

Encourage Your Child's School to Apply



Talk to your child's PE teacher. PE teachers are often the leaders in a school's coordinated health approach. Ask what a typical PE class looks like, which lessons are taught, and what activities the kids perform. Ask where students receive health education and nutrition lessons, which are often taught in PE class as well as the classroom. Pay a visit to your PE teacher during parent conference night or set up an appointment to speak with them and they can help provide valuable insight into the types of things that your child's school does well and where the school programs may be a bit weaker.

1. **Talk to your school's principal.** Ask what kinds of health and nutrition policies the school has in place. Many schools offer students recess in addition to PE, which gives students more opportunities to be physically active during the school day. Some schools even use "brain breaks", giving students opportunities for short bursts of activity in the classroom. These "brain breaks" also help increase blood flow to the brain, which can contribute to learning. Also, ask what the school's policies are on competitive foods and outside food. The availability of snack foods in school may cause students to forgo healthy school meals in favor of these snacks.
2. **Advocate for your school's health and nutrition policies.** Most schools have coordinated school health teams that include school staff members, such as PE teachers, nurses, classroom teachers, and administrators. Schools generally welcome parent involvement on their coordinated school health teams, an excellent way to give parents a voice in the creation of school health policies. It is much easier for a school to make positive changes when administrators know that there will be parental support of these decisions.
3. **Encourage your school to apply for recognition and support programs.** There are a number of programs out there designed to help schools improve student health. If your school has strong health programming or is looking for support in creating healthy school programming and policies, encourage them to apply for recognition from programs like the Healthy Zone School Recognition Program. Funding to public schools is limited, but there are many programs out there that provide funding and support to schools who are working on improving student health.
4. **Encourage your child to play and be active outside of school.** It is recommended that children get at least 60 minutes of activity each day. Most schools work hard to give students opportunities for activity, but it is important that kids have these opportunities outside of school as well. Physically fit children do better in school, miss less classes, and have less behavioral problems, but most importantly, healthy children are more likely to be healthy adults and to live longer, fuller lives.
5. **Visit the [Healthy Zone site](https://HealthyZoneSchool.org) for specific tips on how to promote activity at home and in school.**