November is National PTA’s Healthy Lifestyles Month!

Steps for Celebrating PTA’s Healthy Lifestyles Month in November!

Step #1: Determine your PTA’s goal for Healthy Lifestyles Month.
A goal gives you a foundation to build a plan. Your goal helps to design:
- Specific health messages to influence health behaviors of families and students;
- Fun and family-focused ways to deliver educational messages;
- Strategies that will yield a longer-term impact for students in your school and community.

Sample Goals:
1. To encourage families to make healthier nutrition choices, such as drink more water and eat more fruits and vegetables.
2. To challenge families to reduce their screen time and increase the active play time (i.e., exercise) that they enjoy together.

Step #2: Recruit parents, teachers, school staff and students who are committed to your goal!
Now that you have a goal, you have something to rally volunteers around. Think about the parents, teachers, school staff (i.e. food service personnel, school nurse, physical education teacher, coach) and students who are already passionate about health and wellness. Ask them to participate in a planning session — either by phone, in-person or over e-mail.

Sample Agenda for Planning Session
- Welcome and introductions
- Review goal and previous PTA health education efforts
- Identify key education messages for families
- Determine ways to deliver these educational messages
- Assess barriers to desired health behaviors in school environments
- Consider community organizations or resources that could support the plan
- Determine specific next steps and program timeline

Step #3: Put your plan into action!
Below are some ways PTAs are encouraging families to make healthier choices, while supporting access to healthy options at school. Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles to gain more ideas from your PTA network.
### Promoting Healthy Behaviors

Issue a PTA Healthy Lifestyles challenge each school day through the morning announcements (i.e., Challenge #1: Drink only water or low fat milk today!).

Promote the challenge through the school’s social media sites.

Put a yard sign with the daily challenge in front of student drop-off locations so that families can embrace the challenge together.

Request brochures from community health organizations to distribute during PTA meetings or other school events.

Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) and [LetsMove.gov](http://LetsMove.gov) for free, family-focused educational tools to promote good nutrition and physical activity.

### Encouraging Healthy Families

Host a fun event for the whole family that celebrates healthy and delicious foods, encourages families to get up and get moving and provides opportunities to learn from health experts in the community.

Some PTAs have hosted:
- Healthy Lifestyles Expo (i.e., health fair with activities and games for children)
- Turkey Trot or Trike (i.e., walk or bike event around school)
- Healthy Foods from Around the World

Invite a community health expert to PTA meetings to answer questions about health behaviors, such as “How can I get my picky child to eat good-for-you foods?”

### Supporting Healthy Schools

Talk with the school administrators and staff about the school’s wellness policy and determine specific ways PTA can support its implementation.

Plant a community vegetable garden or host a Farmers’ Market.

Work with a nutritionist to assess the nutrition options at the school and advocate for healthier choices including:
- Low or no sugar drink options
- Flavorful and fresh fruits and vegetables
- Low sugar, low sodium snack options
- Portions appropriate for students’ ages

Recruit parent or community volunteers to support active play during the day, such as recess, before school and after school playground or gym time.

Serve only healthy foods at PTA events.

Pledge to make every PTA fundraiser a healthy one.

### Step #4: Keep the Momentum Going!

Use Healthy Lifestyles Month in November as a kick-off to a year-round effort to encourage health and safety for families in your school and community. This calendar can help you! We have marked dates that are already designated for promoting health or safety messages. And we remind you on the first of each month to visit [PTA.org](http://PTA.org) for new ideas and inspiration from a network of thousands of PTAs tackling a similar goal — to improve the health and safety of children and families!
September 2012: Back to School

September is a great time to start promoting health and safety! Start by incorporating health messages and activities at Back-to-School events. For example, invite local farmers to sell fresh foods during Parents’ Orientation Back-to-School Night with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the school’s PTA.

PTA Action Items:
• Recruit parents, school staff, students and others in the community to join the PTA’s Healthy Lifestyles Committee.
• Ask school administrators for a copy of the School Wellness Policies and work together to identify opportunities for PTA support.
• Organize a school spruce up day for the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance or September 29th Green Apple Day of Service. Gain ideas at 911day.org or mygreenapple.org.

Family Health Message:
• Physical activity can equal an hour of family fun — dance to your favorite tunes, play freeze tag or ride bikes!

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Important Observances:
• Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
• National Hispanic Heritage Month Begins September 15

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2012-2013 National PTA Health and Safety Activities Calendar
Parents and caring adults can play pivotal roles in creating a healthy school and community climate that is free of bullying. PTA leaders can start and maintain community conversations to build awareness and to take action to stop bullying in communities.

### PTA Action Items:
- Download the Connect for Respect Tools.
- Host a Connect For Respect event for your school.
- Recognize school food service providers and bus drivers for their constant focus on student health and safety.
- Distribute retro reflective stickers to increase pedestrian visibility on Walk to School Day and Halloween.

### Family Health Message:
- Walking to school is a great form of family exercise!

Visit [PTA.org/healthylifestyles](http://PTA.org/healthylifestyles) for more health and safety messages!

### Important Observances:
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- Stop America’s Violence Everywhere (SAVE) Month
- International Walk to School Month
- Eye Injury Prevention Month
- National Crime Prevention Month
- National Down Syndrome Awareness Month
- National Hispanic Heritage Month Ends October 15

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November is National PTA’s Healthy Lifestyles Month! PTAs play an important role in engaging families, teachers and children to develop healthy behaviors. By promoting and modeling healthy behaviors, PTAs can help address the nation’s obesity epidemic.

**PTA Action Items:**
- Kick off your Healthy Lifestyles events.
- Work with your teachers to help create a classroom garden. For more information visit FarmToSchool.org.
- Send pictures, videos and media coverage to programs@PTA.org so your PTA can be featured in future Healthy Lifestyles Month promotions.
- Assess how the PTA can support the implementation of school wellness policies.

**Family Health Message:**
- Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov to remind your family of healthy portion sizes!

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

**Important Observances:**
- American Diabetes Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- American Indian Heritage Month
- National Family Caregivers Month
- National Healthy Skin Month
Winter is a wonderful season, but one that comes with the spread of germs at school. Help your school prevent flu and other communicable disease outbreaks by promoting the importance of proper hygiene.

**PTA Action Items:**
- Have a tissue box drive and distribute boxes to every classroom.
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website (CDC.gov/flu) to get more information about the flu.
- Compile and distribute a list of free flu shot clinics in your community.

**Family Health Message:**
- Trap every sneeze and cough in your elbow to prevent germs from transferring to others.

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

**Important Observances:**
- Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- Drunk and Drugged Driver Prevention Month

### December 2012: Prevent Germs

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Visit PTA.org/WorldAIDSDay

**January 2013:**

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles
January 2013: Advocate for Health and Safety

It is officially the halfway mark of the academic year. How has your PTA supported the implementation of the school wellness policies? The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2012 added new provisions for local wellness policies that focus on implementation, evaluation and publicly reporting on the progress of local wellness policies. Take some time to review and evaluate how well your school has been doing in implementing its wellness policy.

**PTA Action Items:**
- Meet with your school administrator about the school wellness policy.
- Identify 1-2 ways the PTA can support implementation of the school wellness policies between now and June.
- Help the school promote the ways it has improved wellness to families by encouraging your principal, school nurse or other staff to present progress to the PTA members.
- Collaborate with the school or a local community center to host an “Open Gym” night for families. Plan age-appropriate games for all members of the family and deliver health education messages during water breaks.

**Family Health Message:**
- According to ChooseMyPlate.gov, oatmeal is an excellent source for whole grain. Stir in low fat milk and add fruit for a healthy start to your family’s day!

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

**Important Observances:**
- National Blood Donor Month
- Oatmeal Month
- National Book Month
February 2013: Family Fitness

Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of childhood obesity. Youth need 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Most children can gain the physical activity they need by active play! Package your family-friendly PTA events with ways families can be active together — tag, three-legged races, dances, etc. Visit kaboom.org/blog for ideas. Children tend to mimic behaviors they see, so be a good role model!

PTA Action Items:
• Recruit PTA volunteers willing to support an open gym, park, playground or afterschool event.
• Hold a Family Fitness Night.
• Invite a group exercise instructor to host early morning classes for interested school staff and parents.

Family Health Message:
• Ask everyone in your family to add a personal health goal to a list of family health goals on the refrigerator. Set benchmarks for each goal and recognize progress with stars or stickers.

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Important Observances:
• American Heart Month
• National Dental Health Month
• Black History Month

Visit PTA.org/GiveKidsASmile for events.
The secret to a healthy life is a healthy start. Daily consumption of fruits and vegetables helps to keep your heart healthy by reducing the risk of developing chronic disease, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Promote fruit and vegetable consumption by hosting events that help to educate your school on the benefits of at least five servings a day.

**PTA Action Items:**
- Encourage parents to offer five daily servings of fruits and vegetables to their children.
- Give interested homeroom teachers vegetable and fruit seeds, pots and planting soil for starting a classroom window garden.
- Facilitate an e-mail recipe swap for making fruits and vegetables more flavorful for children.
- Share these healthy fruit and vegetable recipes in your newsletters.

**Family Health Message:**
- Always fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables!

Visit [PTA.org/healthylifestyles](http://PTA.org/healthylifestyles) for more health and safety messages!

**Important Observances:**
- National Nutrition Month
- Women’s History Month
- American Diabetes Alert Day®
April 2013: Alcohol Awareness Month

One out of three 8th-graders has tried alcohol. Children who start drinking at a young age are seven times more likely to be in an alcohol-related car crash. If you have not talked to your child about the dangers of underage drinking, start now! National PTA has partnered with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) to promote their Power of Parents program, which helps parents bring up the conversation about alcohol with their children. For more information about MADD and Power of Parents, visit MADD.org/powerofparents.

PTA Action Items:
- Support student groups that promote healthy decision making such as Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and your school’s student council.
- Help educate parents on the importance of alcohol safety and how to prevent underage drinking. Use MADD’s Power of Parents Resources at MADD.org/powerofparents.
- Become a trained and certified Power of Parents facilitator.

Family Health Message:
- April 21 is PowerTalk 21 Day – a day when parents across the country will talk with their children about the dangers of alcohol. Download MADD’s parent handbook to help you talk with your children at MADD.org/powertalk21.

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Important Observances:
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Distracted Driving Awareness Month
- National Autism Month
- National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- National Minority Health Month
May 2013: Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Month. As the school year nears its end, help to educate parents about the services that your school district provides for childhood mental health.

PTA Action Items:
- Ask your school nurse or a mental health professional in your community to come to a PTA meeting and help educate parents on different aspects of childhood mental health.
- Create a list of mental health services that your school district provides and distribute it to parents.

Family Health Message:
- Physical activity and exploration of the arts are great ways for children to cope with everyday stresses in life. When more help is needed, seek support from a trained mental health professional such as a psychologist or social worker!

Important Observances:
- Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
- National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
- Mental Health Month
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- National Youth Traffic Safety Month
- National Bicycle Safety Month
- National Celiac Disease Month
- Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

2012-2013 National PTA® Health and Safety Activities Calendar
June 2013: National Safety Month

Summer is finally here! With the nice weather, students will be outside more than ever, so it is important to know how to keep them safe. National Safety Month is a time to make sure that preventive measures are in place to protect your children.

PTA Action Items:
- Encourage parents to get an expert to fit their child’s bicycle helmet.
- Encourage parents to give child care providers a list of emergency numbers and allergies.
- Encourage families to create emergency home evacuation plans and practice what to do in the event of a home emergency.

Family Health Message:
- Visit safekids.org to learn summer safety tips at home and on the go!
- Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Important Observances:
- National Safety Month
- Fireworks Safety Month
- National Cancer Survivors Day
- Father’s Day
- 20-23 – Annual National PTA Convention and Exhibition

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!
July 2013: Summer Fest

During the summer months, teach children and parents about the dangers of excessive heat and sun exposure. Keeping children hydrated during hot summer days helps to reduce the likelihood of heat exhaustion, and good sunscreen and protective clothing will prevent nasty sunburns.

**PTA Action Items:**
- Assess your PTA’s progress on the school wellness policies and determine objectives for 2012-2013 school year.
- Enjoy some safe summer fun with your family!

**Family Health Message:**
- Water! Water! Water! Grab a reusable water bottle for each family member to decorate with permanent markers. Keep it filled and ready to go in the refrigerator to ensure you stay hydrated during the hot days of summer!

Visit [PTA.org/healthylifestyles](http://PTA.org/healthylifestyles) for more health and safety messages!

**Important Observances:**
- UV Safety Month
- Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

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Visit [PTA.org](http://PTA.org) for more resources!
As the new school year approaches, it is important to remind parents to have their children vaccinated before the start of the new school year. Vaccinations help protect children from serious diseases, but a number of recommended vaccinations administered by your child’s doctor can wear off in their teen years. Therefore, remind parents that their older children’s vaccinations may need updating.

PTA Action Items:
• Take your child to the doctor for a checkup.
• Make sure your child is up-to-date on the recommended shots for his or her age group.
• Keep a record of the shots your child gets and the dates he or she gets them.
• Encourage parents to make sure that their child’s health records are up-to-date with the school.
• Start planning ways to encourage healthy lifestyles during Back-to-School events.

Family Health Message:
• Talk with your child’s healthcare provider whenever you have concerns about your child’s health. Your questions help to inform the medical staff about the care they need to provide for your child. Every question is a smart one when it comes to your family’s health.

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Health Observances:
• Children’s Eye and Safety Month
• National Immunizations Awareness Month
Thanks for everything you do for the PTA and to help children every day of the year!