

## Tips for Classroom Teachers

### **Be a Fitness Role Model**

When you catch the Fever, so will your students. Take the Fitness Fever challenge with your students. Simply download a calendar from this site or create your own, then keep track of your physical activity and servings of fruits and vegetables each day. If you're a really good sport, post your calendar in a visible place at school so students can review your progress. While you're at it, enlist other adults to participate as well, such as your principal, classroom teachers, office workers, cafeteria staff, even the maintenance workers. Invite them to participate and to display their calendars throughout the month. Adult participation helps keep students interested and motivated.

During the month, share your ideas and practices regarding physical activity and nutrition. Comment on the taste of a fruit or vegetable you've tried for the first time. Explain how you fit physical activity into your busy day.

For a calendar, look in the Teacher's Lounge under the Curriculum section.

### **Student Journals**

One of the most important things you can do to help students improve their health is to encourage them to record their DAILY PROGRESS in their Fitness Fever journal. Students should record their physical activity and fruits and vegetable servings each day during the Fitness Fever challenge. (Simple instructions are included in the student journal.) Students who record their daily levels of activity and nutrition usually increase their healthy behaviors over the period of a month. Use the student journal to improve writing, counting and journaling skills. At the end of the month, give a Fitness Fever certificate and tattoo sheet to every student who participated in the program.

### **Bulletin Boards**

Ask fellow teachers and students to generate tips for increasing physical activity and nutrition. Start a health wall or bulletin board that includes great ideas from everyone in the school. As days go by, be sure to move some of the older ideas into categories such as "outdoor ideas" or "after-school snack tips." Make sure there is a welcoming spot for all the new ideas that are posted on the bulletin board or wall every day. One school put a series of three bulletin boards together that focused on physical, mental and social health. Another school created a "Wall of Fame" and encouraged students, teachers and staff to write a personal pledge or resolution for improving their own health.

### **Art**

Just think of the colorful, fun banners students could create to hang in the gym. Why not decorate school hallways or classroom walls with paintings and drawings about favorite physical activities, fruits or vegetables. An art teacher created a landscape mural for the gym wall and students drew pictures or posted photographs of their favorite things to do. Pictures are great ways to communicate with non-English-speaking children.

### **Science**

In science and/or health classes, why not talk about how the body moves or the effects of fruits and vegetables on the body? Why not build a nutrition model showing how many grams of fiber and protein the body needs to stay healthy?

### **Language**

Host a spelling bee using words related to physical activity and nutrition. Ask students to design a crossword puzzle using only fruits and vegetables or activities. (Consider using the lists on page 3 of the student journal.) Ask students to write stories or poems about a physical challenge - like learning to ride a bike or

learning to skip - or describe their favorite fruit or vegetable with words, without naming the item, so others can guess.

### **Reading**

February is not only Fitness Fever month, it's also I Love to Read Month. Ask the librarian in your school or local library to prepare a book display or a list of books about physical activity or nutrition. Encourage students to read books with healthy messages and characters that are active and care about their nutrition. Explore this site for a list of book titles related to health, nutrition and fitness.

### **Family Notes**

Send a special note home to families at the end of January reminding them that the Fitness Fever program will begin in February. Encourage families to download a monthly tracking calendar to get everyone in the family moving. And if you are your child's Fitness Fever Partner, show your support by tracking what you ate and how you were physically active.

### **Open Gym**

Host a Family Fitness Night in February! Another idea is to open the school gym before or after school so that families who are dropping off or picking up students can spend 10 or 15 minutes together shooting hoops or walking briskly around the gym. Teachers report that opening the gym in the morning made it easier for students to settle into their morning classes.

### **Stretches**

One teacher contacted a local physical therapist and found fun stretching exercises the students could do while sitting at their desks. Introduce a "stretch" for each day.

### **Fitness Fridays**

Some schools have Fitness Fridays where all students get together in the gym and move and stretch together. How about getting everyone moving to music over the public address system? Or invite a local aerobics instructor to lead a class in the gym. One school encouraged students to walk one-half mile on the school track before they could go onto the playground. Many students would run the distance to get the playground faster. On cold days, students walked their half-mile in the hallway.

### **Jump Rope**

Every year, the American Heart Association sponsors jump rope clinics and distributes information around the state. Call your local chapter of the American Heart Association and see if free materials are available for use in your classes.

### **Freebies**

Send away for free materials from groups like the American Dairy Council or the American Cancer Society. Put these materials in the packets that go to families every Friday.

### **Health Fairs**

One school hosted a health fair to kick off Fitness Fever month. Health, fitness and nutrition experts from the community came in to share materials and ideas with students and their families. Be sure to call your local chapters of the American Heart Association, American Dietetic Association, the American Cancer Society, American Dairy Association, trainers from local health clubs, doctors, nurses and other health professionals.

### **Bravos**

The emphasis of Fitness Fever is on personal achievement, not on competition. When you're thinking of rewarding or recognizing your students, be sure to CELEBRATE ALL ACHIEVEMENTS, not just those of the top athletes in the school. Here are suggestions that other schools have tried to celebrate and recognize student achievements:

- A physical education teacher reports that each week the names of students who completed their journal became eligible for a drawing. On "students' choice" day, students whose names were pulled could select the physical activity for the class.
- One school asked a local tennis club to donate used practice balls so that each student would have a ball to use during recess.
- Teachers in one school donated water bottles, T-shirts and hats from fun runs and used them as giveaways to Fitness Fever students at the end of the month.
- Some schools have asked their local Chamber of Commerce or Lions Club to donate student-appropriate athletic equipment to be raffled off at the end of the month.