

## Together Counts™ Activity Sheet School to Home Summer 2016

### ***Wellness around the World***

Learning about how other cultures stay active and healthy can help us improve our own wellness—both at school and at home. As we approach the end of the school year, put aside some time to explore different cultures and the unique ways that people eat and move. Families can then continue this exploration at home as they set wellness goals for the summer!

This printable sheet outlines activity ideas to help students adopt healthy habits at school and at home.

### **At School Activity 1: Our Culture**

Begin by discussing the meaning of the word “culture.” Explain that culture is what makes everyone unique. A person’s culture is defined by their language(s), clothing, what they play, the art and music they enjoy, their family, where they live, and the food they eat. A family’s background and nationality influences all parts of their culture.

Explain that students will be exploring their own personal culture by focusing on the food they eat. Begin by giving students a piece of blank paper. Ask them to illustrate a favorite dinner that they eat at home with their family, including any drinks and dessert. Encourage students to select meals that are cooked at home. When they are complete, display the drawings on the board and discuss similarities and differences among the meals. Try to identify foods that come from other countries (tortillas from Mexico, pasta from Italy or naan from India, for example). If students are unsure of where their meal originated, encourage them to ask their parents. Older students may also research using the internet.

If your classroom has a world map, label the map to show where each meal comes from. It’s okay for the United States to be labeled for some meals!

### **At School Activity 2: Breakfast Around the World**

Once students have explored the foods that make up their own culture, it’s time to start investigating other cultures! Explain that people around the world have their own ways of staying well. While a balanced meal is always an important part of taking care of your body wherever you live, different countries use different ingredients to achieve this balance.

Write the following food groups across the top of the board and review them, if necessary:

Grains            Vegetables            Fruits            Dairy            Protein            Oils

Explain that while meals don’t have to include every food group, making every meal as balanced as possible is a great way to make sure you have a balanced day.

Once students have an understanding of each of the food groups, project photographs from this [article](#). (Choose four meals in advance that you think would especially interest your students.) Using the photographs and their captions, deconstruct the contents of the breakfasts and instruct students to sort

the meal components into food groups. For example, a baguette with butter would go into the Grains group (baguette) and Oils group (butter).

Once the meal has been deconstructed and sorted, discuss whether it is balanced. If this was their own breakfast, what decisions could the students make to create a more balanced meal? Could an item be added or taken away? Did the students gain any ideas of foods they could incorporate into their own breakfasts to try new flavors or make them more balanced? Depending on ability level, this activity may be completed in groups or as a whole class.

### **At School Activity 3: Trying New Moves**

Remind students that being well doesn't only pertain to what you eat. To be well on all sides of the Wellness Triangle, students must take care of their body (physical wellness), their mind and feelings (emotional wellness) and their relationships with their friends and family (social wellness). One great way to do this is to play and move together!

Like food, how you play is another important part of culture. Children play different games all around the world. Below are directions for three games played in other countries. Teach one (or all) of the games to your students and then spend time reflecting on the experience.

#### **Sun and Ice**

Country of Origin: Mexico

Similar to: Freeze Tag

Materials Needed: None

Directions:

1. Divide your class into two equal teams.
2. One team is "It" and will chase the other team.
3. When a player on the "It" team tags someone on the other team, he/she calls out "Freeze." The tagged player must stand completely still.
4. The player must stay frozen until a player from his/her team touches him/her and says "Sun." The player may then run again.
5. After five minutes, the other team becomes "It." The team with the fewest number of frozen teammates when the rounds end wins.

#### **Drop the Hanky**

Country of Origin: Rwanda

Similar to: Duck Duck Goose

Materials Needed: A handkerchief or small piece of fabric

Directions:

1. Sit your class in a circle facing inwards.
2. Choose one child to be the "circler." It is his/her job to stand outside the circle and hold a handkerchief. The circler should circle around the children with the handkerchief behind his/her back, saying: "I have the hanky, I have the hanky."
3. At some point while walking around the circle, the circler must try to drop the handkerchief behind a child without the child realizing this occurred. If the circler gets all around the circle

without anyone realizing the handkerchief has been dropped, he/she must pick it up and drop it somewhere else.

4. As the circler passes by each child, each sitting child should say “It has passed” if they don’t believe the handkerchief has dropped. They are not allowed to look behind them.
5. If a sitting child thinks that the handkerchief has been dropped behind them, they should stand up and then look behind them. If they are correct, they should chase the circler and try to tag them.
6. If the circler gets to the handkerchief first, then he/she is safe. If the circler is tagged, then he/she is out and the other child becomes the circler.
7. If someone gets up mistakenly when the handkerchief isn’t behind them, they are out of the game if the circler can tag them before they sit back down. If a child mistakenly gets up twice, then they are out of the game.
8. The game continues until there is only one child left sitting or time runs out.

## Catch the Dragon’s Tail

Country of Origin: China

Similar to: N/A

Materials Needed: None

Directions:

1. Have all students stand in a line with each person’s hands on another’s shoulders. The first person in line is the head of the dragon, and the last is the tail. Instruct the head to try to catch the tail by leading the line around so that she/he can tag the end player. The line must not break.
2. All the other players should do their best to keep the head from catching the dragon’s tail.
3. If the head catches the tail, all players move forward one position, and the player who was the head becomes the new tail.

After you play one or more of the games above with your students, reflect on the following questions:

1. How was the game like games we play in the United States? How was it different?
2. How did the game(s) help our Physical Wellness? Emotional Wellness? Social Wellness?

Student’s signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s signature \_\_\_\_\_

Coach’s signature \_\_\_\_\_

Sources:

- Chinese American Historical Museum: <http://chcp.org/virtual-museum-library/chinese-wedding-traditions/traditional-games/#catch>
- Lessons from Africa <http://www.sendacow.org.uk/lessonsfromafrica/resources/circle-game>
- Rise and Shine: What Kids Around the World Eat for Breakfast. *The New York Times Magazine*. [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/10/08/magazine/eaters-all-over.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/10/08/magazine/eaters-all-over.html?_r=1)
- [You’re It! Tag, Red Rover, and Other Folk Games](#) by Thomas Arkham

## Together Counts™ Activity Sheet Home to School Summer 2016

### ***Learning from Others***

Your child has been learning about how children around the world stay well through an investigation of the foods other children eat and the games they play. Now it's time to continue this exploration at home. This summer, use the activities below to incorporate other cultures' wellness habits into your own routines. Then set goals to help your child—and your family—achieve an active, healthy lifestyle!

### **At Home Activity 1: Celebrating Culture**

In school, your child shared a meal that your family frequently eats and looked into where the meal originated. Now let's take this one step further! After discussing your family heritage with your child, plan a meal that celebrates your unique background. The websites below are an easy starting point:

World Cuisine Recipes: [allrecipes.com/recipes/86/world-cuisine](http://allrecipes.com/recipes/86/world-cuisine)

What's Cooking - USDA Mixing Bowl: [whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)

As you plan out your special meal together, set a goal to make the dinner as balanced as possible by trying to include each of the following food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Dairy, Protein and Oils. Involve your child in each step of the decision-making process: from searching for recipes, preparing the grocery list, shopping for ingredients, prepping the food and cooking. When the last bite has been taken, discuss how the meal turned out before you clean up. How was this meal symbolic of your culture? Was it balanced? Was it tasty? Would you like to make it again? Could any changes be made to make it better?

### **At Home Activity 2: Eating Around the World**

Making decisions about how and what you eat can affect all sides of your Wellness Triangle. *What* you eat can impact your physical wellness, while *how* you eat can affect your social and emotional wellness. With your family, read about three ways that people around the world use food to strengthen their Wellness Triangle. Family goals are included in each explanation, so select one to work towards with your child!

#### **1. Flavor!**

Spices like cinnamon, oregano, paprika and garlic come from all corners of the globe and are used in different ways and different combinations around the world. Trying new seasonings is a perfect way to give a flavor and color makeover to vegetables, grains, protein and even fruit! Plus, many spices have proven health benefits.

Goal: With your child, choose a new spice from the grocery store. Research where it comes from and how it is commonly used. Then incorporate it into at least three different meals!

#### **2. Embrace Simplicity**

Costa Rica has a motto called *Pura Vida*, which literally translates to "pure life." The slogan is used to describe Costa Ricans' appreciation of life's smaller, simple treasures. Costa Ricans apply this slogan to all aspects of their lives.

Goal: Embrace *Pura Vida* when it comes to meal-planning, and take time to enjoy the unique flavors of whole foods. Meals don't have to be fancy to be delicious. In-season fruit, for example, can make the perfect dessert and there's no prep needed! As you strive for a balanced diet, avoid over-complicating the menu and incorporate at least one food, left as-is, into every meal.

### 3. Eat Around the Table

*How* you eat is almost as important as *what* you eat. European countries like Italy, Spain and Portugal are known for long family dinners where everyone shares a meal together around one table. Families that eat together are more likely to eat balanced, well-portioned meals. Plus, eating together encourages family discussions and helps promote social and emotional wellness.

Goal: While it may not be feasible to have the family eat together at every meal, set a realistic goal at the beginning of each week that specifies how many times you can make this happen. Try to increase this number every week until eating together becomes the norm.

### At Home Activity 3: Moving Around the World

Making decisions about how and when you move is another fundamental part of your family's overall wellness. It can be easy to overlook physical activity when our days become busy. To avoid this, read with your child about the following three global ways to incorporate physical activity into each day. Then select one and write a challenging yet feasible goal in the space provided. Try your best to achieve your goal this summer in order to strengthen all three sides of your family's Wellness Triangle!

#### 1. Morning Exercises

Many Asian countries prioritize morning exercise, especially in schools. Schools either begin with a set of morning exercises or take a mid-morning break to perform them on a daily basis. It's a great way to get your body moving and your blood flowing as the day is just beginning.

Use this as an example this summer and incorporate morning physical activity into your family's daily routine. Whether it's a bike ride, a walk or a swim, you'll beat the heat and start the day on the right foot!

**Goal:** This summer, we will do the following activities for morning exercise:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. We will do this \_\_\_\_\_ mornings every week.

#### 2. Get more steps!

In cities around the world, one well-known ingredient to wellness is the amount of walking that their residents do every day. Many Parisians, for example, rarely use transportation other than own feet! It's an easy concept: the more steps in your day, the more physically active you've been.

It doesn't have to be hard: Take the stairs, park farther away from the entrance or go for a walk after dinner. Every step counts! If possible, have your child count their steps with a pedometer to track your progress.

**Goal:** This summer, we will do the following activities to increase the steps we take every day:

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Every day, we will try to get \_\_\_\_\_ steps.

### 3. Have a dance party

From Salsa and Merengue to K-pop and Bollywood musicals, there are songs from every country that will get you on your feet. This summer, allow music to do just that! Dancing with your family is a great way to strengthen your physical, social and emotional wellness. So put on those tunes and start moving!

**Goal:** This summer, we will try to dance \_\_\_\_ days every week. Each of these days, we will dance for \_\_\_\_ minutes.

The \_\_\_\_\_ family completed the following Together Counts™ activities:

\_\_\_\_\_ Celebrating Culture      \_\_\_\_\_ Eating Around the World      \_\_\_\_\_ Moving Around the World