

PROVIDE YOUTH WITH MORE WAYS TO BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN SCHOOL



Issue Brief

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Positive Impacts of Active Youth

Because physical inactivity is a risk factor for many diseases and conditions, making physical activity an integral part of daily life is crucial.

Health experts recommend children and youth (ages 6-17) are physically active for an accumulated 60 minutes of moderate-to vigorous physical activity daily.

This minimum amount of daily physical activity will:

- ✓ Improve strength and endurance
- ✓ Help build healthy bones and muscles
- ✓ Help control weight
- ✓ Reduce anxiety and stress
- ✓ Increase self-esteem
- ✓ Possibly improve blood and cholesterol levels

"Consistent exercise, and certain types of specific exercises, can both temporarily and permanently affect the way your brain is able to focus, its ability to deal with stress and anxiety, and its ability to learn ... Exercise is like fertilizer for the brain ... it's so good, it's like Miracle Gro." **Dr. John Ratey, Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School**

In 2009, only 18% of high school students had participated in at least 60 minutes per day of physical activity, and only 33% attended physical education class daily.



Impact of Inactive Youth

Most youth are not engaging in recommended levels of physical activity.

Schools provide a unique venue for youth to meet the activity recommendations, as they serve nearly 56 million youth. At the same time, schools face increasing challenges in allocating time for physical education and physical activity during the school day.

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years.

- Approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2—19 years are obese.
- Obese youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

In a population-based sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, 70% of obese youth had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease

Children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults and are therefore more at risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.

Healthy Polk's Planning Initiative

The dietary and physical activity behaviors of children and adolescents are influenced by many sectors of society, including families, communities, schools, child care settings, medical care providers, faith-based institutions, government agencies, the media, and the food and beverage industries and entertainment industries.

Schools play a particularly critical role by establishing a safe and supportive environment with policies and practices that support healthy behaviors. Schools also provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Schools can promote physical activity through comprehensive school physical activity programs, including recess, classroom-based physical activity, intramural physical activity clubs, interscholastic sports, and physical education.

Healthy Polk is a movement of individuals, businesses and community organizations focused on improving the quality of life and health status of people who live, work and play in Polk County.

In developing the Healthy Polk 2020 community health plan, input was collected from over 2,300 community members through community conversations, an online

survey and phone interviews. The process was finalized in February 2009 when 150 Polk County residents attended a Healthy Polk Community Caucus and chose 10 health priorities for our community. (The full list of priorities is available at www.healthypolk.org.)

One of the 10 Priorities



Provide youth with more ways to be physically active every day in school so they learn to become active adults

Healthy Polk Physically Active Youth Planning Experts

Twelve experts who have content knowledge about physical activity and youth in our community participated in the initial planning process:

- Joe Townsell, Curriculum Coordinator, Physical Education Department, Des Moines Public Schools
- Jean Phillips, Supervisor of Health Services, Des Moines Public Schools
- Steve Quirk, Executive Director, Youth Emergency Services and Shelter
- Jamel Crawford, Executive Director, John R. Grubb YMCA
- Suzanne Mineck, President, Mid Iowa Health Foundation
- Traci Kepley, Coordinator, Health Initiatives Iowa Sports Foundation
- Martha McCormick, President, Next Step Adventures
- Mark Yontz, Project Manager, PE4Life
- Patrice Petersen-Keys, Environmental Education Coordinator, Polk County Conservation
- Eric Martin, Outreach Director, Character Counts in Iowa
- Vernon Johnson, Director of Youth Programs, Homes of Oakridge
- Patty Sneddon, Program Director, Ellis I Levitt Boys and Girls Club

Personal Perspectives

Interviews with Experts

Mark Yontz, Project Manager, PE4Life

Patty Sneddon, Program Director, Ellis I. Levitt Boys and Girls Club

What made you want to become involved with this Healthy Polk Priority? **Mark:** “We advocate for enhanced physical education for kids, it ties in with what we are doing at PE4Life and we are already working with schools in Polk County.” **Patty:** “I think it’s a great priority, I think a lot of people need to get on the same page collectively. So many kids are starting in school overweight and obese, and trying to get them to make healthier lifestyles and choices is really important.”

What are your biggest concerns with how physical activity is addressed in the programming of schools today? **Mark -** “Some schools have declining participation in sports, there are kids struggling with health, nutrition and obesity issues, and sometimes the only outlet (especially junior high/high school) they have is physical education. . . . They don’t put enough emphasis on teaching kids about how they can maintain healthy habits and exercise throughout their lifetime.” **Patty:** “This school specifically, kids aren’t getting enough of it. There are over 700 kids that go to this school, PE is getting cut, I enjoyed it growing up, and I love it. I think that if there is way that we can incorporate more movement in the classrooms then it wouldn’t rely solely on the thought that kids are going to get 30-45 minutes of PE a day, and that’s it.”

Do you believe that through the efforts of the experts/stakeholders/PCHD, the school culture can effectively begin to fully support daily physical activity? **Mark -** “It really is about culture change. “Healthy active kids are better learners. It is going to take maybe . . . the next younger generation who have adopted a better physical education model and put more value on physical activity.” **Patty:** “To be able to change an actual culture you need to start from the bottom and from the top. Once you get a buy-in from the principal then I think you can start to see that change. As long as people know what we’re doing is working, effective and impacting kids, then it is easier to change”

What is the role of the community and the stakeholders? **Mark-** “Advising, mentoring, and connecting people to resources. Money alone is not going to change the problem; it goes back to attitudes, cultures, perceptions, and breaking down stereotypes. At the end of the day I see what we are doing is more of shedding the light on all the positives and good things that physical education and physical activity can and should be within a school environment. There are all of these different programs, outreaches, and people already doing all of these things in the community; they are just doing it in their own way” **Patty:** “There are all of these different programs, outreaches, and people already doing all of these things in the community; they are just doing it in their own way. By getting all of these different people together to shift the culture and going to the stakeholders and saying, ‘this is what we want to see happen in Polk County, this is what needs to be done.’ School board members have more of an influence on how to get the ball rolling and to be able to take that change.”

What the Experts Say This Priority Means

After a rich and thoughtful discussion, experts agreed that Healthy Polk Priority 2 should focus on youth in Polk County who attend preschool through graduation from high school. All youth should be given opportunities to be physically active every day in school. Physical activity means fun, playful activity designed to get children moving enough to raise their heart rate. Youth should be able to carry these skills into adulthood. Given the priority focus on school, the experts felt the emphasis should be on programming spent before, during and after the school day and directly linked to the schools.

Community Assets

Character Counts – Building Toolbox
Switch Program school-based “Do, Chew, View”
Polk County Conservation
Des Moines Parks and Recreation
Hip to be Fit
First Tee Golf
Fishing
Des Moines Police Department
Health Clubs in MS (Merrill)
Health and PE curriculum
Polk County School Nurse Consortium
DMPS afterschool sports
DMPS Adult and Community Ed
Metro Volleyball Program
Polk County Health Department
Freedom for Youth
Neighborhood Associations
FCC Urban Baseball League
Private Sports leagues AAU, USSA, GRA
Isiserettes
Blank Children’s Hospital – CATCH Program
Play and Learn
Mental Health Providers
Chrysalis after-school
YMCA
Trim Kids
Sports Leagues
After School Programs
Kids Strong
American Heart Association “Go Healthy”
Boys and Girls Club of Central Iowa
CATCH Curriculum

Community Assets

Smart Girls
Bike Club
Earth Heroes
Triple Play
Tri Club
Planned Parenthood Education for girls
PE4 Life
Des Moines University Healthy Lifestyles
Children and Family Urban Ministries
Before and After School Programs
Inner City Urban Development
Kingdom Hoops
Young Women’s Resource Center
After School Program
Des Moines Bike Collective
Ankeny Schools
Des Moines Public Schools
Johnston Public Schools
North Polk Schools
Saydel Schools
South East Polk Schools
Urbandale Schools
Waukee Schools
West Des Moines Schools
Iowa Department of Public Health
Food Bank
Iowa State University
Live Healthy Iowa –Kids 100
Governor’s Challenge, Fall Fitness Challenge, Go the Distance Day

How is PE4Life helping with this movement?

“We are the only organization in Iowa, let alone the country I believe, that does what we do, and that’s focus specifically on professional development training for P.E. teachers and providing equipment grants to schools. We are helping move the bar, create the conversations, and chart the path.”

Mark Yontz, Iowa Regional Project Manager, PE4Life



Community Gaps

Experts noted that school budgets were declining, infrastructure was lacking and policy drivers such as “No Child Left Behind” were influencing some school administrators to reduce physical education in order to preserve academic programming. Most notably, given the reduction in physical activity resources and sedentary classrooms, the experts felt that the current school culture does not identify physical activity as a high priority.

The experts did agree that sufficient data was available to make the case linking the positive impact of physical activity on academic progress. Over two sessions the experts refined the gaps and proposed a set of initiatives to address the gaps. Three gaps were identified and a set of recommendations to address each gap

was created. A summary of the gaps and strategies follows.

Gap 1: Physical activity is not a high priority in the current school culture and classroom activities are largely sedentary.

Gap 2: School-Community partnerships are not optimized to support daily physical activity

Gap 3: Local champions need to strengthen engagement with school leaders

What Would It Look Like

All elementary, middle and high schools are committed to physical education.

All elementary, middle and high schools have movement activities within the classroom.

All youth have physical activity opportunities before and after school.

All parents encourage daily physical activities for themselves and their children.

Youth in Polk County are motivated to choose physical activity and are fit for life.

Polk County has low morbidity rates for cardiovascular disease, hypertension and diabetes.

Physically Active Youth Priorities - Timeline for 2011-2013



On November 30, 2011, twenty-eight individuals participated in the community gathering to confirm, prioritize and advance the elements of the agenda proposed by the experts.

TWO PROJECTS LAUNCHED

- 1. Create a case statement that captures the link between physical activity and academics that references both the local conditions and nationally recognized best practices.**
- 2. Create a school culture that supports daily physical activity**

Physically Active Youth Priorities Timeline 2013-2020

- ❖ Leverage existing community relationships and efforts that are aligned with Priority 2 to increase opportunities for physical activity when children are in the school building but not in classrooms during the day.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for individual and organizational action.
- ❖ Explore and create new partnership and discussion opportunities to leverage engaged leaders and build additional support for moving HP 2020 Priority 2 forward.
- ❖ Develop a peer-led process to help Polk County schools meet their State of Iowa Department of Education academic expectations for K-12 health literacy related to physical activity.

Priority Implementation Partners

Barb Baker, Hip to be Fit and Des Moines Parks and Recreation
Karen Bason, Grandview University, Health & PE
Mike Boyle, Ankeny School District
Alex Calahan, American Heart Association
Holly Crandall, Des Moines Public School District
Brooke Den Hartog, American Heart Association "Go Healthy"
Glenn Dietzenbach, South East Polk School District
Cindy Elsbernd, Kids Strong
Penny Ferguson, Gateway Dance
Brooke Findley-Jordan, Chrysalis Foundation
Melissa Foley, Trim Kids
Chris Frantsvog, Polk County Health Department
Michelle Hulburt, Waukee School District
Tracy Kepley, Live Healthy Iowa
Kathy Legget, Center for Advocacy and Outreach Blank Children's Hospital
Eric Martin, Institute for character Development
Chris McCarthy, Iowa Health Des Moines
Sharon Miller, Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa
Carey Miller, Food Bank of Iowa
Mark Nelson, Freedom for Youth
Patrice Peterson Keys, Polk County Conservation
Doug Reichart, Des Moines Partnership
Laura Sands, Senator Harkin's Office
Shane Scott, West Des Moines School District
Don Tripp, Des Moines Parks and Recreation
Julie Walk, Johnston School District
Mary Lou Warner, Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Iowa
Randy Wee, Alliance for Healthier Generation
Lora Wunsch, Saydel School District

How is the Ellis I Levitt Boys and Girls Club helping with this movement? *"I'd say by the strategic programming that we do in getting kids active in not just the gym but throughout the school day. We have seven different programs that are helping them make more nutritional choices and be more physically active."*

What is your favorite part about your job? *"I think that being a role model for kids and being in there lives at this age when they are still in elementary school when they are still shapeable to let them know about life and all of the things they can possibly do."*

The older you get the more difficult it is to re-instill good behavior and to make good choices". **Patty Sneddon, Program Director, Ellis I Levitt Boys and Girls Club**

SAVE THE DATE

Please Join Us for the next Re-Gathering of the Stakeholders in support of Physically Active Youth!

Wednesday, June 27, 2012 at 8:00 AM

Place: TBA

For More Information Contact:

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Healthy Polk 2020

www.healthypolk.org

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

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Reference Sources for Issue Brief

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

http://www.fitness.gov/resources_factsheet.htm

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/reports/physicalactivity/>

Centers for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm>

PE4Life

<http://www.pe4life.org/about-us/faq/#5>

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Chair, Healthy Polk 2020
Chris McCarthy, Project Manager, Center for Healthy Communities,

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