



New Campaign Launches to Prioritize Health and Well-Being of U.S. Children in Next Decade

Take Action for Healthy Kids Offers Parents Support and Inspiration to Take 1 Million Actions for Kids by 2025

CHICAGO (January 15, 2020) – As we look ahead to a new decade, Americans overwhelmingly agree that children face more challenges than ever to their physical and emotional health and well-being, according to a survey* by [Action for Healthy Kids](#) (AFHK). Through its new [Take Action for Healthy Kids campaign](#), AFHK is calling on parents, caregivers and others to take 1 million actions by 2025 to help prioritize and advance children’s health and well-being in the U.S.

“Would a stadium full of people chant ‘We’re number 37?’ Of course not—but that is where the U.S. ranks globally in children’s well-being, according to UNICEF.” said Rob Bisceglie, CEO, Action for Healthy Kids. “The evidence is clear that a child’s physical, social and emotional health are inextricably tied and proven to affect their school performance, cognitive ability and overall well-being. We must expand opportunities for parents, educators and other stakeholders to work together to create communities that support children in leading healthy, happy and productive lives, both in and out of school.”

Parents are the Original Influencers

In this day and age of social media, the majority of adults surveyed (76%) overwhelmingly said parents, caregivers and guardians have the greatest influence on a child’s physical and emotional health and well-being. Parents are also considered to have the greatest impact when it comes to addressing the myriad challenges kids face today according to a majority of respondents (77%), while half agreed that schools have a major impact.

However, only three in 10 respondents who are parents feel very confident in children’s ability to make healthy decisions—regardless of the age of their child under 18—indicating we need to do more as a society to support not only children’s health knowledge but also their ability to develop resiliency, deal with stress, and make healthy choices for themselves.

Some of the statistics are sobering: Kids age 8 to 18 spend up to seven hours a day on screens¹; vaping is on the rise even among middle schoolers, and the use of e-cigarettes is higher among high school students than adults²; just 24% of kids age 6 to 17 get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day, with activity levels dropping as kids age³; and one in three children remain overweight or obese⁴.

¹ Rideout, Victoria J., Foehr, Ulla G., and Roberts, Donald F. *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Rep. Menlo Park: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010.

² Retrieved from <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>

³ National Physical Activity Plan. (2018) The 2018 United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

⁴ Trust for America’s Health. (2019) U.S. Obesity Rates Reach Historic Highs – Racial, Ethnic, Gender and Geographic Disparities Continue to Persist. Retrieved from <https://www.tfah.org/issue-details/obesity/>

After working with schools and parents for nearly two decades, and mobilizing educators, families and community members to create health-supporting environments for kids, AFHK believes that collaboration between parents and schools is the key to driving change. Research shows that parent engagement in school not only provides extra resources and people power that schools need, but it also promotes positive health behaviors among children and adolescents⁵, as well as better grades, stronger social skills and greater self-esteem⁶.

“Every child needs nurturing adults, a safe, supportive environment and optimal nutrition. These building blocks lay the foundation for physical health and the social and emotional skills children will need to cope with stressors throughout their lives,” said Dr. Bob Murray, Professor of Pediatrics, Ohio State University College of Medicine and Vice Chair of AFHK’s Board of Directors. “Helping schools, families and communities provide those building blocks is our responsibility as a society from which we will reap great rewards.”

How to Take Action

AFHK and its partners are offering a variety of ways for parents and others to kick off the campaign and take 200,000 actions by the end of 2020 that will contribute to healthier schools, families and communities, including:

- Apply for and help to implement a [school grant](#) designed for parents to improve health and wellness at school.
- Host an [Every Kid Healthy Week](#) event in April.
- Take a [quiz](#) to see how healthy their child’s school is.
- [Learn](#) how to get involved, start school health teams, and engage with their school leaders.
- Find recipes, ideas and inspiration for [creating healthy meals](#) together and supporting [health at home](#).
- Exchange ideas and share information with others using AFHK’s new [Healthy Kids Network](#).
- Host a [DIY fundraiser](#) to raise money and awareness to support AFHK’s mission.

Parents and other caring individuals who are ready to take action can learn more about the importance of children’s health and well-being, find a variety of featured and seasonal actions, get inspired by kids’ and parents’ stories, share their own actions with the hashtag #TakeAction4HealthyKids, and discover a variety of ways to make a difference at actionforhealthykids.org/take-action.

The Take Action for Healthy Kids campaign is sponsored in part nationally by ALDI, Dole, CSX, GoGo squeeZ and Peloton.

About Action for Healthy Kids®

Action for Healthy Kids is dedicated to improving children’s health and well-being by bringing together educators, parents and communities to transform school into a place where children learn to lead healthy lives. Through funding opportunities, programmatic support, and our flagship programs Game

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2012.

⁶ Resnick MD, Bearman PS, Blum RW, Bauman KE, Harris KM, Jones J, et al. Protecting adolescents from harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1997;278(10):823–832.

On and Parents for Healthy Kids, we support children’s healthy and happy futures in communities where change is most needed. Action for Healthy Kids is the organizational home to Active Schools, formerly known as Let’s Move! Active Schools, a collective impact movement of public and private sector partner organizations working to prioritize physical education and physical activity in schools. To learn more about the ways our growing network of 140,000+ volunteers and champions is helping to ensure every kid is healthy, active and ready to learn and thrive, visit us at actionforhealthykids.org. For sponsorship opportunities, visit actionforhealthykids.org/supporters.

** The Padilla Spotlight Survey, conducted in September 2019 and commissioned by AFHK, surveyed 658 U.S. adults. Additional findings available at actionforhealthykids.org/survey-2019.*

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