

Healthy Weight Initiative
Alabama Department of Public Health
The RSA Tower
 201 Monroe Street, Suite 1040
 Montgomery, AL 36130



SPRING 2009

Healthy Weight

INITIATIVE

NEWSLETTER



NEWS AND EVENTS

NATIONAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND FITNESS DAY WALK

Take a break from work for good health. Go for a walk! The Employee Health and Fitness Walk is sponsored each year by the AL Department of Public Health, the Governor's Commission on Physical Activity, and the AL Sports Festival. Join the fun at the Capitol or host your own walk at work. Everyone is invited to participate.

When: May 1, 2009
Where: State Capitol, Montgomery
What time: 11:30am – 1:15pm

SPRING FAMILY PICNIC – FOR FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH DIABETES

Enjoy the spring weather at a picnic. Activities include swimming, face painting, games, kayaking, boating and more! Parents will have the opportunity to participate in a roundtable discussion about diabetes with health professionals. Lunch is provided. Join the fun for only \$5 per family.

When: May 16, 2009
Where: Camp Grace, Mobile
What time: 11:30am – 3:00pm

STATE OBESITY TASK FORCE

Do you have an interest in obesity issues in Alabama? Get involved and join the State Obesity Task Force. Learn about interventions and programs that are taking place throughout the state to address obesity.

When: May 11, 2009 from 9:00 am until noon
Where: Alabama Power Company, Clanton

TV TURNOFF WEEK

I'm Unplugged! Are you? Take time in April to unplug the television. Make screen-time-reduction a vital and integral part of all plans that improve health, education and wellness while building stronger families and communities. Visit www.screentime.org for more information on how to participate in TV Turnoff Week.

When: April 20-26, 2009
Where: Nationwide

DIABETES YOUTH RIVER REGION "CATCH AND RELEASE"

This fishing event is being held for the River Region and Montgomery area children and youth having diabetes. Families and their children are invited participate in this event for a fun day of fishing at no charge.

When: May 17, 2009
Where: Lagoon Park, Montgomery
What time: 1:00pm - 4:00pm

WOMEN'S HEALTH 5K RUN & 1 MILE MOTHER-DAUGHTER WALK

Save the Date! Take part in the first annual Women's Health 5K run and Mother-Daughter Walk sponsored by the Office of Women's Health. Visit www.alabamahealthywomen.com for more details.

When: May 9, 2009
Where: St. Vincent's Hospital, Birmingham



CELEBRATE PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH

May is Fitness Month and is a perfect time to encourage afterschool students to get more active for better health and to get fit.

Roughly 16% of children and adolescents between 6-19 are overweight and the numbers have been climbing over the past 20 years. In Alabama, the overweight levels are slightly higher and more than half of this group is not meeting recommended levels of physical activity. A current Alabama afterschool project has found a staggering 29–50% of participants are obese. The good news is regular physical activity is one of the most important things to do to improve the health of kids in this setting.

The most recent national guidelines released in 2008 outline that children and adolescents need at least 60 minutes of daily active play. The afterschool setting is the perfect place for them to run, jump and move around. To achieve substantial health benefits, children and adolescents need 3 types of physical activity:

- **Aerobic Activity** – this type should make up most of the daily 60 minutes. This can include things like brisk walking, running, biking and playing games that require catching and throwing.
- **Muscle-strengthening** – this type is needed at least 3 times a week. This includes things like push ups, sit-ups, swinging on playground equipment/bars and playing games such as tug of war.
- **Bone-strengthening** – this type is needed at least 3 times a week. This includes things like hopping, skipping, jumping and running, playing games like hop scotch and sports such as volleyball, basketball and tennis.

So, there's a lot to gain from regular physical activity, but remember that kids need encouragement to do it everyday. The keys to remember are:

- **Activities must be age appropriate:** otherwise the kids may be frustrated or bored.
- **Offer a variety of options to be active:** provide different equipment, games and activities.
- **Help make it enjoyable and keep the focus on fun:** kids won't do something they don't enjoy.

To celebrate Fitness Month, you may want to hold an event such as a Field Day. This type of event provides a fun opportunity for the kids to be physically active and can be done on a shoestring budget with little equipment. Field days can focus on a theme and provide a variety of fun "stations." A station example is called Crazy Colors All Around (taken from resource booklet listed below). The equipment needed is: notecards, different color cones and a timer. The game is played by using different color cones and putting cards under the cones with an opposite color written on a note card. Students will run to the opposite color cone that they have chosen from under the last cone. The students can be divided into four groups at one of the colorful cones. Let the students know which cone to run to and pick up a note card with a color on it, then run to the colored cone that was written on the note card.

Resource Materials Available: The Action for Healthy Kids Central Alabama team developed a manual for "Fantastic Field Days on a Shoestring Budget." Please contact Molly Killman at molly.killman@adph.state.al.us if you are interested in receiving a copy.

GREENVILLE GOES GREEN & GETS HEALTHY

Greenville Elementary students are learning how to help themselves and the earth be healthier.

At the beginning of the 2008 school year, the Greenville Elementary after school program volunteered to take part in the Joint Obesity Project with the Alabama Department of Public Health. The project incorporates nutrition and physical activity lessons in to the after school program in an effort to lower obesity in children. The students have learned about making healthy lifestyle choices such as drinking fewer sodas and drinking more water instead.

To put those lessons in to action and tie in the importance of a healthy earth, a recycling program was started using only water bottles. Nancy Philyaw is the after school program director at Greenville Elementary and states "The children are much more aware of the importance of drinking water. They've really enjoyed the recycling program." This program encourages environmental responsibility and drinking water in place of sodas.



Not only are the students drinking more water, but they are being environmentally friendly at the same time.

MIMI MOUSE LEARNS TO EAT HEALTHY AND BE FIT

Mimi Mouse is an adorable cartoon character that wants to eat healthy and be fit. Created by Channing Bete, Mimi Mouse is appealing to young children and teaches them good healthy habits.

The Alabama Department of Public Health partnered with Channing Bete to develop materials that are appropriate for young children in Alabama. The materials focus on the importance of good nutrition and physical activity. They include a fun, animated DVD, Eat Healthy and Be Fit stickers, handouts for parents, and We Love Healthy Food workbooks with a leader's guide.

A pilot project is under way in Alabama to see if Mimi Mouse has a positive impact on young children. Several sites, in a variety of settings, received a free Mimi Mouse kit and are taking part in the project. Four after school programs were selected to participate:

- Baldwin County Public Schools After School Childcare - Cherry Penn.
- Ready 4 College – Shandra Williams
- Butler County Education and Community Learning – Amy Bryan
- Huxford Elementary School in Escambia County – Carol Middleton

They will be using the Mimi Mouse materials in their after school sites with elementary age children. Visit www.channing-bete.com for Mimi Mouse materials and other items that promote healthy lifestyles.



HAVING FUN WITH HULA HOOPS



THREAD THE NEEDLE

- A group of students (about 5-6 at a time) hold hands in a circle. One student will be holding the hula hoop on their arm while holding hands in the circle.
- When play begins, the student with the hula hoop on their arm will step through the hula hoop without letting go of their neighbors hands.
- This will continue around the circle until the hula hoop has been passed through every student.
- The game is over once the hula hoop comes back to the original student holding the hula hoop.

Form 2 or 3 groups for this game and race to see which group finishes first!

HULA CONTORTION

Students will go through a maze of hoops using designated movements.

- Divide the class into small groups of five to ten children.
- In each group give all the children a hula hoop, with the exception of one child.
- Allow the children a few minutes to arrange themselves and their hoops in an unusual position.
- When the whistle blows, the children hold their position.
- The child who does not have a hoop must go through all the hoops using different movements such as crawling, rolling, and going backwards.
- Give each child an opportunity to go through the hoops.

For more hula hoop ideas like this, visit www.teachervision.fen.com. Click on "Subjects" and then "Physical Education". Next click on "Physical Education Resources for Teachers" where you'll find Hula Hoop Activities.

SAVE THE DATE – JULY 23, 2009

The 5th Annual Healthy Weight Initiative Workshop is just around the corner! Make plans to attend this one day workshop where attendees will hear about issues concerning childhood obesity in Alabama. Speakers will give nutrition and physical activity updates and share innovative ideas for implementing programs that promote better health in children and their families.

Visit www.adph.org/nutrition and click on Healthy Weight Initiative for future details.