



iowa dietetic association

“YOUR LINK TO NUTRITION & HEALTH”

Low Cost or No Cost Ideas for Creating a Healthy School Environment

Nutrition

- Reduce the price of healthy foods and drinks or raise the price of less-healthy options.
- Ask math students to calculate the amount of sugar and calories in soft drinks and candy bars; then ask art students to create posters featuring those calculations and place in high traffic areas.
- Teachers and staff role-model healthy snacks and beverages.
- Raise funds with non-food events:
 - spelling bees, math-a-thons, penny votes
 - recycle printer cartridges
 - sell stepcounters, candles, gift certificates, flowers or bulbs, pet treats, Christmas ornaments or Valentine flowers, brick memorials, school cookbook or t-shirts with school logo.
- Celebrate special events with healthy snacks from the Five Food Groups
- Celebrate special events without food, such as birthday book or seasonal windsocks or plants.
- Instead of rewarding with food use these substitute rewards:
 - *elementary students*: eat lunch with teacher or principal, paperback book, volunteer reads special book to whole class, enjoy a private lunch in the classroom with a friend
 - *middle school students*: 5-minute chat break at end of class, extra credit, eat lunch outside or have class outside
 - *high school students*: extra credit, donated coupons to video or music stores, a few minutes of “free choice” time at end of class.
- Install vending machines with milk, cheese, yogurt, 100% juice and water in high-traffic areas.
- Make healthy options available at concession stands such as milk, cheese, yogurt, 100% juice, water, pretzels, fruit & vegetables.
- Develop a policy on “foods of minimal nutritional value” for your campus or district.
- In school stores or a la carte lines, offer milk in resealable plastic bottles, yogurt, cheese, bagels, cut-up fruit and vegetables in baggies.

Physical activity

- Have children do stretches while in lunch or bathroom lines.
- Ask community group or business to buy pedometers for students to count to 10,000 steps a day
- Teacher, staff or parent leads walks at lunchtime and log miles toward Walk Across Iowa
- Raise funds by selling services such as gift wrapping, raking leaves, washing dogs, singing telegrams, or with competitions such as fun runs or jump-rope-a-thons.
- Instead of food as rewards, reward with an extra recess or a walk with the principal.
- Students do spelling or math drills during walks with teacher
- Schedule recess BEFORE lunch.
- Open school gym after school hours for Family Fun Fitness Days
- Partner with another community group for supervision of gym and sports fields at selected times.
- Enlist a neighborhood group for a fix-up day to maintain sports equipment and grounds.

To work with an Iowa dietitian to support child nutrition and physical activity in Iowa contact:

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Adapted from a handout developed for Iowa's Partners for Healthy Kids

For more information visit....

www.ActionforHealthyKids.org