

Promoting Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People

How You Can Help

Everyone can make a difference in young people's lives by helping them include physical activity in their daily routines. If you are a parent, guardian, student, teacher, athletic coach, school administrator or board member, community sports and recreation program coordinator, or anyone else who cares about the health of young people, here are some steps you can take.

Everyone Can

- ✓ Advocate for convenient, safe, and adequate places for young people to play and take part in physical activity programs.
- ✓ Encourage school administrators and board members to support daily physical education and other school programs that promote lifelong physical activity, not just competitive sports.
- ✓ Set a good example by being physically active, making healthy eating choices, and not smoking.
- ✓ Tell young people about sports and recreation programs in their community.
- ✓ Discourage the use of physical activity as a punishment.

Parents or Guardians Can

- ✓ Encourage your children to be physically active.
- ✓ Learn what your children want from physical activity programs and help them choose appropriate activities.
- ✓ Volunteer to help your children's sports teams and recreation programs.
- ✓ Play and be physically active with your children.
- ✓ Teach your children safety rules and make sure that they have the clothing and equipment needed to participate safely in physical activity.

Students Can

- ✓ Set goals for increasing your physical activity and monitor your progress.
- ✓ Encourage friends and family members to be physically active.
- ✓ Use protective clothing and proper equipment to prevent injuries and illnesses.
- ✓ Encourage the student council to advocate for physical education classes and after-school programs that are attractive to all students.
- ✓ Take elective courses in health and physical education.

Teachers and Coaches Can

- ✓ Use curricula that follow CDC's *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People* and the national standards for physical education and health education.
- ✓ Keep students moving during physical education classes.
- ✓ Ensure that young people know safety rules and use appropriate protective clothing and equipment.
- ✓ Emphasize activity and enjoyment over competition.
- ✓ Help students become competent in many motor and behavioral skills.
- ✓ Involve families and community organizations in physical activity programs.
- ✓ Refrain from using physical activity, such as doing push-ups or running laps, as punishment.

School Administrators and Board Members Can

- ✓ Require health education and daily physical education for students in grades K–12.
- ✓ Ensure that physical education and extracurricular programs offer lifelong activities, such as walking and dancing.
- ✓ Provide time during the day, such as recess, for unstructured physical activity, such as walking or jumping rope.
- ✓ Hire physical activity specialists and qualified coaches.
- ✓ Ensure that school facilities are clean, safe, and open to students during nonschool hours and vacations.
- ✓ Provide health promotion programs for faculty and staff.
- ✓ Provide teachers with in-service training in physical activity promotion.

Community Sports and Recreation Program Coordinators Can

- ✓ Provide a mix of competitive team sports and noncompetitive, lifelong fitness and recreation activities.
- ✓ Increase the availability of parks, public swimming pools, hiking and biking trails, and other places for physical activity.
- ✓ Ensure that physical facilities meet or exceed safety standards.
- ✓ Ensure that coaches have appropriate coaching competencies.
- ✓ Work with schools, businesses, and community groups to ensure that low-income young people have transportation and appropriate equipment for physical activity programs.

For more information about what schools can do to promote physical activity among students, please see CDC's *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People*. The guidelines can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physact.htm>. Print copies are available from the Division of Adolescent and School Health's Information Service, P.O. Box 9017, Silver Spring, MD 20907; phone: 888-231-6405; fax: 888-282-7681; E-mail: HealthyYouth@cdc.gov.