



healthy schools

= successful students

TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN TO MAKE HEALTHY

choices at school and after class can be just as important as helping them get good grades.

That's why parents need to work with schools to provide healthier food options and activities.

1 *Teach health at home.*

Meet Over Lunch: Read the school menu with your child and look for the healthiest choices.

Serve Smarter Snacks: Try baked chips or pretzels with salsa, reduced-fat or low-fat ice cream, and fruit smoothies.

Still scratching your head? Use the Alliance Product Navigator (www.healthiergeneration.org/productnavigator) to find even more healthy snacks for school or home.

Use a Calculator: The Alliance Product Calculator (HealthierGeneration.org/productcalculator) can help you know which snack foods fit best into a healthy kid's lunchbox.

Coach Your Kids: Lead by example—make physical activity part of your routine, and help them see the benefits.

Huddle Up: Look for sports programs in your community—and talk to other parents about physical activities in your neighborhood.

2 *Become a cheerleader for physical activity.*

Coaching Tips: Ask a coach or PE teacher what physical activities are offered during and afterschool.

Go to the Principal's Office: Talk to the principal—or write to the district superintendent if you are concerned about the lack of physical education at your child's school.

Pedal Power: Only 16% of kids today walk or

bike to school. Why not encourage your kids to do what you and your parents did? Be sure to have them wear a helmet for while biking.

Do Your Homework: Learn about free and low-cost opportunities for physical activity before or after school.

Sign Up: Volunteer to help with afterschool sports teams.

3 *Bring in a "substitute" at school parties and fundraisers.*

Fun, not Food: Avoid making refreshments the "main event" at parties. And don't use food as a reward or prize.

Play On: Instead of an indoor party, why not give children extra recess time? At birthday parties, let the birthday boy or girl pick an active game for everyone.

Giving is Fun: Turn a regular party into a special community service project. Invite senior citizens in for lunch, or make blankets

for rescue dogs. Parents can plan the events and bring materials.

Top Sellers: Instead of food, try selling balloons, bumper stickers, candles or gift certificates as fundraisers.

Raise Your Activity Level: Work with your child's school to organize events like walk-a-thons, dance-a-thons or bike-a-thons. Ask sponsors to pledge money by the mile or by the hour.

4 *Raise your hand and volunteer.*

Roll Call: Let your child's principal know you're here—and you're ready to help.

Bring Back Recess: A survey found that 90% of teachers and parents want daily recess in schools. Take action with support and leadership from the National PTA. To help make recess and physical activity part of your child's school day, go to www.peacefulplaygrounds.com

Get Growing: Get a group of parents together, pick a place, and design the perfect garden for students. Then set a budget, raise a few dollars and start digging! For more information, go to www.fns.usda.gov

Use Your Feet: Fewer and fewer kids are walking or biking to school. That's why groups like Safe Routes to School are working with cities to clear safer paths for students. Find out more at www.saferoutesinfo.org

Join the Network: Join the Healthy Schools Program's Network at HealthierGeneration.org/schools to get free access to ideas and tools that will help you work toward a healthier school with your child's teachers and principal.

5 *Quiz the school, and work together to find answers.*

Join the Council: Many states require local School Wellness Councils or Health Advisory Councils. To find out if your child's school or district has a school wellness council or health council, contact the principal or the district food service director.

Ask Questions: What is your school district's wellness policy? What are the goals for physical education and healthy food options? When does the policy start? How can parents make sure that things are being done?

Study: Find out whether your kids can get healthy foods in the cafeteria or vending machines. Make sure they're getting

enough time for recess and physical education classes. And see if the school is selling healthy foods at fundraisers.

Join the PTA: Your school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a great place to find other parents who care. Tell them about the school's Wellness Policy—so that they can help make sure it's working, too.

Extra Credit: If you're serious about making real changes in your child's educational system at the district or the state level, check out the Action For Healthy Kids website and download their "Parents are the Power" brochure: www.actionforhealthykids.org