



Take Action for Healthy Kids During **Every Kid Healthy Week**

A toolkit resource for parents
and schools to take action,
promote and celebrate.

everykidhealthyweek.org

ACTION FOR
HEALTHY
KIDS 

EVERY KID HEALTHY WEEK

2024 SCHEDULE


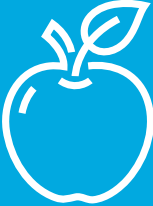



APRIL 22 MINDFULNESS MONDAY	APRIL 23 TASTY TUESDAY	APRIL 24 WELLNESS WEDNESDAY	APRIL 25 THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY	APRIL 26 FAMILY FRIDAY
• • • • • CHILD HEALTH FOCUS • • • • •				
Social Emotional Health 	Nutrition Education 	Physical Activity 	Risk Prevention and Education 	Family Engagement 

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Overview

About This Toolkit

Congratulations on hosting an Every Kid Healthy Week event in April! You are part of a national movement taking action to make schools healthier places so kids can learn to eat right, be physically active and get equipped for success. Healthy kids are better learners!

Action for Healthy Kids supports schools in implementing health and wellness programs, and their success is only possible through the work of school staff, families, and community volunteers. Volunteers are some of our greatest resources, and the ranks of AFHK volunteers have grown from fewer than 700 in 2002 to more than 150,000 today. This toolkit is designed to provide information, tips and resources to help schools and volunteers through the entire process of planning and implementing successful Every Kid Healthy Week events.

Why Celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week?

Children today face many urgent challenges to their physical and emotional health and well-being. But with sound nutrition, opportunities for physical activity, and safe and supportive environments, kids thrive. We aim to ensure every child is well nourished, physically active, healthy and ready to learn.

The process begins by providing schools and families with the necessary resources to promote healthy children and schools. Get ready to inspire healthy habits and have some fun because Every Kid Healthy Week is here!



TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Schools have access to a variety of tools and resources to support them in becoming health promoting.



PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

School communities together implement sustainable programs and practices that promote nutritious eating, physical activity, and support children's social emotional health.



STAFF, FAMILY, STUDENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Schools engage staff, families and communities to ensure impact and sustainability.

**EVERY
KID
HEALTHY**

What is Every Kid Healthy Week?

Every Kid Healthy Week is an annual observance created in 2013 to celebrate school wellness achievements. Observed the last week of April each year, this special week shines a spotlight on the great initiatives schools are implementing to improve the health and wellness of their students. The week also provides an opportunity for everyone in the country to get involved in a celebration to help support sound nutrition, regular physical activity, social emotional health and health-promoting programs in schools.

How Can My School Take Action and Celebrate?

To celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week, schools can host events that promote and reinforce healthy eating, physical activity, nutrition education, physical education, social emotional health and mindfulness in order to increase student achievement. Are you already planning a school event in April? Add a focus on healthy kids and families to show your school's commitment to wellness! Looking for a new idea? Check these out:

- » Host a family fitness night.
- » Organize a health and wellness fair.
- » Refurbish your playground or cafeteria.
- » Gather the community for a nature walk.
- » Hold a family and community school breakfast event.
- » Plant a **school garden**.
- » Try potential new and healthy breakfast options and/or fruits, veggies and whole grains with a **taste test**.
- » Energize the classroom with fun **brain breaks**.

This toolkit will explain how to plan for some of these popular events. If you'd like more ideas and ways to implement them, check out the Action for Healthy Kids program (**Step 4: Find Activities**).

Check out our **Digital Resources Library**! Browse videos, activities, tip sheets, and more to utilize at school or the home for improving kids' physical and emotional health.



Event Ideas

Mindful Spaces at School

Sensory or movement hallways are a fun and engaging way for students to get their wiggles out, refocus during a transition or self-soothe after facing a difficult challenge. These paths are created to be colorful and playful and turn a passive environment into an active one. Not only do they add more physical activity to a child's day, they can also be designed to help them practice a variety of skills and just play.

Tips for Success

- » Meet with your principal or administrator to discuss the project and share your ideas.
- » Carve out some time to plan what your path will look like.
- » Research sensory path or movement hallways and pick out your favorite stations and activities.
- » Get creative! Consider a variety of stations and activities that touch on various skills.
- » Choose a space that is both accessible to all students and not a disruption to others when in use.

Activity Ideas

- » Gross motor skills: Create a mix of zig zag, curved and straight lines with directions for students to hop on one foot, balance and walk on their tip toes or crab walk.
- » Fine motor skills: Create lines or shapes with colorful tape or paint for children to trace along the wall.
- » Social emotional skills: Promote goal directed behavior and decision making through a mix of increasingly challenging tasks along the path. Encourage optimistic thinking and self-regulation through positive affirmations.
- » Core academic skills: Encourage academics with alphabet patterns, sight words, numbers to determine how many hops or addition/subtraction hopscotch, etc.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Every Kid Healthy Week is an excellent time to work together with your School Health Team, parents, and others to make your school a healthier and happier place. When you listen to different ideas and thoughts from everyone, you can come up with new and exciting ways to make your school even better!

- » Volunteers can be brought in to help outfit the space — from leading arts and crafts activities to incorporate, to creating directional signage, to building out, painting and decorating the area!
- » Take a video of a family using the course. Share with teachers, other school staff and parents to demonstrate how to use. Encourage utilizing and modeling its use for brain breaks, sensory walks to support self-regulation when upset, during parent pick up and more!

Parent and Community Breakfast Event

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and schools provide millions of breakfasts to hungry children every single school day! Host a parent and community breakfast event to celebrate your successes and to promote a healthy and nutritious school breakfast. Parent and community engagement is key to any successful school nutrition program. Not only do parents support healthy habits at home, but they can also support your nutrition and food service efforts at school.

Tips for Success

- » Highlight a new breakfast item, or revamp your existing menu.
- » Host a taste test of potential new breakfast items, and ask participants to give feedback through a survey or focus group discussion.
- » Invite a local celebrity or athlete to attend, and ask them to share their story about the importance of breakfast.
- » Decorate the cafeteria, and celebrate with handouts and fliers that highlight the importance of healthy school meals.
- » Hold a raffle, and give away healthy prizes such as jump ropes, pedometers and even school spirit gear.
- » If space allows, set up a fitness circuit course, and invite students and families to participate before or after their breakfast.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Invite parents, school faculty and community members to join in the festivities. See page 11 for tips on how to promote your event.
- » Volunteers can help support your needs in a number of ways:
 - » Connect with potential community members who can attend as a local celebrity or athlete.
 - » Assist with event planning, organization, or event set-up.
 - » Use the help of volunteers for the simplest of tasks such as handing out nutrition promotion materials and information on the school breakfast program.
- » Think about what needs you have and how additional volunteer support would be helpful.

Reenergize Your Playground or Cafeteria and Other School Renovations

A school spruce-up can involve students, their families and the school staff in improving their school, team building, and developing school and community pride. Treat it as a special Saturday activity for students and families, followed by a healthy picnic, or schedule multiple spruce-up days during the school year as a way to continually engage everyone. Think about incorporating sustainable practices and renovations to benefit the school environment.

Tips for Success

- » Check with your principal and school district first to receive approvals.
- » Break down each activity into specific parts.
 - » For example, a schoolyard pick-up involves defining areas, dividing types of debris, providing receptacles, recycling collection, and more. Once broken down it is easier to task your project for participants.
- » Create a list of supplies you'll need, and ask around for donations and discounts.

Activity Ideas

- » Plant trees or flowers around the school campus.
- » Paint the cafeteria to make it more inviting.
- » Clean up debris on school grounds.
- » Start a recycling program or compost area.
- » Paint hopscotch and other games on the playground.
- » Build a school garden.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Invite parents, friends and family members to join in the festivities. See page 11 for tips on how to promote your event.
- » Identify local community experts and other individuals who could assist as volunteers, provide donations or offer other needed support (e.g. garden center to provide tools, paint store to donate supplies, local muralist for painting a cafeteria wall).
- » Create a detailed plan for the tasks volunteers will accomplish so they can get right to work when they arrive.
- » Make sure to share the "Why" with volunteers so they can connect the work they're doing with the value it will have for your students!

Health and Wellness Fair

Health and wellness fairs are a great opportunity to engage students, parents and the entire community in healthier eating and physical activity. Host a fair to show parents nutritious and tasty school foods and encourage kids to try new healthy foods they might ignore during school meals. Get everyone moving through fun fitness activities, and enlist community members and business to help.

Tips for Success

- » Begin planning eight weeks in advance to coordinate with local community organizations. To make your health and wellness fair as successful as possible, work with community partners such as fitness instructors, colleges or universities, health centers and local chefs—just remember that typically, the more partners you have, the more planning is required.

- » Delegate some planning tasks to your school wellness team or other school groups, and recruit parent and community volunteers to help.
- » Make a checklist of what you'll need, such as: publicity (flyers, newsletter blurbs, media outreach), community partner coordination (written agreements, regular meetings or calls), logistics (program, schedule, set-up/clean-up) and equipment (tables, chairs, A/V).

Activity Ideas

- » Invite nutrition services staff to present information about the school breakfast and lunch programs and the value of school meals with samples of breakfast and lunch items.
- » Enlist parents, teachers and volunteers to conduct a healthy foods taste test.
- » Ask a restaurant or local chef to sample some of their healthier dishes.
- » Provide health screenings, including blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol readings, with the help of a local clinic or health department.
- » Bring a local farmer or representative from a farmer's market to share info on composting and gardening.
- » Recruit local fitness instructors to conduct a physical fitness activity or high school athletes to demonstrate their skills, allowing students and adults to participate.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Invite parents, friends and family members to join in the festivities. See page 11 for tips on how to promote your event.
- » Volunteers can help support your needs in a number of ways—from connecting with potential community partners to assisting with event setup. Think about what needs you have and how additional volunteer support would be helpful.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES >> HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

Building Relationships with Empathy Activities

Empathy is the heart of a nurturing and supportive environment. Helping children identify their own feelings helps them to recognize and respect the feelings of others.

This in turn supports better communication and conflict resolution and build relationships rooted in trust. Increased social awareness and self-regulation builds a sense of community and creates a positive classroom culture. Get your students up and out of their seats for a fun activity break that also helps them strengthen their social emotional skills and relationships.

Activity Ideas

- » Circle time at the beginning or end of the school day is an opportunity for children to socialize and further develop their social emotional learning skills. This practice creates a space where students feel empowered to listen and share, build relationships with peers and identify how to appropriately express themselves and relate to others.
- » **In My Shoes Game** is a great way for students to talk about the similarities and differences they share with their fellow classmates. Discuss the importance of recognizing others' experiences and emotions and explore ways to connect and build healthy conversations.
- » **Feelings Charades** can help dive deeper with students by having conversations around different situations associated with each feeling, and strategies for managing ones that are more challenging.

Tips for Success

- » Use these activities as a way to introduce a daily routine of student check-ins
- » Set ground rules and boundaries so students know this is a safe place to share, and respect other's feelings/emotions
- » Be aware that children express emotions differently and some may not want to share how they are feeling and that is okay.
- » **Offer opportunities in the classroom** for children to decompress or self-select activities that support emotional regulation.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Engage parents in the social emotional learning by sharing with them the activities or lessons happening in the classroom and offer tips for replicating or continuing the learning at home.

- » Integrate mindful practices into parent teacher conferences or other events so everyone can participate together.
- » Connect with your community and explore opportunities for local instructors to teach a creative movement or yoga session.
- » Take pictures of students learning different poses and create easy flash cards students can take home and practice with their families.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES >> EXPLORING EMPATHY

Family Fitness Event

A family fitness event that involves physical activity and healthy eating can help you share positive messages beyond the classroom by engaging and educating parents and motivating kids to practice healthy behaviors at home.

Tips for Success

- » Family fitness events can be held during the day or at night.
- » Select a diverse set of activities to meet the interests of all ages and skill levels.
- » Reach out to local businesses to participate in your event. For example, a local gym or trainer may be able to volunteer to offer fitness training stations.
- » Make a list of participating teachers and volunteers. Schedule bi-weekly meetings starting six weeks prior to the event to work out logistics, instructions and needs for each station.
- » Make a list of all equipment needed six weeks prior to event.

Activity Ideas

- » Obstacle course
- » Target throws
- » Tug-of-war
- » Water balloon toss
- » Sack and relay races
- » Jump rope
- » Yoga
- » Dance



Engage Parents and Families

- » Invite parents, friends and family members to join in the festivities. See page 11 for tips on how to promote your event.
- » Plan ahead and ask your parent network to support the event as volunteers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES >> FAMILY FITNESS NIGHT

Fun Runs, Walks and Races

Fun runs, walks and races are not just great ways to get kids outside and moving, but they also teach the value of competition and sportsmanship and can encourage teamwork and cooperation to achieve a common goal. Plan a 5K Walk or Run with your school so people of all skill levels can participate.

Tips for Success

- » Consider picking a theme for your event to get people excited about participating.
- » Follow these simple guidelines: Make it easy to set up and promote, make it easy to conduct, make it challenging yet doable for all students, and make it FUN!
- » You can even use the fun run as a fundraiser for your school.
 - » Students can find sponsors to donate money for each lap they are able to run, and students who raise the most money or run the most laps can win healthy prizes for their performance.

Engage Parents and Families

- » Invite parents, school faculty and community members to join in the festivities. See page 11 for tips on how to promote your event.
- » Volunteers can help support your needs in a number of ways:
 - » Connect with potential community partners for donations.
 - » Assist with event planning, organization, or event set-up.
 - » Assist with the simplest of tasks, such as handing out water to run/walk participants.
 - » Think about what needs you have and how additional volunteer support would be helpful.

Planning a Successful Event

Tips and Tricks to Plan a Successful Event

Use the following steps and tips below to help ensure a successful event:

Enlist the RIGHT People: Depending on the size of your event, it may require a team of people to produce. This is the time to enlist every volunteer you can find. Start with your own network—school staff, teachers, parents, alumni and even current students. Your school leadership should be committed to the success of the event, and the event planning team should be enthusiastic about their work. However, you will encounter some volunteers who cannot meet their commitment, so have plenty of folks on hand that can fill in the gaps. Make sure you have volunteer leaders to help coordinate your people power, too.

Choose the RIGHT Event: Select an event that is consistent with your school's mission to improve health and wellness. Other things to consider when planning your event are:

- » **Determine your event objectives:** What do you want to achieve from the event? What do you want students, parents, and community members to learn?
- » **Identify your target audience:** Who do you want to attend your event, and what is their role? If you are having a fundraiser, how will funds be raised—sponsorship and advertising, auction, raffle, ticket sales, or something else?
- » **Align your event with your capabilities:** It is better to have a successful event for 50 people than to have a mediocre or disorganized event for 300 people. Make sure the event is consistent with the budget, as well as volunteer and staff time and abilities.
- » **Select the best date:** Ensure that your event does not conflict with other major events in the community or with holidays when people are away.

Give Yourself Enough Time: Create a schedule and timetable for everything that needs to be done. Some events may need separate timetables for specific aspects. Allow time for goal setting, volunteer recruiting, promotion, and communications, in addition to pursuing sponsors and donors. Check out our template timeline to get started at everykidhealthyweek.org.

Avoid Pitfalls: Stick to your timeline, and plan for the unexpected. If you are planning an outdoor activity, make sure you have a back-up date in case of rain or snow. Even if you are planning an indoor activity, significant rain or snow can deter participants from attending. Consider having a back-up date scheduled in case of an emergency. Plan for alternative information sharing in case someone can not make it or you have more people than anticipated.

Recognize, Reward and Review: Say thank you! Be gracious and generous with your appreciation. Thank everyone involved with your event, and do it right away. Thank them in person, by phone, with letters or thank you cards, and in your newsletter. When done well, this is a time-consuming task but is crucial to the success of your event and any future events you may have. Volunteers and donors are much more likely to come back if they feel their contributions are valued. Make certain you have not forgotten a single sponsor, donor or volunteer. A post-event gathering or healthy luncheon is a great way to thank the volunteers who assisted with the event planning (if your budget allows for it).

Measure Your Success: Measuring your success begins the moment the first person arrives for the event. Are your attendees smiling? Absorbed in the activities? How about your volunteers? Are people thanking the planning committee? Asking if you plan to do it again next year? Planners and organizers should write down all of the comments they hear—positive and negative—to be included in an evaluation of the event. Provide a simple index card or brief survey for attendees to complete with their feedback. Refer back to the expectations you established when planning your event and see how you did:

- » Was your event well-organized, well-attended, and well-regarded?
- » Did you get positive media coverage?
- » If possible, compile your evaluation into a summary and distribute it to all the key players to be included in school newsletters and community bulletins. And don't forget to share your **success stories** with Action for Healthy Kids.

Regardless of which project you decide to implement, here are a few key strategies to ensure high student and family participation and volunteer engagement:

Communicate: Get students excited by making announcements at school. Better yet, let the kids make the announcements! Send home a flyer with details for parents. If you are concerned they won't get the information, give the kids an incentive to bring back a tear-off section with a parent's signature. You can even encourage challenges among the grades to see who can have the most families attend or sign up as volunteers. Once volunteers sign up, email them with a confirmation, and follow up with a call or email to remind them of their commitment, clarify expectations and answer questions as the event gets closer.

Incentivize: Check with your local retailers for prizes. Grocery store gift cards, sporting goods equipment, free lessons for martial arts or yoga, tennis shoes and camping equipment all make great prizes and awards for participants. Be creative, and come up with any type of prize that relates to healthy eating or being active. If you're hosting an event with stations, like a family fitness day or wellness fair, give kids an event card, and have each station pass out different stickers as they complete the activity; kids with a full card get entered in the prize drawing. Brainstorm creative ideas, and make it fun!

Recruit Volunteers: Engaging community partners as volunteers is fundamental when it comes to including them in your events. They are among your most valuable resources, but where do you find them, and how do you go about connecting with them? The first step is to brainstorm what you need and your current "assets"—parent network, individuals, community based organizations, businesses, faith-based organizations, higher learning institutions, etc. Who is already in your network? Who has the skills and interests that complement your needs? Who has been involved in the past?

- » The wider your reach, the greater chance you have to meet all your needs.
- » Just ask! Often times, people are more than willing to volunteer but have never been asked.
- » Keep asking! Our world is saturated with competing priorities. There's a chance your original message got lost in the mix.



Communicate and Promote

It is important to consider how you will communicate with people leading up to your event.

You should tailor the messages you send to ensure the groups you are communicating with receive information that is important to them. Elements could include:

- » Special arrangements (i.e. for people with a disability or with food allergies)
- » What to bring and what not to bring to the event
- » Services and facilities available at the event
- » A connection to the 'why' of the event—what impact it will have on students and families
- » The event times and specific activities

All communication materials should include contact information (telephone number and/or email address). Consider creating the following communication materials:

- » An event registration page for people to sign up to attend and/or volunteer—a hard copy in the school's main office is a good idea.
- » Advertising and publicity in local media outlets, including the calendar section of newspapers and websites (send calendar listings at least 3-4 weeks in advance of your event out).
- » Posters, flyers or brochures posted in the school and throughout the community and sent home with students.
- » Letters to, and meetings with, key community groups and parent networks.
- » Communications from food service and school meal menus.
- » Banners and signage
- » Facebook and other social media posts (use #EveryKidHealthy)

Communicating with Parents

Reaching out to parents can be a constant challenge. Even in this age of technology, we still have issues getting information to parents. So what do you do?

- » **Call them.** Set up a phone tree, and have several volunteer parents call from a list. Some districts now have automated calling systems. These are great, as long as they are not overused.
- » **Email them.** This can be a one-time letter sent out for the event, or you can produce a newsletter—monthly, every six weeks, even twice a year—and either copy and send home with students or post on your school's website.
- » **Translate!** We are a very diverse culture, and there are many parents who do not speak or read English. If you have a predominance of a specific culture, make sure your information is translated and that you are able to find bilingual volunteers to work with you.

Other communication options include:

- » The school newspaper.
- » School events such as report card pick-up, Family Literacy/Math Night, PTA/PTO meetings and athletic events.
- » Information tables or school yard signs when parents are picking up/dropping off their children.
- » Social media—use your school's Facebook page and other outlets to get the word out.

Using just one means of communication will not work. Sending a flyer home with students will reach some parents. Email will also reach a lot of parents, too, but to ensure you are reaching all parents, use as many forms of outreach as possible to maximize your reach.

Celebrating Success

Share Your Success Stories With Us!

It's important to celebrate the success of your Every Kid Healthy Week event as a way to thank those who volunteered and participated and to garner support for future wellness initiatives.

Many people want to be part of success and are often drawn to what is positive. Sharing success stories is a great way to celebrate the work of family and community volunteers and to highlight the accomplishments of your local school. Every Kid Healthy Week success stories represent the progress, achievements, and lessons learned from Action for Healthy Kids volunteers, and they inspire other schools to host similar events and engage their own school communities. The more stories volunteers (like you!) share, the more visibility schools get for their health and wellness activities. Consider using some of the media outlets you used to promote your event to share successes. **Please let us know what you did by sharing on social media and tagging us using #EKHW24!**



Count Your Action

Help us reach our goal of 1 million actions by 2025 by encouraging parents to take action, and **let us know what you did by sharing on social media and tagging us using #EKHW24!**

Get inspired by Every Kid Healthy Week success stories at **actionforhealthykids.org!**



Resources

All resources can be found at everykidhealthyweek.org.
Popular links include:

Backgrounder

A brief overview of the importance of Every Kid Healthy Week.

Flyer

Customize and distribute this promotional event flyer to staff, parents and community members.





Healthy Kids. Better World.

ACTION FOR
HEALTHY
KIDS 