



Wellness Policies

Beginning in school year 2006-2007, all schools participating in the school meal programs were required to have a local “school wellness policy” in place. The wellness policy addresses areas such as nutrition, nutrition education, and physical activity in the school.

Why is there so much emphasis on wellness? The prevalence of overweight among children aged 6 -11 years has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Overweight children and teens are more likely to become overweight or obese adults with a higher risk of developing diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some types of cancer, and gallbladder disease. The great news is that all of these health problems are preventable with proper diet and adequate physical activity! Schools alone cannot solve the nutritional and physical activity problems of children. It will take the combined efforts of families, schools, communities, government agencies, health providers, the food industry, and the media to make significant progress. However, schools do play an especially critical role. The U.S. Congress and the Kansas Legislature recognized this important role when they passed laws regarding Wellness Policies in schools.

In recognition of the need for a combined effort in improving the health of children, effective school year 2011-12, schools are required to expand the Wellness committee to include teachers of physical education, school health professionals, parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators and the public to participate in the development and implementation of wellness policies, including periodic review and updates.



Go to www.kn-eat.org, School Wellness Policies to view school wellness data for the 2010 program year and see the progress that has been made since 2006 in creating healthier school environments in Kansas schools! Be sure to check out the Healthier School Environments Brochures on this site for information on ideas for improving the health of your school.

10 tips

Nutrition Education Series

got your dairy today?

10 tips to help you eat and drink more fat-free or low-fat dairy foods



The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk. They provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. Choices should be low-fat or fat-free—to cut calories and saturated fat. How much is needed? Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups* a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

1 “skim” the fat

Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. If you currently drink whole milk, gradually switch to lower fat versions.

This change cuts calories but doesn’t reduce calcium or other essential nutrients.

2 boost potassium and vitamin D, and cut sodium

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese. Milk and yogurt have more potassium and less sodium than most cheeses. Also, almost all milk and many yogurts are fortified with vitamin D.



3 top off your meals



Use fat-free or low-fat milk on cereal and oatmeal. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt instead of higher fat toppings such as sour cream.

4 choose cheeses with less fat

Many cheeses are high in saturated fat. Look for “reduced-fat” or “low-fat” on the label. Try different brands or types to find the one that you like.

5 what about cream cheese?

Regular cream cheese, cream, and butter **are not** part of the dairy food group. They are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium.

* What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group? 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

6 ingredient switches

When recipes such as dips call for sour cream, substitute plain yogurt. Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream, and try ricotta cheese as a substitute for cream cheese.

7 choose sweet dairy foods with care

Flavored milks, fruit yogurts, frozen yogurt, and puddings can contain a lot of added sugars. These added sugars are empty calories. You need the nutrients in dairy foods—not these empty calories.

8 caffeinating?

If so, get your calcium along with your morning caffeine boost. Make or order coffee, a latte, or cappuccino with fat-free or low-fat milk.

9 can’t drink milk?

If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try soymilk (soy beverage). Check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure your soymilk has about 300 mg of calcium. Calcium in some leafy greens is well absorbed, but eating several cups each day to meet calcium needs may be unrealistic.

10 take care of yourself and your family

Parents who drink milk and eat dairy foods show their kids that it is important. Dairy foods are especially important to build the growing bones of kids and teens. Routinely include low-fat or fat-free dairy foods with meals and snacks—for everyone’s benefit.



Active Families

Engaging in physical activity as a family can be a fun way to get everyone moving. Studies show that kids who believe they are competent and have the skills to be physically active are more likely to be active. And those who feel supported by friends and families to become active, or surrounded by others interested in physical activity, are more likely to participate.

Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day, but it doesn't have to occur at once. It all adds up! And remember, sleep is just as important and is an essential part of living an active life. A recent study found that with each extra hour of sleep, the risk of a child being overweight or obese dropped by nine percent.

Here are a few activities and steps that you and your family can consider to get started on a path to a healthier lifestyle:

- Give children toys that encourage physical activity like balls, kites, and jump ropes.
- Encourage children to join a sports team or try a new physical activity.
- Limit TV time and keep the TV out of a child's bedroom.
- Facilitate a safe walk to and from school a few times a week.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk around the block after a meal.
- Make a new house rule: no sitting still during television commercials.
- Find time to spend together doing a fun activity: family park day, swim day or bike day.
- Issue a family challenge to see who can be the first to achieve a Presidential Active Lifestyle Award by committing to physical activity five days a week, for six weeks. Adults and children can both receive the award!
- Talk to your children's principal or write a letter to your district superintendent to incorporate more physical education in schools.
- Encourage schools to hold recess prior to lunch to increase physical activity before mealtime.
- Volunteer to help with afterschool physical activity programs or sports teams.
- Be sure that children get the sleep they need. Most children under age five need to sleep for 11 hours or more per day, children age five to 10 need 10 hours of sleep or more per day, and children over age 10 need at least nine hours per day.
- Learn how engaging in outside activities can be fun and affordable for families through *Let's Move Outside*, which promotes a range of healthy outdoor activities for children and families across the country.



Article Source: Let's Move! (www.letsmove.gov)

Child Nutrition & Wellness
Kansas State Department of Education
120 SE 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612
Phone: 785-296-2276
Fax: 785-296-0232
www.ksde.org
www.kn-eat.org

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