned into family keepsakes while helping to raise money for your school. Print students' artwork on these items and sell them at your next fundraiser or turn classroom art projects into holiday gifts parents can purchase. Projects can be linked to art or curriculum-based activities.

Clean-up Day

Ask for donations for students' work. Create teams of students and adults who offer services (all conducted in public places and/or outside) such as spring yard work, washing windows and cleaning cars. The students and adults donate their time, but the home or business owners pay for the services. Establish a fair rate and make arrangements in advance.

Back-to-School Ideas

Order back-to-school supplies in bulk for discounts. Have parents purchase packages of supplies directly from school—this is convenient for parents, ensures students have correct supplies and raises money for the school.

Do-it-Yourself Fruit Baskets

Ask parents or parent groups to volunteer. Buy fruit and decorative supplies in bulk at large discount stores. Sell baskets or raffle them at the next school event.

Go Green Sales

From selling reusable bags to green cleaning items to energy saving lightbulbs, schools can fundraise and save the earth with items that highlight school spirit or an environmental message.



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Suggested Monthly Fundraising Activities

Fundraising ideas for the entire school year! Convene fundraising committees (student or parent) or your School Wellness Council at least monthly to ensure that fundraisers are well-organized, advertised and successful.

September

- Back-to-school sale (school logo merchandise, school supplies)
- Start ongoing fundraisers via the school store or donation drives (e.g. annual appeal)

October

- Columbus Day
- Halloween
- Walk-a-thon
- Pumpkin sale

November

- Election Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Recycling drive for America Recycles Day (Nov. 15)
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Autumn fruit, vegetable, or plant sale

December

- Holiday items (Festively packaged fruit or vegetables, wrapping paper, plants, candles, etc.)
- Holiday event (concert, dinner, theater, dance)

January

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Talent show, battle of the bands, board game night, and other indoor events

February

- Valentine's Day flower sale or dance

March

- NCAA Basketball Tournament

April

- Earth Day
- Seed, plant, or flower sale
- Walk-a-thon
- "Green" fundraiser (e.g., recycling drive, reusable bags) for Earth Day (Apr. 22)

May

- Mother's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fresh fruit or vegetable sale
- School logo merchandise (e.g., "My teenager goes to _____ school")

June

- Graduation (flower sales, etc.)
- Father's Day



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Example Letter: Healthy Fundraising

[Insert date here]

Dear **[insert school name]** parents, guardians, and staff,

As a member of our school community, many of you are already aware that we have regular, annual fundraisers that provide vital funds for school programs. These fundraisers help to support new school initiatives, after-school activities, field trips, and athletic programs that enhance students' learning and achievement. In the past some fundraisers have relied on the sale of unhealthy foods like candy and baked goods, and we now recognize that this practice sends the wrong message to children and goes against our commitment to creating a healthy school environment at **[insert school name]**. To continue to build a school culture that models healthy behaviors, we are implementing the following guidelines regarding school fundraising. Importantly, healthy-food and non-food fundraisers can still generate the income necessary for school programming while promoting health and wellness. At **[insert school name]**, we recognize that a child's health and wellbeing is the result of a team effort between parents, teachers, and the community, and we greatly appreciate your support with these changes.

Healthy School Fundraising Guidelines

All school-sponsored fundraisers at **[insert school name]** that occur during or outside the regular school day will involve the sale of food items that either make a positive contribution to children's health and are aligned with healthy nutrition standards, or use non-food fundraising methods. Examples of non-food fundraisers include walk-a-thons, product sales (wrapping paper, greeting cards, magazine subscriptions), and book fairs. Fundraisers to be avoided include activities like bake sales, label redemption programs, and candy and cookie sales. **[Insert school name]** will support this policy with the necessary resources and assistance to adapt current fundraising practices.

Please see attached pages on ideas for additional healthy fundraising ideas. These are simply some suggestions, and we welcome your input and creativity. Do not hesitate to contact **[insert contact name]** at **[email or phone number]** should you have any questions or concerns regarding the new school guidelines. Again, we appreciate your support in making **[insert school name]** a healthy, successful school.

Sincerely,

[Insert school principal or classroom teacher name]



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Example Letter: Healthy Fundraising

Ideas for Healthy Fundraising at [Insert School Name]

Non-Food Fundraising

- Create a school cookbook. Ask families and staff to submit their favorite healthy recipe to compile in a cookbook and involve students with illustration and writing. Sell the finished product to parents and community members. Ask local businesses to join in the effort and feature the cookbook in their store for a period of time. If a professional look is preferred, personalized cookbooks can be printed through companies like Cookbook Publishers, Inc. (cookbookpublishers.com) and G & R Publishing (gandrpublishing.com).
- Sell flower-grams. Sell flowers and cards on holidays such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day for students and staff to give to friends or family. This is a great way to acknowledge a holiday without candy or treat sales.
- Hold a [fill in the blank!]-a-thon. From Bowl-a-thons and Math-a-thons many activities can be turned into school fundraisers. Students can get sponsorship for each lap walked, bowling frame completed, or math problem solved.
- Host a book fair. Holding a book fair at school can accomplish the two important goals of fundraising and literacy promotion at the same time. Hosting schools receive a percentage of the profit from all book sales. See www.scholastic.com/bookfairs for more information.

Healthy Food Fundraising

- Sell do-it-yourself fruit baskets. Buy assorted fruit, dried fruit, nuts, and decorative supplies in bulk at large discount stores. Ask student groups and parent volunteers to assemble baskets. Sell the fruit baskets around holidays or raffle them off at school events.
- Switch out the bake sale for a smoothie sale. Instead of the traditional school bake sale, try selling smoothies during or after the school day. This does not require many materials: a few donated blenders, cups, and smoothie ingredients. Include a variety of fresh or frozen fruits and low-fat and low-sugar yogurts for children to design their own creations.
- Create a school "farm stand." During the fall months, highlight seasonal produce like pumpkins, gourds, and squash. Students can bring these home for cooking or decorating.
- Sell culinary herbs and spice sets. Herbs and spice sets make great gifts for the holidays and year round while promoting cooking and healthy family meals.

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Building Your Team



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Although individuals within schools can make big strides toward school wellness, real progress takes a great team. Use these tips to create a strong support system for a healthy school environment.

First, schools should nominate an existing staff member as the Wellness Champion. The Wellness Champion is the school's expert on health and wellness and might help facilitate the implementation of schoolwide policies and programs that promote a healthy school. This person should be nominated by the school principal and will be an enthusiastic and dedicated driver of positive change. A Wellness Champion acts as the point of contact between each school and the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness (OSHW).

Next, with a Wellness Champion leading the way, here's how other team members can play vital roles:

Principal

Model a healthy lifestyle. Ensure that messages are consistent across all channels of school communication, from the cafeteria to the classroom. Create local school policies that promote health. Reward positive recognition for healthy fundraising and classroom celebrations.

School Nurse

Spread the word about health every day! Remind students about the importance of healthy eating through posters and signage. Communicate with parents and students—via a health section in the school newsletter, for example—about the importance of overall health.

PE Teacher

Introduce the fun and satisfaction of physical activity to students, helping increase their chances of a healthy future and understanding of the connection between physical activity and success in the classroom. Champion and provide training for in-class activities that get students moving.

Parents

Encourage wellness at home and at school, and support teachers in making celebrations and fundraisers a healthy part of the school experience. Send students to school with healthy snacks that prepare them for learning.

Classroom Teachers

Integrate wellness into everyday classroom lessons and manage the classroom through the use of healthy rewards. Teach healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

Dining Manager

Help students understand the facts behind their nutritious school lunch. Encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables by serving those first or helping organize activities around this goal. Collect feedback on school meals to understand student preferences. Communicate with parents about positive changes to the school meals program and instill school pride around wellness.

