

# Building Family-School Partnerships Through Physical Activity and Active Play

ACTIVITY	AT HOME	AT SCHOOL	AFHK RESOURCE
<b>Set up a fitness circuit course.</b>	Use common household items to set up various obstacles or stations. Create a basketball station using laundry baskets and socks rolled up into balls or a jump rope or a hose for a “walk the tightrope” station.	Invite parents/caregivers to donate old or no longer used items to create a circuit course at school. Invite parents/caregivers to volunteer at your next Field Day event and include them in monitoring various stations or to create their own teams for an upcoming family night.	<a href="#">Backyard Fitness Circuit Course</a> <a href="#">Fitness Circuit Course</a>
<b>Create space during the day for active and unstructured play to help build social skills, foster creativity, reenergize and refocus.</b>	Play uses critical thinking and creativity to explore the imagination and turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. Turn household items or an arts and crafts project into homemade props before setting off on a make-believe adventure.	Incorporate active play into family events to help build social connections and promote physical activity. Use active storytelling games or invite families to share their favorite ways to play to kick off or break up meetings and family events.	<a href="#">Make Time to Play Today</a> <a href="#">Common Objects</a> <a href="#">Easy On-the-Go Play Activities</a>
<b>Incorporate brain breaks and opportunities for movement throughout the day.</b>	Find ways to pair movement with your everyday activities. Use commercial breaks while watching your favorite television show to do jumping jacks or pushups. Take a homework break and go for a walk as a family. Get creative and see how many minutes of movement you can add to each day.	Create a “Brain Break Resources” take-home sheet for children to incorporate at home. Build these activities or other movement props into homework assignments and encourage families to participate and set a classroom goal for active homework minutes.  If you already send a weekly or monthly family newsletter home, try including an “Staying Active At Home” section and include physical activities from physical education and the classroom.	<a href="#">Classroom Physical Activity Breaks</a> <a href="#">Making the Most of Screen Time</a>
<b>Pair active games with seasonal sporting events.</b>	When watching a game or sporting event at home, create a list of movements for different actions (e.g. for every score, do 5 jumping jacks). Get creative and switch up your activities for various occurrences depending on the sport. Ask your school’s physical education teacher about what kids are learning in class and how they can support similar activities at home.	Incorporate sports, games, and other friendly competition into math lessons and other classroom lessons. Invite children to use their passions for sports and games to learn academic skills at the same time.	<a href="#">Take the Superbowl Challenge</a> <a href="#">Get Family Fit: Family Activity Points</a> <a href="#">Get Moving During Math Night</a>
<b>Walk or bike around the neighborhood.</b>	Get outside and get moving as an after-school or weekend morning ritual. Start slow and pick your favorite route to walk as a family. Invite neighbors to join in on the fun to foster a greater sense of community.	Host a Family Fun Run or a Before or After-School Running Club where family and community members can join in on the fun.  Already have something? Invite parents/caregivers to volunteer for before or after school programs and help teach walk and bike safety.	<a href="#">Neighborhood Walk and Bike Activities</a> <a href="#">Walk to School</a> <a href="#">Bike to School</a>
<b>Create an active scavenger hunt.</b>	Create an active-at-home scavenger hunt to get you and your children moving as they use their problem-solving skills to solve clues. Use common household items to minimize added costs.	Create a Back-to-School Night scavenger hunt for children to work together with their parents/caregivers to complete various stations. Incorporate a different physical activity at each station.	<a href="#">Scavenger Hunt</a> <a href="#">Outdoor Exploration Activities</a>
<b>Plan a family fitness night.</b>	Welcome each member of the family to choose 1–2 of their favorite physical activities for a family fitness night! Take turns teaching and learning new activities to enhance confidence and communication.	Invite parents/caregivers to suggest games from their culture as part of a school-hosted Family Fitness Night.  Host a Take Your Family to physical education Week and invite parents/caregivers to join in on the physical education and recess fun!	<a href="#">School Family Fitness Night</a> <a href="#">Open Gym</a>

## Why Family-School Partnerships?

For kids to develop the lifelong habits necessary to become healthy, successful adults, schools and families must commit to working together to build a culture that supports the whole child. Effective family-school partnerships occur when families and schools actively partner to develop, implement, and evaluate effective and equitable practices to improve kids' educational and health outcomes.

# 5 TIPS for Developing Strong, Effective Family-School Partnerships

FOR FAMILIES	FOR SCHOOLS	FOR FAMILIES-SCHOOLS TOGETHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get involved at your child's school, as you're able. Visit the school and learn about its culture and practices related to student health. Volunteer in the classroom and at school events. Attend in-person or virtual meetings with teachers and school staff as possible.</li><li>• Introduce yourself to school leaders and ask questions. What are your school and district priorities and practices related to student health, and how would they like families to provide support?</li><li>• Talk to other parents/caregivers. Gather perspectives and ideas from other families, especially those in your school community that may be dealing with different challenges than your own family, to understand and communicate your community's needs and concerns.</li><li>• As a parent/caregiver, you have a powerful voice—use it as best you can. Speak up and speak with school staff, share your concerns and priorities, and let them know how to communicate with you and other families in a way that works best for you.</li><li>• Don't make assumptions—learn how things work. Take advantage of learning opportunities and ask questions, then communicate your concerns clearly in a constructive, non-judgmental way. Approach conversations in a spirit of collaboration vs. confrontation.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the demographics of your community. Learn about their values and the specific challenges they may face. Provide quality interpretation with meetings conducted primarily in the language spoken by the majority of participants.</li><li>• Create a warm and welcoming environment that shows families that their input is desired, respected, and valued. Ask families about their lives and their concerns and validate the challenges families have and their expertise. Don't get defensive—share the challenges you have so that families can help come up with solutions.</li><li>• Offer multiple two-way communication channels so families can ask questions and share opinions (e.g., texts, emails, phone calls, video-conferences, in-person meetings).</li><li>• Consider your own mindset. Get rid of pre-conceived notions about how parents/caregivers think, the expertise they have, and how they want to be involved.</li><li>• Communicate the school/district vision and priorities clearly and transparently, and provide families with clear information about how school and district departments function, set policy, and make decisions. Share school and district policies, goals and plans related to student health.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find a way to meet that is accessible and agreed upon by staff and families and consider providing childcare for the meetings. If childcare cannot be provided, are there other ways this barrier can be addressed (e.g., children attend meetings with their parents/caregivers, schedule meetings at different times, provide stipends for babysitters, etc.)?</li><li>• Recruit 1–2 committed parents/caregivers to co-lead the partnership. They should care deeply about the work and have connections and credibility in the community.</li><li>• Recruit school or district staff with a strong belief in the partnership's purpose and value and a willingness to commit to the group and take actions to address family concerns.</li><li>• Work with established school parent/caregiver groups (e.g., PTO, PTA, Parent Advisory Council, Parent Action Committee) to get their perspective and buy-in for the collaboration and to recruit more families to participate.</li><li>• Bring a solution-focused mindset to the work and find common values. Every person brings a different set of values to the table. Identify the core values you share and bring them to the forefront of how you collaborate as a committee.</li></ul>

## Additional Resources

### Building Family-School Partnerships

Collaborating for Healthy Schools Guide (Action for Healthy Kids) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Parents for Healthy Schools (CDC) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Resources and Support (National PTA) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Standards for Successful Family-School Partnerships (National PTA) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Power of Partnerships (National PTA) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Schools and Families: An Important Partnership (Colorín Colorado) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Family-School-Community Partnership Framework (Colorado Department of Education) [English](#)  
[Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#) (Dual-Capacity)  
[Family Engagement Playbook](#) (Global Families Research Project)

### Physical Activity

Action for Healthy Kids — [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
CATCH Health at Home: Physical Activity (CATCH) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
SNAP-Ed Connection: Physical Activity and Health Education (US Department of Agriculture) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Go Noodle Video Library: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Play at Home Playbook (Playworks) [English](#) | [Spanish](#)  
Resource Library: [For Schools](#) | [For Families](#) (Active Schools)  
[Parent and Family Wellness](#) (SHAPE America)

## Healthy Kids. Better World.

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