



School Wellness
Community Guide



healthiest
— state —
initiative

Introduction

An integrated school, parent, and community approach can enhance the health and well-being of Iowa students. Iowa Team Nutrition and Iowa Partners: Action for Healthy Kids have partnered to develop this guide to identify specific strategies and actions that schools can take to increase community engagement in school wellness activities.

The Healthiest State Initiative

The Healthiest State Initiative is a privately led public effort to engage Iowans and their communities throughout the state to make Iowa the healthiest state in the nation by 2016. Programs within the initiative motivate individuals and communities to be active more often, find positive ways to cope with stress, improve nutrition, and create stronger communities and relationships. Use this guide in your community to support the initiative.

For more information or to join the mission on becoming the Healthiest State, [Click here](#).

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The updated school wellness policies will help bring more people into the process to ensure kids are surrounded by a healthy school and community environment.

School Wellness Policy

Local wellness policies are an important tool for parents and school districts to promote student wellness. Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program were required to have wellness policies in place beginning in the 2006-2007 school year. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 expands the scope of wellness policies, by requiring that additional stakeholders be included in the development, implementation and review of the wellness policies. Schools are now required to inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the local wellness policies.

Tools to Make It Happen!

To effectively inform and update the public about the local wellness policy, the school needs to be actively monitoring policies and practices that are a part of the local wellness policy. The Iowa Department of Education and Iowa State University have developed an online *Local School Wellness Assessment* tool.

This tool allows a school to assess its current policies and practices and track progress from year to year using the reporting feature. This tool is available to schools free of charge, [Click here](#).

Iowa Association of School Boards sample wellness policy along with support materials and resources, [Click here](#).

Healthy Kids Act

The purpose of the Healthy Kids Act is to establish physical activity requirements for students and to establish nutritional content standards for food and beverages sold during the school day. Iowa Department of Education has developed a webpage to support schools with the implementation of the Healthy Kids Act nutritional content standards at the local level, guide schools in reexamining their school district wellness policy, and engage parents and the greater school community in recognizing the impact they have as role models, [Click here](#).

Promote Family Involvement in School Wellness?

Family involvement is a vital part of school wellness programs. Schools can take a number of steps to help families feel more comfortable in being involved with improving school wellness.

- Recognize that families come in many forms and sizes, and have different values and beliefs.
- Promote and display many diverse kinds of families in materials.
- Offer translation and other culturally sensitive services to non-English speaking families.
- Treat parents as resources rather than barriers. Determine how they can share their talents.
- Reach out to all families, not just those that attend parent meetings or regularly volunteer.
- Create a safe, welcoming environment for families.

Tools to Make It Happen!

Fuel Up to Play60 Parent Engagement Tools, [Click here](#).

Team Nutrition Middle School Parent Sheet, [Click here](#).

Team Nutrition Middle School Parent Video, [Click here](#).

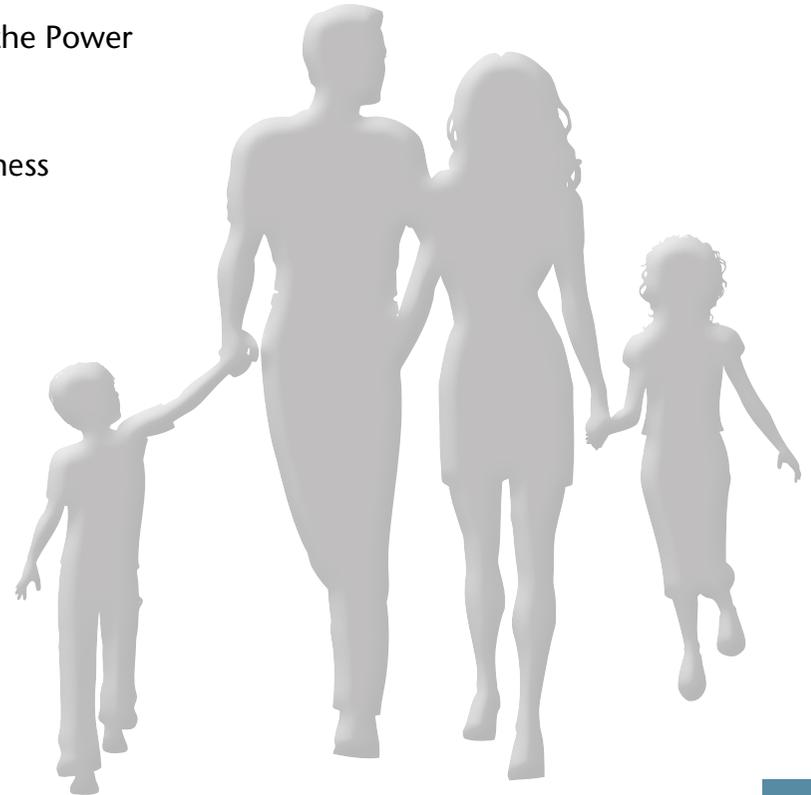
School Health Advisory Councils, Iowa Dept of Public Health, [Click here](#).

Centers for Disease Control - *Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health* [Click here](#).

California Project Lean Toolkit Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) resources, [Click here](#).

Action for Healthy Kids – Parents are the Power Resource: [Click here](#).

Action for Healthy Kids – School Wellness Resources for Parents: [Click here](#).



HealthierUS School Challenge

Prove to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community that your school is one of the best in the Nation, committed to nutrition and physical activity! The HealthierUS School Challenge nationally recognizes schools at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Gold of Distinction award levels for:

- Serving school lunches that reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, that include offering a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain products, and low-fat and fat-free milk.
- Restricting the availability of foods and beverages at school to those that meet healthier guidelines.
- Offering nutrition education for students to learn to make healthy choices.
- Providing physical education and opportunities for students to be physically active during the school day.

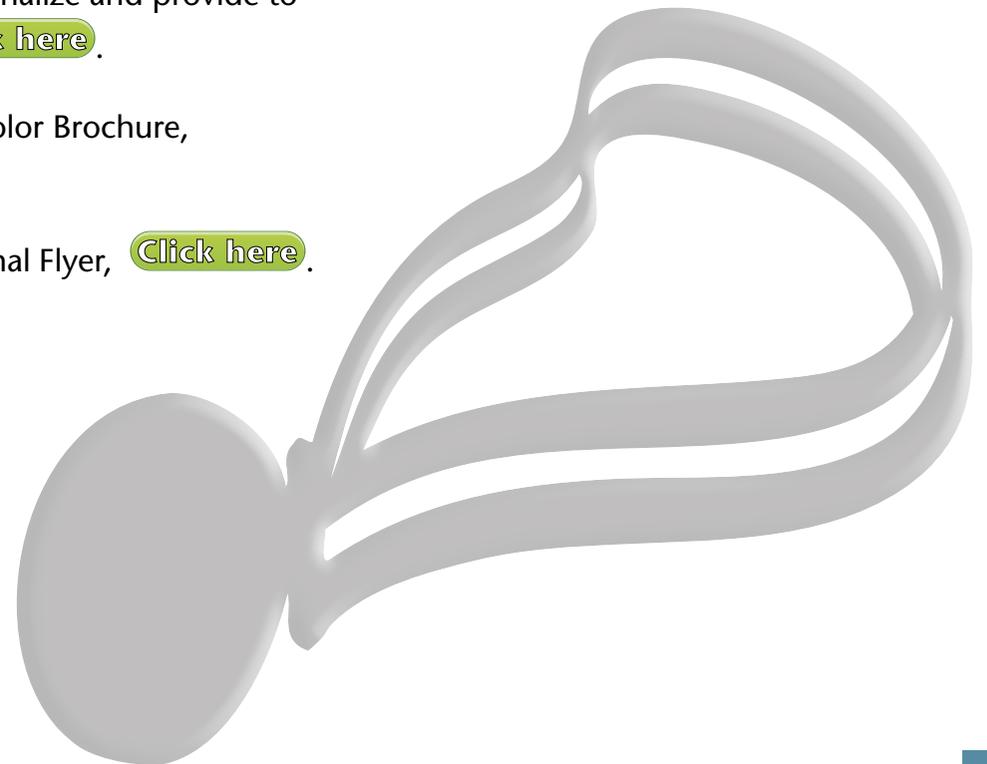
Tools to Make It Happen!

Recruit parents and community members to serve on your HealthierUS School Challenge Advisory Team. For more information about the challenge, [Click here](#).

Use the following to generate excitement and communicate information about the Challenge:

- HUSSC Award Winner Press Release - a template to personalize and provide to the media, [Click here](#).
- HUSSC Tri-fold Color Brochure, [Click here](#).
- HUSSC Promotional Flyer, [Click here](#).

- HUSSC Sample Letter to Parents, [Click here](#).
- State-developed HUSSC Promotional Materials on the Healthy Meals Resource System, [Click here](#).
- HUSSC Success Stories, [Click here](#).



Family Fun Nights and Health Fairs

School family nights are a great way to bring families together at school for an evening of fun activities that include games, events, and competitions that everyone can enjoy.

Engage community organizations to perform health screenings, provide educational materials at a booth, provide healthy food samples, coupons, information about their business, donations for giveaways.

Tools to Make It Happen!

Fuel Up to Play60 Planning Tools, [Click here](#).

Family, Food and Fitness Day, [Click here](#).

School Health Community Fair, [Click here](#).

Ideas for Physical Activity: Zumba, Pilates, Yoga, Karate, bean bag toss, potato sack race, circuit stations, spoon and egg race, Wii Sports station, obstacle course, football target throw, mini-frisbee golf course, parachute, and [Minute to Win It](#) games.



Take Your Event Outside! Here are some activities that connect children to nature and get them moving, from Iowa Department of Natural Resources. [Click here](#)

Ideas for Nutrition Education: Build a healthy snack station, activity sheets, and taste testing. If people try and like healthier foods, they'll be more likely to continue healthy eating habits, [Click here](#).

Set up computer kiosks and for parents to

complete an on-line health assessment. The American Heart Association's My Life Check, is a health assessment tool that takes a few minutes to complete and provides a personal heart score and life plan, [Click here](#).

Game On! Taste Test resource, [Click here](#).

Fuel Up to Play60 Taste Test resource, [Click here](#).

Iowa State University Extension has a series of publications entitled *Raising Healthy Kids* available for families at no charge, [Click here](#).

Contact a local Hy-Vee! Hy-Vee dietitians are an excellent resource for school health fairs. They may bring hands-on games, nutrition information to share, deliver wellness presentations, and have healthy food samples. Use the dietitian online finder tool to find a dietitian in the area, [Click here](#).

Don't forget about including Power Panther. Contact Iowa Team Nutrition to receive a Power Panther costume for your event.

School Fundraisers and Concession Stands

Throughout the school year many fundraisers are held. Fundraising with healthy foods and non-food items demonstrates a commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, and allows students to receive consistent messages.

Concessions are a part of most school-sponsored sporting events. They are often used to help student groups and clubs raise needed activity funds. Many of the foods and beverages sold at concession stands are often high in sugar and/or fat. Concession sales can be a great opportunity to provide and promote healthy choices. Students will buy and consume healthy foods and beverages when the options are accessible, affordable and tasty. Concession sales can be profitable and contribute to the health and well-being of students.

The University of Iowa (UI) is developing a guide titled, Supporting Improved Nutrition at School Concession Stands.

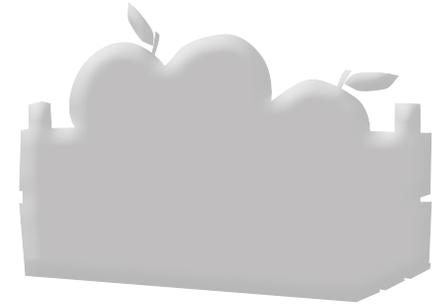
A partnership with the Muskie Boosters of Muscatine Community School District showed that concessions stands can make healthy changes and retain profits. UI is seeking additional volunteer communities to test the guide. Evaluation will include short surveys of students and group members, short interviews of group leaders and sales data. Time will be compensated. Please e-mail jennifer-park-mroch@uiowa.edu to be a part of this project.

Tools to Make It Happen!

School fundraisers using locally grown and produced Iowa food and products can be a healthy alternative. Teach kids about agriculture, to support local products and the economy, [Click here](#).

For non-food ideas for school fundraising, view this Iowa State University Extension publication, [Click here](#).

Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools is an initiative of the Food Family Farming Foundation, National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, United



Fresh Produce Association Foundation, and Whole Foods Market in support of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative. To find out how your school can apply for a salad bar grant, [Click here](#).

Healthy Fundraising Ideas, [Click here](#).

Michigan Department of Community Health, [Click here](#).

South Dakota Department of Health Sample Concession Stand Policy Guide, [Click here](#).

Nutrition Environment Measures Survey-Vending (NEMS-V) was developed to evaluate the worksite vending machine environment. This tool can be used to select healthy concession stand choices by identifying them with a green, yellow, or red sticker, [Click here](#).

School Parties

Classrooms have many celebrations throughout the school year. Traditionally classroom celebrations center around food, which often includes less healthy choices. Encourage families to provide healthy alternatives to reinforce the importance of nutrition and physical activity taught in the classroom.

Tools to Make It Happen!

Work with the foodservice department to see if there is interest in setting up a catering menu for school parties that parents can use. Items could include: fruit and veggie platters, whole grain crackers and cheese and yogurt parfaits.

Get non-food ideas for classroom rewards from this Iowa State University Extension publication, [Click here](#).

Action for Healthy Kids School Parties Resource, [Click here](#).

Ideas for Healthier Classroom Celebrations, [Click here](#).

Foods Brought from Home List, [Click here](#).

Stories in Motion – Short stories that prompt physical activities, [Click here](#).

Walking Clubs and Walk-to-School Program

Walking is a form of exercise accessible to just about everybody. It's safe, simple and doesn't require practice. Walking is free, easy to fit into daily life, and can be a great form of transportation. Organizing a walking club or walk-to-school program at your school can energize the entire community!

Tools to Make It Happen!

Iowa Team Nutrition Walking Works for Schools, [Click here](#).

Safe Routes to School, [Click here](#).

Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit, [Click here](#).



Fuel Up to Play60, [Click here](#).

Iowans Fit for Life Walking with a Purpose, walkability audit tool for schools, [Click here](#).

The Iowa Bicycle Coalition's Safe Routes to School program provides FREE workshops that help communities create a walking and bicycling action plans for school zones, [Click here](#).

Consider retired members of the community to assist with walk-to-school programs. RSVP is Iowa's primary source for volunteers over the age of 55. For a list of RSVP contacts across the state, [Click here](#).

Iowa Department of Transportation's No-cost or Low-cost Safe Routes to School programs, [Click here](#).



School Gardens

Families are an important addition to a school gardening team and can provide support in obtaining resources for the garden, working in the garden, and promoting the garden. Students from local community colleges may offer knowledge, guidance and physical labor. Local businesses can provide support throughout the year.

Master Gardeners and 4-H clubs are a tremendous resource. They can work with the students in the garden, show them how to plant, what to plant, how to work with seedlings in the greenhouse, and teach them basic gardening in the classroom. Are there community gardens close to the school? Consider community gardens as an existing opportunity to partner with.

Tools to Make It Happen!

Iowa State University Extension Master Gardener Program, [Click here](#).

LSU Ag Center, Research and *School Garden Tool-Kit*, [Click here](#).

Wisconsin Department of Health Services *Youth Garden Tool-Kit*, [Click here](#).

ISU Extension *Growing in the Garden Curriculum*, [Click here](#).

Farm-to-School

Farm-to-School is broadly defined as any program that connects schools and local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, providing agricultural, education opportunities, and supporting local farmers. There are many things you can do to implement “Farm-to-School.”

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Invite a local farmer, chef or have food service staff present an activity or talk to students about a food and how it’s grown.
- Plan nutrition education activities, such as Harvest of the Month, featuring a local food product that is in season.

- Collaborate with teachers to plan an outdoor garden plot or container gardening activity.
- Encourage the use of local foods as healthy school fundraiser or feature at a special event.

Tools to Make It Happen!

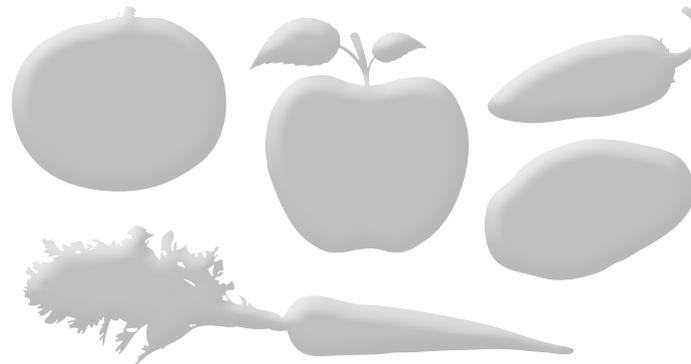
Iowa Dept of Education Farm-to-School webpage, [Click here](#).

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship webpage, [Click here](#).

Fuel Up to Play60, [Click here](#).

National Farm to School Network, [Click here](#).

American Heart Association Teaching Garden Program - Garden-Themed Lessons, [Click here](#).



Newsletter Templates

Many schools have newsletters that are published monthly on their website, placed on the back of the school lunch menu or distributed through an e-mail. Newsletters are an excellent way to communicate nutrition and physical activity information to families. Wellness resources and ideas can be in the form of a featured article or an entire section of the newsletter.

Tools to Make It Happen!

Pick-a-better Snack[™] has several newsletter templates to be used for each month of the school year, [Click here](#).

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach also offers two newsletters, *Growing Up Healthy and Active* and *Words on Wellness* that may be used on your website or in your monthly newsletter. Contact the Nutrition and Health Program Specialist serving your county to request these newsletters, [Click here](#). Click on your county and then click on the 'staff' tab to find the specialist serving your county.

School Nutrition Association *Social Media Guide* (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), [Click here](#).

Connect the cafeteria to the classroom, parents and to the community with *Montana's Eat Smart. Play Hard. Cafeteria Tool-kit*, [Click here](#).

Here are some ideas for article topics:

- Fuel Up to Play60 Resource, [Click here](#).
- Monthly school breakfast articles.
 - o USDA Resource, [Click here](#).
 - o Iowa School Breakfast Challenge, [Click here](#).
- Say Yes to Family Meals, Iowa State Extension, [Click here](#).
- Fuel Up to Play60 – At Home Tools
 - o Parent Newsletter, [Click here](#).
 - o Tips for Nutrition, [Click here](#).
 - o Tips for Physical Activity, [Click here](#).
- The National Wildlife Federation's, "Be Out There" campaign includes practical tools for families, schools and communities to make being outdoors a fun, healthy and automatic part of everyday life, [Click here](#).



MAY



Pick a better snack & Act with your family.

MOM-TO-MOM

My kids have their opinions about certain things. Since they started tasting so many fruits and vegetables as part of nutrition education at school, they have really found their voice when it comes to the foods they enjoy. They have learned that you can't decide if you like a food until you try it at least once and sometimes several times. They help me make my grocery list each week and I know when they tell me they like a fruit or vegetable that they will eat it and I don't have to risk it going to waste.

~ Tracey, a mother of two in Iowa

Eat well and your kids will too.



COST COMPARISON

As summer approaches, it is sometimes cheaper to buy in-season fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market. The markets are loaded with rhubarb, asparagus, spinach and strawberries!

To find a Farmers Market near you, log on to www.idalsdata.org/iowaData/farmersMarket.cfm



GET REAL!

Get moving during commercial breaks. There's usually 15 minutes of commercials for every hour show. Dance or move during every commercial break with your family. Use the commercial breaks to pick up the room, put things away, fold laundry, or do the dishes.



WHY IT MATTERS

Kids who watch the most television are most at risk of being overweight. Fast food, soda and sugary snacks are often advertised during kids' TV shows making kids want those foods even more. There are other things kids can do inside even if the weather isn't good or if it feels unsafe to play outside. Have your kids help cook dinner. Talk about the highs (good things) and lows (bad things) of the day. Play cards or board games as a family. Limiting TV gives us more time to spend with each other and keeps us all active and energetic.

Visit our website at www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabetersnack

Funded by USDA's Snap-Ed Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer. In collaboration with the Iowa Dept. of Public Health, Iowa's Food Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Go to www.yourfood.iowa.gov for more information.

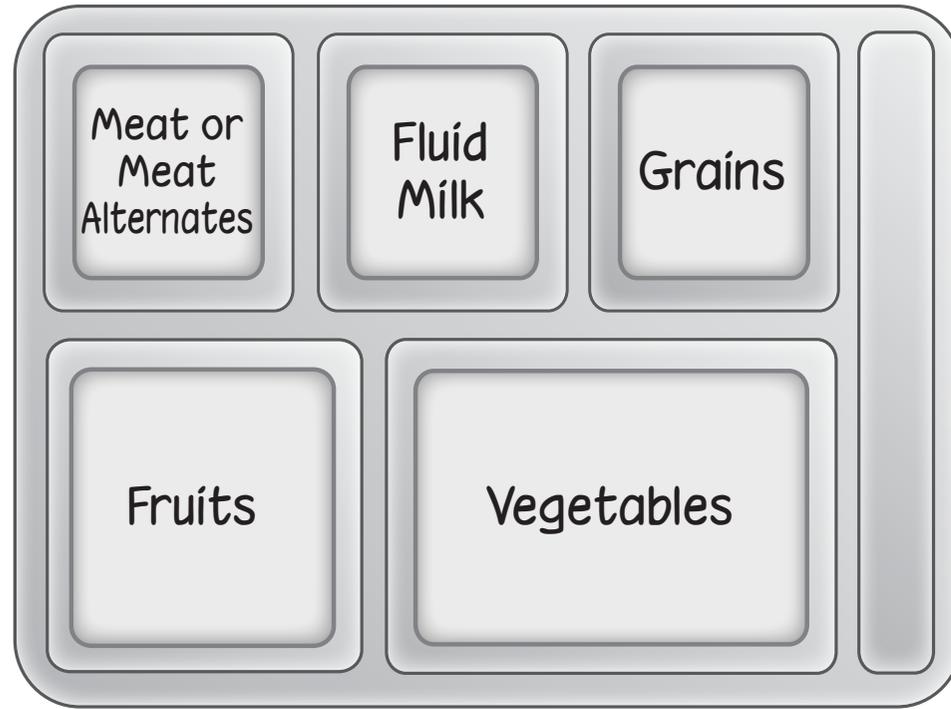


Nutrition Education Take-Home Bag

Teachers can create a nutrition education take-home bag to share the lessons learned in the classroom with families. The bag could contain resources that promote the consumption of healthy foods and promote physical activity. A distribution system could be set up to ensure all families have an opportunity to utilize the bag.

Tools to Make It Happen!

To view a sample nutrition education take-home bag, [Click here](#).



Take Your Parents to School Lunch

As part of National School Lunch Week, the School Nutrition Association has teamed up with KIWI Magazine for National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day. In October (or a day of your choosing) consider hosting a “National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day” and spread the word to parents that healthy and tasty options are being served in your cafeteria every day.

Communication Tools to Make It Happen!

National Take Your Parents to Lunch Day Checklist, [Click here](#).

Iowa Department of Education New Meal Pattern Tools, [Click here](#).

Wellness Workshops for Parents and Community Members

Consider offering a series of short wellness workshops for parents and community members. The workshops can be delivered by a dietitian or nurse from a local hospital or parent volunteer. Parents and community members could learn more about eating healthfully and becoming more physically active and the importance of their role modeling potential. Their increased knowledge in these topics could build support for overall healthy lifestyle choices that are easy, accessible and desirable for all, including the students of the school district.

Tools to Make It Happen!

The Centers for Disease Control has a series, of six one-hour workshops available to download titled, Eat Healthy – Be Active Community Workshops. Each workshop includes a lesson plan, learning objectives, talking points, hands-on activities, and handouts. The workshops are designed for adults in a wide variety of community settings, [Click here](#).

Invite a chef from the community to assist with food demonstrations. To locate chefs in your community that are interested in working with schools, visit the Chefs Move to Schools webpage, [Click here](#).

Summer Food Service Program

During the school year, many children receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch through the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. What happens when school lets out for the summer? The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to fill the nutrition gap and make sure children can get the nutritious meals they need. Sponsors of the program do not have to be schools. Public or private non-profit schools, local, municipal, county, tribal or state government are examples of local organizations that often serve as SFSP sponsors.

Tools to Make It Happen!

To learn more about the Summer Food Service Program, including eligibility, how to become a sponsor, and a current list of sponsors, [Click here](#) or contact Stephanie Dross at stephanie.dross@iowa.gov.



Shared Use Agreements with School and Community Fitness Centers

Shared use is a way to increase opportunities for children and adults to be more physically active. It refers to two or more entities – usually a school and a city or private organization– sharing indoor and outdoor spaces such as gymnasiums, athletic fields and playgrounds.

Examples of shared use:

- A school fitness center is available to community members on the weekend.
- A school and swim team share a pool.
- A school opens its soccer field to a local league for weekend games.
- A YMCA opens its gym to the local PE teacher so students have a place to exercise

Tools to Make It Happen!

Joint Use Taskforce, [Click here](#).

Shared Use of School and Community Facilities, [Click here](#).

Model Shared Use Agreements, [Click here](#).



Grocery Stores and Restaurants

Decisions about food are complicated and many factors determine the food choices families make. One powerful way to encourage healthy choices is to put messaging about those choices at the point-of-purchase in grocery stores and restaurants.

- Consider partnering with local grocery stores to place signage in the produce department of the grocery store. The signage can be tied back to the messages disseminated to parents and children through the school. Grocery stores are typically eager to partner on projects that have the potential to increase their sales. Request food sampling sessions at local stores using the fruits and vegetables that are promoted at school.

Campaigns like *Pick-a-better Snack*[™] have ready-made posters you can use, [Click here](#).



The Healthy Options tool-Kit is a collection of materials, developed by the Prevention Research Center for Rural Health in the University of Iowa College of Public Health. The tool-kit allows health departments, coalitions, and other groups a way to work with restaurants to set up their own Healthy Options program. To view the tool-kit, [Click here](#).

Western Kentucky University, Healthy Weight Kids Coalition and the Institute of Medicine partnered through the Kellogg Health of the Public Fund to develop a “smart card” discount program to encourage students to make healthy food decisions at local restaurants, [Click here](#).

Tools to Make It Happen!

Hy-Vee Grocery Stores have implemented the NuVal® Nutritional Scoring System. The system scores food on a scale of 1 to 100, based on nutritional criteria. To learn more about the system, [Click here](#).

To contact a Hy-Vee dietitian to present information or provide resources about NuVal® for students, school staff, or parents, [Click here](#).



Working with the Media

Publicizing an event or program means bringing community awareness to the issue, generating support, and highlighting the program and the positive work it does for youth in the community. The media especially enjoy hearing from young people, so have students involved when promoting the event or program.



Tools to Make It Happen!

To maximize chances of getting coverage, take care in how the program is characterized. The media is more likely to cover a story if they feel it is “news” as opposed to a simple human interest story. Here are some tips:

- Connect the program to a national initiative such as the First Lady’s *Let’s Move* initiative or changes to the National School Lunch Program.
- Include an on-air demonstration or performance. This adds production quality to the story and may pique the interest of the media.
- Pitch the story as informative for viewers. The chances of coverage will increase when sharing tips and resources that will be valuable to viewers.

Team Nutrition, Empowering Youth Resource, page 91, [Click here](#).



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