

How Tomorrow Moves: Opportunities to Increase Physical Activity and Create PSE Change in Schools

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Introduction

Schools offer many opportunities to get kids moving. Through the School Grants for Healthy Kids: How Tomorrow Moves initiative, Action for Healthy Kids has worked with almost 500 schools over the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years to increase physical activity to at least 30 minutes per day (half of the recommended 60 minutes daily) and improve their policy, environmental and system to support active students, parents and communities.

Methods

Schools worked to add movement to their student's day by implementing innovative physical activity strategies including:

- Recess/play-space/gymnasium refurbishing
- Equipment for recess and physical education
- Brain breaks
- Before- and after-school programming
- Walking and biking to school programming
- Fitness testing.

In addition, schools engaged family and community volunteers through the nationally recognized Every Kid Healthy Week.



Impact of Physical Activity Grants since 2013:



Results

Schools reported eight common themes:

- Increased student awareness on the importance of PA
- Increased physical activity
- Student participation
- Student engagement and enthusiasm
- Improved student nutrition
- Improved student focus/behavior
- Parent support
- Teacher support

"If what they are learning is done in a fun, stress-free environment, students are much more focused and willing to participate. That's what we are accomplishing through active academics."

--David Genova, Rupert Elementary (PA)

Over 93% of schools were able to increase their physical activity levels to meet the recommended 30 minutes during the school day while 48% of schools reported at least 60 minutes of physical activity at school (meeting the full daily recommendation). 88% of students were actively engaged in the physical activity initiative. 98% of students and 95% of parents reported being physically active daily was important to them. In addition, schools reported policy, environmental and systems changes as well that positively impact student physical activity levels.

Discussion

Using an innovative model, Action for Healthy Kids is helping schools increase student physical activity significant manner while also addressing school policy, systems and environmental changes to improve school wellness environments. Providing schools with seed money to get started results in increase physical activity for students, staff, parents and increases community engagement.

