

## Wellness Committee Weekly Tips

### Ways Schools Can Promote Health and Wellness Among Students

Schools play an integral role in improving the health and wellness of youth populations. Healthy behaviors are learned in school and research has proven that healthy students are better learners. Are you a teacher, school administrator, or director of a youth program who wants to advance the academic performance of your students? If so, it is time to serve as a health and wellness ambassador. Here are five simple and fun ways to promote health and wellness in your classroom.

#### Get Moving



Keep students active throughout the day. Studies show that physical activity improves children's achievement and cognitive ability. Incorporate movement games into daily lesson plans. For example, have a spelling bee where students do a jumping jack after each letter or play catch during a review game. Tell students to stand in a circle and give one student a small ball. Ask a review question to the student holding the ball. The student must answer correctly before tossing the ball to another student.

Other ideas include taking walk or stretch breaks every couple of hours. Take students outside or to the drinking fountain. Create a weekly calendar or afternoon exercises to do in the classroom. Even just five-minute bursts of physical activity can get students' blood flowing and help them refocus!

#### Integrate nutrition education into lesson plans



Play games that explore healthy eating. Create flashcards or posters with healthy food items versus unhealthy foods. For example, french fries or baked potato; soda or water; fried chicken or grilled chicken. Provide coloring sheets or word searches related to nutrition. For a long-term project have students create a healthy cookbook. A cookbook can be adapted to many different subjects: practice addition and subtraction, fractions, chemistry, or spelling and grammar. Encourage students to ask family members for recipe ideas or help them research fun recipes to try.

#### Practice guided breathing exercises



Benefits of guided breathing (or meditation) for kids include increased focus, improved coping mechanisms, increased self-esteem, and better overall mental health. Try a short-guided breathing exercise before a test or after recess. Meditation helps students feel more empowered and calmer. Check out this resource for meditation exercises for children.