

Get Your Students to Move It: Schools Can Help Lower the Risk for Type 2 Diabetes in Youth

by [the National Diabetes Education Program](#)



Type 2 diabetes – once thought to only affect adults – is being diagnosed more frequently among American Indian and Alaska Native youth, according to clinically based reports and regional studies. Increasingly, school personnel and parents are concerned with helping overweight youth lower their risk for type 2 diabetes. A healthy weight can be achieved if youth make healthy food choices and increase their physical activity during the school day.

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), a federally-funded program, has developed the [*Move It! And Reduce Your Risk for Diabetes School Kit*](#) to assist schools in developing programs to help students lower their risk for the disease. This free resource was originally developed for American Indian and Alaska Native students, but it can be adapted for students of all races and ethnicities. The *Move It!* kit includes a CD-ROM of materials such as customizable posters of youth engaging in fun physical activities, a fact sheet that can be used as a teaching aid, and sample newsletter text for school and community publications.

Here are some tips to help you adapt the *Move It!* kit for your school:

- Add information on lowering the risk for type 2 diabetes in youth to the existing health curriculum.
- Distribute copies of *Move It!* kit materials in health and gym classes.
- Hang the *Move It!* posters in classrooms, the cafeteria, or gym.
- Encourage a routine walking program during lunch periods or breaks.
- Add your school's logo and photos of students to the *Move It!* posters.
- Sponsor or coordinate a dance contest in the gym or cafeteria.
- Coordinate marathons, walk-a-thons, or athletic tournaments.

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Positive feedback has been provided from schools that have adapted the *Move It!* kit:

- “Every person that...took the time to listen to our message that exercise can help prevent diabetes was receiving a life-changing opportunity from just an ordinary kid who wanted to make a difference,” said John Riley, Davenport High School student, Davenport, Okla.
- “There’s just no way to measure the motivation that has developed since we began to move it,” said Regina Riley, *Move It!* coordinator, Davenport Schools, Davenport, Okla.
- “Everyone we know has diabetes! Now [American Indian and Alaska Native kids] know that moving feels good and is fun,” said Bonnie Gurno, *Move It!* coordinator and Pine Point Public Schools Superintendent, Ponsford, Minn.

For more information about lowering the risk of type 2 diabetes in youth, check out NDEP's [*Tips for Teens: Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes tip sheet*](#). To download or order a free copy of the [*Move It! And Reduce Your Risk of Diabetes School Kit*](#), visit the National Diabetes Education Program's website at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (6337).

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