



Fun and Fitness Family Events

One of the most effective ways to get parents involved in schools is by hosting an event that involves their children. Parents are always curious about what goes on at school and how well their kids are doing. Hosting an event that involves physical activity and healthy eating can help you promote healthy behaviors, share positive messages, educate and engage parents, and motivate kids. These events can be as simple or as involved as you have time and volunteers to make them.

GAME ON ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS 
TIP SHEET

Six Steps to a Fun and Fitness Family Event

ONE Have the PE teacher set up the gym with stations that demonstrate what the kids are doing in PE. Kids can show parents what they are learning and parents can see how PE has evolved since they were in school.

TWO Involve your school nutrition staff in the event. Have them prepare samples of the types of foods being served, specifically fresh fruits and vegetables, and any whole grain, low-fat items. This is a great way to show parents that school foods are nutritious and taste good and to get kids to try items they might ignore during normal school meals

THREE Invite local businesses that have services or products that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Have them conduct demonstrations and share information.

- A local gym can share fitness training exercises.
- A yoga instructor can demonstrate yoga and stretching positions.
- A restaurant or chef can sample some of their healthier dishes.
- A bicycle shop can provide bike safety demos.
- A local clinic can provide health screenings.
- A farmers' market can share information on composting and gardening.

FOUR Ask the high school to have some of their athletes demonstrate their skills, letting kids and adults participate. Soccer, baseball, lacrosse or even drill team players can share some skills and show kids that being active can be fun.

FIVE Communicate! Get the kids excited by announcing the event at school. Better yet, let the kids make the announcements. Send home a flyer with details for parents. Give kids an incentive to bring back a tear-off part with a parent's signature. Consider a challenge among the grades to see who can get the most families attend.

SIX Provide prizes! Ask your local retailers for prizes: grocery store gift cards, sports equipment from a sporting goods store, free lessons for martial arts or yoga, running shoes, camping equipment, etc. Any type of prize that relates to healthy eating or being active will work. Participants receive a sticker or stamp for each activity station they visit to a place on a card or "passport." Completed cards can be entered into a prize drawing.



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Checklist for your Fun and Fit Event

- Pick a time and date that fits with your school community.
- Talk with the principal and get his or her support.
- Get staff interested and excited about participating. Find a hidden talent and ask staff to participate in a demo (Jazzercise? Karate?).
- Send information home to make sure parents are informed.
- Talk with school nutrition services about providing healthy snacks and sharing information about school meals.
- Ask students to volunteer and get school clubs involved (sports teams, student council, National Junior Honor Society, etc.).
- Ask your PTA or other parent group to help out. Consider providing prizes.
- Make sure prizes are related to healthy activities.
- Give each family a card or "passport" with a list of activity stations and provide stations with stamps or stickers to give out when families participate in the activity.
- Have different community groups provide demonstrations for bike safety, yoga, health and wellness checks.

Other Event Ideas

- Health fairs
- School garden work days
- Cooking lessons or "Iron Chef" competitions
- Walk-to-School month with parent participation
- Create school teams for local runs or walks
- Screen movies that promote healthy living
- Parents and teachers vs. kids sports competitions
- Family nutrition classes from community partners (like your cooperative extension service)

Promote Healthy Living

Plan family events that get parents engaged and on board with healthy living, as this will create more buy-in and support for a healthy school culture. It also makes it more likely that healthy habits will be reinforced at home!

Communication is Key

- Ask the school to offer an incentive to make sure information gets to parents. A free homework pass or time outside after lunch are great motivators.
- Use the school phone tree to share important information.
- Ask for a parent signature when you send home information.



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