Take Home Resources
to Foster Physically Active Lifestyles

Schools can encourage students and families to get active at home in many ways:

- Provide sample resources that students can take home to encourage family activity (such as the family activity tracker found on page 25).
- Include physical activity tips in your school’s newsletter or website.
- Promote physical activities at school events.
- Provide information regarding physical activity opportunities in the community.
- Educate parents and guardians about being physically active role models for students.
- Encourage parents and guardians to create a PLAY 60 Challenge at home.

On the following pages, you will find ideas schools can share with families to keep students active at home.
Why is physical activity so important and why are we committed to getting our students moving?

The American Heart Association recommends that children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Increased physical activity is associated with an increased life expectancy and decreased risk of cardiovascular disease as well as related risk factors such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity.

Childhood obesity rates are at all-time highs: today nearly one in three kids and teens in the United States are obese or overweight. That’s why our school is proud to participate in the NFL PLAY 60 Challenge, a program of the National Football League and the American Heart Association that inspires kids to get more physically active and helps schools encourage physically active lifestyles year-round.

We know that physical activity benefits the minds, bodies and spirits of children; and that inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles and can help reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Evidence also suggests a relationship between increased physical activity and improved academic performance. We can achieve our goal of getting kids physically active for 60 minutes every day — with the help of parents and families like you.
We’ve committed to get our students physically active for 30 minutes a day in school, and we’d like to ask you to help get them moving for 30 minutes at home.

As a parent, you have the greatest opportunity to impact your child’s choices and actions. Modeling sensible eating and being physically active for your child is one of the best ways you can ensure that they won’t grow up to be overweight and sedentary. When you plan for physical activity, plan to participate alongside your child. Your attitude will influence those of your child, so have some fun! Physical activity doesn't need to be strenuous to be beneficial, simply moving your body through space is physical activity.

You probably already know that physical activity is good for the body, but did you know it’s also good for the mind and spirit? Movement triggers a release of brain chemicals that helps improve learning. Physical activity develops the mind with improved social skills and discipline. The spirit benefits by the increase in confidence, self-esteem and teamwork.

Throughout the year, we’ll provide you with tips, information and ideas to encourage physical activity at home.
ACTIVE HOMEWORK IDEAS:
You can help your kids get moving WHILE they do their homework!
Here are some ideas:

**TV Challenge:** If students are watching TV at night, create a ‘workout routine’ conducive to commercial breaks (i.e., short 2-3 minute circuits such as push-ups, crunches, squats, etc.). Have the whole family come up with a new circuit for every week. Write it down and post it near the TV.

**Here are some ideas:**

- Jump rope 1 minute
- 3 sets of 12 tricep dips using the coffee table or a chair
- 15 squats holding a ball or book; lift the object into the air while jumping up from the squat
- Stand next to the wall and try to tap the highest point on the wall you can by jumping up — repeat 15 times
- 3 sets of push-ups — 10 each set
- Get on your hands and knees and while keeping your back straight, raise your right leg and left arm at the same time, switching back and forth. Repeat 20 times. Do 2 sets.
- Walk up and down the hall doing lunges
- 20 crunches — right elbow to left knee, left elbow to right knee. Do 3 sets.
More Active Homework ideas…

**Rev-up Reading:** When students are assigned reading homework, encourage activities to help improve concentration, such as stretches before beginning and a break every 20 minutes.

**Walk and Talk:** Kids often need to talk with their families about things at school — grades, upcoming tests, activities or events. Once a week, take a Walk-Talk with your kids (and pets) and pick a subject to discuss.

**Quiz Me:** Kids often get help studying from a family member or another student. While being drilled on spelling words or vocabulary, they can also do activity drills. Start an active study routine — for right answers do jumping jacks, for questions they still need work on do push-ups. Vary the activity to keep it fun. The study buddy should join in also.

**Walk it Out:** Encourage kids by taking them to visit a zoo, arboretum or an aquarium where they can walk around while they’re learning as part of a research project.
SETTING GOALS:
As a parent, you can encourage your kids to evaluate their food choices and physical activity habits. Here are some tips and guidelines from the American Heart Association to get you started:

**Vegetable intake:** Females - 2 cups per day. Males - 2.5 cups per day.
- Hint: a cup of vegetables looks about the size of a baseball

**Fruit intake:** 1.5 cups per day.
- Eat whole vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned) and fruits instead of drinking juices.
- Eat a lot of deeply colored vegetables and fruits (e.g., spinach, carrots, peaches and berries).

**Hours of sleep:** 8-10 hours per night

**Screen time (including TV, video games, computer):** less than 2 hours per day

**Vigorous physical activity (the kind that makes you sweat):** 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day
- Hint: if your child gets very little physical activity, they should build up to 60 minutes gradually, adding minutes every few days. A steady increase in the level of intensity should complement the gradual increase in time.

**Non-sugar beverages:** Limit the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages your kids consume; make sure they stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Other healthy options are up to one cup (8oz) of 100% fruit juice and 2-3 cups of fat-free or 1% fat milk.

**Fat-free/ 1% fat/low-fat dairy products:** 3 servings a day
- Examples of one serving:
  - 1 cup (8oz) fat-free (skim) or 1% fat milk
  - 1 1/2 oz fat-free, 1% fat or low-fat cheese
  - 1 cup (8oz) fat-free, 1% fat or low-fat unsweetened yogurt
BE A ROLE MODEL!
Parents can help kids develop healthy habits by setting a good example. Here are six great ways you can be a good health model for your kids:

**Walk the Talk:** Lead a healthy eating and active lifestyle. Your kids will notice your efforts. Try different types of physical activities and sports — even if you’ve never tried before.

**Make it Real:** Establishing achievable goals and limits are key to adopting any new behavior. Small steps and gradual changes can make a big difference in your health over time, so start small and build up. Write down the goals and track the progress so you can see how the family is measuring up.

**Team Up to Play:** Plan activities everyone will enjoy. Let the kids have a say in the planning, too (they’ll be more likely to get involved). Ensure your kids have an opportunity to participate in practice sessions and events.

**All Kids Need Encouragement:** Use sincere, positive language when participating in physical activities. Even when the adventure doesn’t go as planned, find something to compliment. Try some of these phrases: “You can do it! You should be proud of yourself! You’ve got what it takes! You’re getting better! Amazing effort! You’re a shining star! I knew you had it in you!”

**Earn Your Prize:** Reward healthy habits with more physical activity opportunities (entry into a local 5k) or a piece of equipment (football, tennis racquet, Frisbee, hacky sack). Don’t use screen time or food as a reward or punishment.

**Expect to Explore:** Your child has unique personalities and needs. Encourage him/her to Play My Way. The What’s Your Way to Play Quiz will help students assess the types of physical activity they will most likely enjoy. Remember, adolescents’ moods, thoughts and behavior fluctuate and that will affect their physical activity choices on a daily basis. That’s OK — everyone needs to Play My Way! Challenge your family to create and complete your own NFL PLAY 60 Challenge.
BE CREATIVE!
Coming up with new ways to be physically active at home can be a challenge, so try these activities to get movin’ for 30 minutes every day:

1. **Family Physical Activity Night**: Once a week have a family physical activity night in which the family takes a bike ride, goes for a walk or plays an active game.

2. **Are you Fitter than a Middle School Student?** Challenge your child to a contest to see if you are fitter than a middle school student. Choose five physical activities in which you can compete against your child and record your scores.

**Challenge Examples:**

- How many sit-ups can you perform in a minute?
- How many push-ups can you perform in a minute?
- How far can you jump forward from a standing position (standing long jump)?
- How fast can you walk or run a mile?
- How many times can you jump rope in a minute?
- How flexible are you? While seated with legs straight in front of you, how far can you reach? Measure the distance from your toes to the tips of your fingers (Sit and Reach).

**Challenge your child six weeks later to see if you and/or your child improve your scores.**
Continued…

3. **Family Disc Golf Game:** Create a family disc golf game in your neighborhood or park. Take turns choosing different targets to throw a Frisbee at and see how many throws it takes to hit the target. Example of targets: tree, post, sign, fence, trash can. You can use a ball instead of a Frisbee.

4. **Family Swim Night:** Go to your local pool and have a fun swim night with your family. Have contests such as: How long can you hold your breath? How long can you float on your back? How far can you glide after pushing off from the side of the pool? How big of a splash can you make? How long can you stand on your hands?

5. **Create a Treasure Hunt:** In a local park or your backyard, create a treasure hunt for your child by giving them different clues to find a hidden treasure or go on a Geocaching adventure with your family (www.geocaching.com).

6. **Family Sports Day-PLAY 60:** Chose three different sports to participate in during the day as a family. Participate in each sport a minimum of 20 minutes for a total of 60 minutes of physical activity. Ask your child to identify their favorite sport and the importance of participating in an enjoyable activity.

7. **Family Exercise Video Night:** Have your family do an exercise video together. Select a video from TV, cable, library or video store.

8. **Athlete Archetype Challenge:** Talk to your child about what Athlete Archetype they think they are and why. Choose an activity and participate at a level that aligns with their preferred Athlete Archetype. For example, if your child is a “Socializer,” they might enjoy a fun game of bowling without keeping score. If your child is a “Competitor,” they will want to keep score and win!

9. **Set a Goal:** As a family, set a goal to participate in four different types of physical activities per month.

10. **Student for a Day:** Take a back seat and let your child teach you one of their favorite physical activities or sport.
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11. **Film Study and Practice:** Watch a sports-related movie with your child and after the movie perform the activity that is associated with the movie. For example, watch “Rudy” and then play a touch football game with the family.

12. **Box Score:** Family members set a goal for the number of days they will participate in 60 minutes of physical activity. Each family member puts a checkmark on the calendar every time they participate in physical activity for 60 minutes a day. Reward family members who achieve their goals. Use the Family Tracker on page 25 to keep count of your accomplishments.

13. **Dinner Time:** In addition to being physically active, it’s important to eat right. Get your child involved in cooking and planning healthy meals. Make it a priority for your family to develop good eating habits.

14. **Gym Day:** Take your family to the local recreation center or Y and have fun being active.

15. **Dog Walk:** Have your family volunteer at the Humane Society and take a dog for a walk.

16. **Keep it Simple:** Toss the football, play catch or throw a Frisbee.

17. **Steps to Success:** Have a competition with your family to see who takes the most steps in one day. Wear a pedometer during your waking hours for a day to count the number of daily steps taken. If you only have one pedometer, take turns who wears the pedometer for the day. See who takes the most steps.

18. **Make a Difference in Your Neighborhood:** Have your family volunteer to clean a designated road or clean and paint a school or church. Help a neighbor do yard work or shovel snow.

19. **Backyard Games:** Play backyard games such as croquet, badminton, horse shoes or Bocce Ball with your family.

20. **Take a Picnic:** Pack a healthy meal and go on a picnic. Plan to participate in a physical activity such as flag football, hiking or a game of tag.

**Check out www.nflrush.com/play60 for fun games and additional ideas for a physically active lifestyle.**
TIPS AND ADVICE:
If your family hasn’t been very active before, it can be overwhelming to know where to start. Here are some tips to help you get active:

- **Warm up before increasing intensity.** Ease into higher activity levels like walking for 10 minutes to warm up your muscles before jogging.

- **Start small when setting goals.** Try working towards 60 minutes by adding 10 minutes here and five minutes there throughout the day, rather than doing it all at once.

- **Keep track of your healthy (or less healthy) habits to monitor your family’s overall health.** You might be surprised how much time you spend in front of the computer or how little activity you’re getting — write it down and see how you’re doing.

- **Be a pro.** Professionals never question “if” they are going to work out, but “when” they are going to work out. Pick a time you can be active as a family and stick to it! Try before school, after school or before bed.

- **Pay attention to the benefits.** As a family, talk about the benefits you’re noticing from being active together. Are you sleeping better? Concentrating better? In a better mood?

- **Drink lots of water.** Not drinking enough water can lead to dehydration, which can cause a reduction in performance, tiredness, upset stomach, cramps, or even heat exhaustion. Aim for staying hydrated by drinking water and including other sources of water in your diet, such as fruits and vegetables.
Continued…

• **Do not be afraid to get dirty and break a sweat!** An indicator that you’re getting a good workout is if you’re sweating or breathing hard.

• **Build up endurance.** Don’t expect to become a pro athlete overnight. Set a goal and work towards it by pushing yourself a little harder every day or every week.

• **Improve hand-eye coordination.** Practice throwing up a tennis ball, hackey sack, or even a paper ball in the air and catching it to improve your skills.

• **Know the long-term benefits of working out.** In addition to improving the way you look and feel now, an active lifestyle can reduce your chances of health problems when you’re older.

• **Step it up.** Take the stairs instead of riding the elevator. Make it a no-car day by walking or riding your bike — not only is it good for your body, but good for the environment.

• **Have fun!** Do not forget that staying fit is a lifetime goal and should be something you enjoy doing. Try new activities to keep it interesting.
DAILY CHALLENGES:
Parents can challenge their kids daily to some fun physical activity. Here are some ideas to get your family started!

- **Boogie Down:** Turn up the music, let loose, and bust a move! Dance for 10-20 minutes until you’re out of breath.
- **Take it Outside:** If it is nice out, do something in the great outdoors like go for a walk or start a game of touch football in the park.
- **Have a Family Field Day:** Get the family together and head to the park for some old fashioned fun. Try kickball, tag, or flag football.
- **Commercial Break:** While watching television, do some quick sit-ups, push-ups, or jumping jacks.
- **Add a Twist to Household Chores:** Instead of dragging your feet, try jumping from room to room or do some lunges while tidying up.
- **Share Your Story:** Help motivate family members and friends to become physically active. Talk as a family about the importance of activity. Do you have a family history of cardiovascular disease? How can physical activity play a part in keeping your family healthy?
- **Ditch the Remote:** Get up and change the channels old school style.
- **Go Screenless:** Make it a no computer, video game or TV day.
- **Neighborhood Field Day:** Gather neighborhood friends and family to participate in an organized team sports event or fun field day.
- **Blast From the Past:** Teach the kids some of your favorite games from growing up. Try out Red Rover, Kick the Can or Steal the Bacon.
HEALTHY POST-GAME SNACKS:
Because almost one in three kids and teens in the United States are overweight or obese, it’s important for parents, coaches and others to make sure kids have access to healthier foods — including post-play snacks. All too often, kids are rewarded with unhealthy foods and sugary full-calorie drinks, but lots of healthier choices not only taste great, but are better for them too!

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<th>Instead of…</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar-sweetened beverages</td>
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<td>• Low sodium vegetable juice</td>
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<td>• Water</td>
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<td>Full calorie chips and crackers</td>
<td>• Unsalted sunflower seeds</td>
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<td>• Whole-grain crackers (fat-free or low fat)</td>
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<td>• Fat-free, 1% fat or low-fat cheese sticks</td>
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<td>• Plain, fat-free, 1% fat or low-fat yogurt</td>
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<td>Sweets and baked goods</td>
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<td>• Fat-free, 1% fat or low fat unsweetened fruit yogurt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sugar-free ice pops</td>
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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS FUN!
Physical Activity is Fun!

Begin a lifelong commitment to being fit by building physical activity into daily schedules. Start small with a goal to reach 60 minutes a day.

The benefits of becoming active are numerous. You'll notice immediate changes in how you feel (mood, self-esteem, strength, endurance) and see long-term health benefits. Physical activities come in all shapes and sizes — from light to moderate to vigorous.

**Remember:**

If you’re breathing hard and sweating, your heart is pumping!
Anything that gets you moving can be physical activity; so find ways to make it fun!
Try touch football, rock climbing or dance.
Find ways to include the whole family, such as an evening walk or jump rope contest.
Participating in the **NFL PLAY 60 Challenge** means committing to getting physically active for at least 60 minutes every day — 30 minutes in school and 30 minutes at home. Ask your family to participate in the Challenge with you at home and get movin’ every day of the week! Use this grid to track your family’s activity and see who has the most physical activity minutes at the end of the week.

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