



Healthy Choices

The Fond du Lac
School District
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Ready, Set, Go for Healthy Bodies

Use Your Fuel

School communities in the Fond du Lac District are putting renewed emphasis on exercise, along with education about healthier food choices for students. We want to help our youth cut the fat and sugar they consume, and increase their body movement to efficiently burn the fuel they eat.

Our physical education classes are focusing less on team sports and more on fitness for life. We are talking with our students about the importance of moving their bodies in some form of exercise for about an hour total each day.

In that same spirit of caring, we invite parents to put a new premium on physical activity for the family. Please talk with your children about what they are learning at school about being healthier people.

To spark your conversation, we are sharing these details about the healthful changes we are making in our schools, and some ideas for ways to add fun and fitness to your family time. It can be as easy as parking a few blocks from school and adding a short walk to your morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up!



Follow the Fitness W.A.Y.

The Fond du Lac School District was among the 2006 recipients of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) grant, from the U.S. Department of Education. PEP grants provide funds for equipment, support and physical education teacher training to expand and improve physical education programs for the benefit of student health and fitness.

Before applying for the grant, our PEP Grant Committee created a program called, "Light the W.A.Y. (Wellness, Activity and Youth) to Fitness." The philosophy of this program moves gym classes away from team sports toward an emphasis on lifelong physical fitness activities. Classes will include teaching the skills for roller skating, jumping rope, Frisbee golf, wall climbing and obstacle courses. New equipment will include gloves and ball Ts for softball, and the use of pedometers and heart rate monitors to illustrate the amount of movement and the heart beats per minute that equal vigorous exercise. Students will also be introduced to resistance training with visuals that show the muscles being worked.

Hopefully, you've seen a take-home benefit from this grant: a jump rope for every elementary student in the district. We've been pleased to see the ropes go home and then come back to school for recess use. There is a lot of joy in jumping, along with benefits for the heart, lungs and other large muscles. School staff shares your children's enthusiasm for their growing skill!

Get a Jump on Exercise

Our Physical Education staff encourages students and their family members to do 30 to 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. Why?

Vigorous daily exercise increases bone density, helps maintain healthy weight, and decreases risk of diet related diabetes, heart attack, colon cancer and high blood pressure. Obesity and diabetes have grown as health concerns for school-age children in the United States. Incorporating healthy activity now helps prevent health problems in youth and in adulthood.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention made the recommendation for 60 minutes a day, noting that the activity can be accumulated over the course of the day. Making time for three to six 10-minute episodes may feel more attainable. And it can be fun: active recess and after school play counts toward the total.

Move Cool at School

Waters kids are "jumping to it." Our extracurricular jump rope club has great participation and our kids are excited to show their skills on the playground and at a recent school-wide talent show. Plus, we raised our heart rates and funds for the American Heart Association through Jump Rope/Hoops for Heart in April.

Our three-week roller skating unit in Spring gym classes ended with a Family Skate Night celebration at Spectrum Roller Rink, sponsored by the Waters PTO.

Freezing temps and rain may sometimes keep Waters kids inside, but Principal Cathy Daniels keeps the student body moving with recess workouts like Tae Bo.

Recesses are now generally scheduled before lunch, based on studies that show health benefits of activity before eating.

Waters School connects our kids with the Fond du Lac Recreation Department for active summer fun in softball and soccer.

Resources

Online:

- Information on improving health habits. www.healthierUS.gov
- BAM: Body and Mind website for ages 9-13. www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/
- Special recommendations for young people. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/recommendations/young.htm
- Verb: It's What You Do, encouraging exercise for tweens. www.verbnow.com/
- 99 Tips for Family Fitness Fun. www.shapeup.org/pubs/99tips/index.html

At the Fond du Lac Public Library:

- Fitness Fun: Pilates for Kids DVD
- Wai Lana's Little Yogis yoga DVD
- *Keeping Fit* by Sylvia Goulding
- *Fit Kids* (birth to teens) by Mary L. Gavin
- *And many more books and DVDs.*

"Home Work" = Happy!

Family Game Night. Take a breather from cards and board games and put a little twist on family fun with the body bending floor game, "Twister." Or, take the games outdoors to get a jump on hopscotch and jump rope, and have a ball with softball, tennis, kickball, badminton, or croquet. Don't forget tag and kick the can.

Spin Cycle. Aid digestion with an after-dinner family bike ride; walk to the park or around the neighborhood.

Teacher's Helper. Come to school to participate in gym classes, recesses and special activities. Are you a whiz at tennis? Do you love to skate? Share your talent and enthusiasm with a class.

Healthy Home. Enlist the kids' help in vacuuming, sweeping, snow shoveling, raking, mowing, planting and harvesting the garden. Everyone will get exercise—and sharing the chores means both time together and more time for fun when the work is done.

Travel Action. Don't leave the area for active, vacation-style fun: head out for warm weather mini-golf or water parks; plan skating and sledding in the cold.

See? Exercise **is** fun! Now, go fly a kite.