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Schools are under tremendous financial strain as a result of the current economic crunch. Your support is more important than ever and will demonstrate your continued dedication to Action for Healthy Kids and its efforts to impact school wellness. Best of all, your contribution will support our shared mission and ongoing efforts to promote health and learning for all children.



News to Use

School Breakfast Grant Application Available

Schools can now apply to help their kids get a healthy start each day with a new grant program made possible by Action for Healthy Kids and **Kellogg's Corporate Citizenship Fund**. Applications are now being accepted from schools participating in the National School Breakfast Program with greater than 50 percent eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. Click [here](#) to download an application and get details including eligibility criteria, completion guidelines and deadlines.

During the 2007-08 school year, less than half of eligible low-income children participated in the National School Breakfast Program. More are expected to become eligible as family members lose jobs and incomes are reduced. As highlighted in the **Food Research and Action Center's School Breakfast Scorecard**, breakfast lays the groundwork to help children learn and thrive. Research shows that eating breakfast improves school performance, reduces behavioral problems, improves children's diets, and can help reduce childhood obesity.

Wellness Policy Tracking Made Easy

Wellness policy implementation has just gotten easier! Action for Healthy Kids has added a monitoring component to its 8-step Wellness Policy Tool to help school districts improve nutrition and physical activity practices. This new, web-based tool is fully customizable and includes a scoring system to evaluate progress, and links to resources for areas of the policy that need improvement.

"Because this tool is organized in a linear fashion and fairly comprehensive, including coordinated school health components in addition to nutrition and physical activity, it makes it easy to consider ways to improve our implementation and monitoring plan," says Jennie McCary, wellness coordinator for Albuquerque Public Schools and president-elect of the New Mexico Dietetic Association.

Click [here](#) for the monitoring component of AFHK's Wellness Policy Tool, and to register for a webinar on March 23 or 26 to learn how to help your school monitor their wellness policy.

Opportunity Outlook

Help Get Kids Moving!

Created in 2004, *Punk Rope* is a blend of recess and boot camp with activities that range from calisthenics, conditioning drills, relay races, rope jumping, and upper body and core training. Students of all ages and activity levels can join in the fun!

Punk Rope has been offered in community centers, health clubs, colleges, schools, bowling alleys, and city parks. Click [here](#) for more information about *Punk Rope*, to register for a workshop, or to order instructor manuals, materials and equipment.

News from our Partners

The **President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** recently announced the departure of Melissa Johnson as executive director, and welcomed Rear Admiral Penelope Slade-Sawyer as acting executive director during the organization's transition period. Click [here](#) to read the President Council's Winter 2009 e-newsletter which features highlights of their accomplishments over the past year.

We Can!, a program from the **National Institutes of Health** for families and communities to help children maintain a healthy weight, now offers a training-on-demand toolkit as an easy way to introduce *We Can!* to your community.

If you're interested in hosting a training, click [here](#) for information about submitting a training request form.

Mounting Evidence

This is a new feature on research supporting the link between kids' health and success in school.

A new study in the January 2009 *Journal of School Health* found that increasing opportunities for kids to participate in physical activity, fitness and sports may help support their success in the classroom.

While further research is required, there is mounting evidence that opportunities in school to help children meet the recommended one hour of physical activity per day not only will enhance their health but also may have a positive effect on learning and academic achievement. Click [here](#) to read the article.

AFHK in the News

School Boards Journal Lauds Progress, AFHK

The **National School Boards Association** (NSBA) recently issued a call to action to school leaders to address childhood obesity in its *American School Board Journal*. The Journal cited mounting evidence that poor nutrition and lack of physical activity impact students' ability to focus in the classroom.

It also highlighted school success stories, as well as findings from Action for Healthy Kids' publication, *Progress or Promises What's Working For and Against Healthy Schools*, that showed despite an increased awareness by educators of student nutrition, physical fitness, and health issues, there are gaps in perception between school leaders and other stakeholders about the state of wellness in schools.

Click [here](#) to read the NSBA report. An executive summary and full report of *Progress or Promises* are available on Action for Healthy Kids' [website](#).

Teams in Action for Healthy Kids - Florida

Three schools in Marion County, Florida, are participating in *Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge* this school year as part of a \$25,000 grant awarded to the Florida Action for Healthy Kids Team. AFHK Teams in Michigan, Ohio and Arizona also received funding to implement *Game On!* in schools to help students make better food choices; support local wellness policies; and engage school administrators, parents and students to create healthier schools.

Game On! is a series of challenges to motivate students to make better food choices and move more. Sparr Elementary School in Marion County engages students through unique activities such as taste tests; a "home scavenger hunt"; poster contests; and fitness activities like Frisbee golf. Visit [Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge](#) to find fun activities to introduce to students at your school.