



Health, Wellness & Safety Committee

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

It is important for children to come to school emotionally and physically healthy. Studies have shown that children's physical well-being has a significant effect on their learning and long-term success. When children are well-rested, well-nourished, and physically fit they are more ready to learn.

Every parent wants his or her child to be happy and healthy. Parents share the responsibility of ensuring their child's well-being with teachers, the community, its members, and all its services. Learning the facts about various health concerns is key to this common effort.

PTA's COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY FAMILIES

National PTA and Colorado PTA are committed to building healthy families and healthy communities and believe we all have an important role to play in making sure parents, schools, and communities have the support and resources they need.

Healthy eating habits formed during childhood lead to a healthy life. Proper nutrition is key. Parents can teach their children good eating habits by being positive role models in their own choices and by explaining to their children the importance of a balanced diet and how to choose healthy options from each food group. These resources will help you prepare more nutritious meals and be able to discuss more healthy food choices.

CHANGING THE FAMILY'S DIET BEGINS WITH TWO REALIZATIONS

1. The first is that teaching your children about good nutrition is as important as making sure they learn good manners, get good grades in school, get to bed on time, etc. Poorly fed children are sick more often, have increased risk of developing degenerative diseases at earlier ages, and tend to have weight problems sooner or later. Also, many children find it difficult to concentrate and learn as a result of poor nutrient status.
2. The second realization is that children can be very resistant to change and many times would rather do something other than what you want them to do. You must remember that you are the parent and that you make the decisions. Children need direction and structure.

PARENTING TIP: While you are making changes, begin having a dialog about what you are doing and why. This does not mean turning every meal into a lecture, but rather involving your children. Take your child to a health food store

and let them help you pick out some new things to try. Teach your child to read labels and ask him/her to select foods that do not contain certain ingredients. Let your child assist in choosing recipes and preparing foods. Kids are more likely to go along with your new program if they feel they have some input and participation.

Over time, your child will begin to understand that part of your family's culture involves eating healthy foods and making healthy lifestyle choices. They will reach this realization from continuous reinforcement from you, which is the way they have learned everything else.

ADDED BONUS

There is an added bonus to improving your child's diet – yours will get better too! You will be a great example for your kids – they tend to observe and imitate what you do.

NATIONAL PTA POSITION STATEMENT

The National PTA recognizes good nutrition as a key component in creating healthy and productive individuals. Ongoing study in the field of nutrition provides the public with constantly changing information on what constitutes a healthy diet, which can be confusing.

The National PTA and its constituents will continue to work at the local, state, and national levels to enhance the nutritional health of our nation's children and families.

The National PTA supports federal legislation to assist states in providing necessary support for families in the areas such as health, nutrition and welfare services.

RESOURCES TO CONTACT and/or ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Colorado Action For Healthy Kids (www.ActionforHealthyKids.org/Colorado)