



## SCHOOL TO HOME WINTER

### Family Connection Features:

- Tips for Keeping Active in Winter
- Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds!
- Focus on Frozen & Canned Fruits & Veg
- Strive for 60 Minutes a Day
- Intergenerational Dance!
- Home to School Activity Charts (see parent/student signature page 8 due date: \_\_\_\_\_)

### Avoid the Winter Slump!

Live in a cold part of the country? Don't let the frigid temps slow you down. Keep hats and mittens on hand in an easy to find spot, like a basket by the door. Have kids bundle up and play outside in 15-minute bursts if it's too cold to stay out longer. Once they get running around, they'll warm up and likely play for longer. Reward them with hot chocolate for a snack or dessert (kids their age need 4 servings of calcium-rich dairy a day!) and they'll warm up before they know it. They'll also be more alert for homework time and better able to settle down to bedtime at a reasonable hour.

At school we're continuing to work on our "60 a Day" charts to reach our goals of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day (that's 7 days a week). The winter months can require extra motivation to keep moving, as shorter days and school vacations often find kids watching more television, playing more video games, and engaging with phones and devices. And all this comes at a time when many of us are overindulging on holiday feasts and treats. Help us remind kids that this means they need to spend even MORE time on the move!

We've added an extra "60 a Day" Physical Activity Chart at the end of this lesson for your child to use at home, especially on weekends and during vacation weeks. Who knows? It may inspire other family members to get moving as well!



## SCHOOL TO HOME

# WELLNESS – EVERY PART COUNTS!

### Family Activity: Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds!

The winter season can find parents more stressed due to holidays and expectations, and children more sedentary with energy levels that could use a boost. Here are some simple exercises to help clear your mind and reset your mood. We're doing some of these at school — so ask your kids to show you how!

#### Relax and Unwind

**Shoulder Shrug** – Take a slow, deep breathe in while shrugging your shoulders, lifting them high up to your ears. Hold 3 seconds and then release. Repeat three times.

**Yes and No** – Shake your head slowly from side to side and then up and down. Pretend you're saying No, No, No 6 times and then Yes, Yes, Yes 6 times. Repeat.

**Bear Hug** – Give yourself a great big hug and release the tension in your back while you're at it. Put your right hand on your left shoulder and your left hand on your right shoulder.

Now breathe in and out deeply, gently squeezing the area between your shoulder blades.

### Family Activity: Everyday Desk Exercises

Fitness doesn't only happen at the gym! You don't need a sports field or court either. They can be done at a desk in an office, at the kitchen table, or while you're sitting in your living room. Students are taught how to do them in the classroom or at home, whenever they need a homework break, a cool down or a pick-me-up.

In addition to adding to your 60 minutes a day goal (the Physical Activity Guidelines are for adults as well!). They are a great way to energize your body and mind. Do these while sitting at a desk or table, or standing next to a chair. Make sure to keep a safe distance from furniture and from each other.

#### Seated Stretches

- Stretch your legs, one at a time, until they are perfectly straight with pointed toes. Hold for 10 seconds at a time, then slowly lower them back to the floor.
- Rest your heels on the floor and flex your toes straight up toward the ceiling. Hold for 10 seconds, then release and repeat.
- Lift both feet and do 5 ankle circles to the right, then 5 to the left.

#### Leg-Lifts

Stand sideways behind your chair. Hold the back of the chair with your left hand and slowly lift your left leg. Keep your knee bent straight ahead at a 90 degree angle. Now lower your leg until it almost hits the ground, but slowly raise it up again. Repeat for a total of 10 times and then switch to the other side.

#### Forward Crawl

Stand next to your desk and do forward arm circles for one minute. Follow with backward arm circles for 30 seconds.

**Back Crawl**

Now do the opposite! Do backward arm circles for one minute. Follow with forward arm circles for 30 seconds.

**Run in Place**

Feeling sluggish? Time for a cardio boost! Set your timers and jog in place for one minute. If that's too difficult for some family members, march in place instead. After one minute, how do you feel? The next time you do it, shoot for two minutes. This is great for a homework break or for parents who feel exhausted after work and daily chores. Aerobic exercise gets blood pumping to your heart and brain as well. Cardio is good for the heart and mind!



## SCHOOL TO HOME

# WELLNESS – EVERY BITE COUNTS!

### What's In Season? What Makes Sense?

In winter we see different kinds of fruits and vegetables in our supermarkets. Bushels of different varieties of apples and pears are replaced with oranges, tangerines and grapefruits. Sure, it's now possible to get practically any kind of produce from around the world delivered to supermarket shelves, but things you enjoy at other times of the year might be less fresh and abundant, and more expensive.

This is a good time to take your kids grocery shopping and teach them about some basic home economics. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are more economical at many times in the year and just as nutritious when packaged with limited additional sugar and salt. Get creative with your kids and think of ways to get more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Blueberry pancakes, broccoli cheese soup, peach smoothies, ham and pineapple pizza... what else can you think of?

### Here are some tips from My Plate and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables—on a budget

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all smart choices. Look for sales and buy some of each to last until your next shopping trip.
- Choose frozen vegetables that do not have added fat, salt or sugars.
- Buy canned fruits packed in "100% juice" or water.
- Look for canned vegetables that say "No added salt." You can also rinse canned vegetables to reduce the sodium content.
- Buy fruit and vegetables in loose-pack plastic bags. You'll only need to pour out what you need; then immediately return what you don't use to the freezer.
- Look for frozen fruits as an option when fresh fruits are out of season. Choose frozen fruit without added sugars in the ingredients list. To help frozen fruit keep its shape, serve while it's still somewhat frozen. Frozen fruit bars make a nutritious snack, too.
- Choose frozen plain vegetables or those made with low-sodium sauces.

### Benefits of Choosing Frozen

According to data from U.S. Cold Storage, frozen products often contain more nutrients than fresh foods. That's because produce destined for commercial freezing is harvested at the height of ripeness and nutritive value. It is taken directly to nearby freezing plants for immediate processing which preserves the nutrient content. Fresh foods, on the other hand, can lose vitamins and minerals while being transported in trucks and sitting on shelves. Buying frozen foods also helps reduce food waste.

### Keep Canned Foods on Hand

To help ease the stress of meal planning and budgeting, it's smart to keep canned ingredients on hand. You can make a variety of healthy dishes faster and have dinner on the table in a fraction of the time. Beans of all types and colors

are a great high-protein staple for chilis, soups, burritos, dips and casseroles. Canned tomatoes are ideal for pasta sauces, soups and salsa. Canned tuna and salmon provide countless ideas for lunch and dinner. Canned peaches and pumpkin have you covered for desserts, no matter what's in season.

### **What's for Breakfast?**

#### **Start every day the whole-grain way**

- Serve whole-grain versions of cereal, bread, or pancakes at breakfast.
- Whole grains with more fiber will help your kids feel fuller longer so they stay alert in school.
- Choose foods with "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grains" on the label. Or check the ingredient list to see if the word "whole" is before the first ingredient listed (for example, whole-wheat flour). If it is, it's whole grain.



## SCHOOL TO HOME

## WELLNESS – EVERY MOVE COUNTS!

**Strive for 60 a Day, Every Day**

At school kids all strive for a common goal: Engaging in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Both the CDC and the American Heart Association recommend this be moderate-to-vigorous activity. While some of these 60 minutes can be done at school, the rest are left for after-school time. How can you help? By encouraging your kids to be active, and by being active yourself.

**What are the benefits of being physically active every day?**

1. Regular physical activity keeps your heart healthy and strong. It also helps you build healthy muscles, bones and joints.
2. Physical activity is good for both your body and your mind! It can improve your mood, give you more energy during the day, and help you sleep better at night.
3. It is also a good way to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Help stress the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle at home. Physical activity should be as important to your daily routine as brushing your teeth, bathing and getting enough sleep.

Do some activities that get your heart pumping: March in place, jog in place, dance, play jump rope games with an “invisible jump rope” (use your imaginations!). If you’re able to go outside, you could just instruct students to run around the perimeter of the playground or field. As long as they’re moving and doing their personal best, every step counts!

**Winter Boredom Busters**

Feeling cooped up due to winter weather? Get creative and think of indoor activities that are active (like dancing) rather than passive (like sitting on the couch). Things like:

- “Sock skating” on the kitchen floor or in non-carpeted hallways
- “Wastebasket basketball” with balls made of crumpled newspaper tossed into a wastebasket, bucket or cardboard box

What else can your kids come up with? Gather recycled cardboard from paper towel and toilet paper holders, recycled yogurt tubs and aluminum cans and let them use their imaginations!

**Dance Your Way to 60!**

Time flies when you’re having fun. Think of ways to incorporate physical activity into indoor play time to keep everyone active. Here are some ideas to suggest to your kids:

**Dance Solo:** How long is a song? A minute? Two minutes? More? Make a guess. Then pick a favorite song to dance along with at home. Set a timer or look at a clock to check the start time and end time. How long did you dance? How many times would you have to dance to that song to add 5 minutes to your 60 a Day chart? How about 10 minutes?

**Make It Social:** Invite a friend over to dance. How many minutes can you clock together for your charts? Or try Zumba together by watching some videos from [Zumba Kids](#).

**Family Activity: Intergenerational Dance**

Here's a fun, easy-to-learn dance routine you can try with the whole family – grandparents included. This multicultural video shows people of all ages, from all over the world, doing the Sid Shuffle. Have your kids show you the moves as you dance along with the music "...and walk it out like Granny!" [Dance Video: Do the Sid Shuffle](#)

**Remember to Track Your Minutes!**

Use the charts here to track your activity "bursts" and bring them back to school. Or keep one chart at home and one at school. Pay attention to how you feel on days when you're less active vs. more active. When you've racked up 60 minutes of activity for several days in a row, how does that make you feel? How about an entire week?

### Home to School Wellness Charts

| FAMILY ACTIVITIES   | Date(s) | Notes: Which ones did you try? |
|---|---------|--------------------------------|
| Relax and Unwind  |         |                                |
| Desk Exercises  |         |                                |
| Making a recipe with frozen, canned or fresh fruit or veg |         |                                |
| Dancing   |         |                                |
| Other Physical Activity                                   |         |                                |

### Physical Activity Chart

Students: Write the name of the activity type in each box. Tally your minutes and add them to your 60 a Day chart back at school.

Parents: We're including a couple extra ones here, in case you'd like to try it too. No need to return this one to school. Hang onto your copy for inspiration!

| Name: _____       |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
|-------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>Total</b>      |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |

### Signatures

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's signature \_\_\_\_\_





**Family Copies (Keep at Home)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>Total</b>      |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

| PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-------------------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| 10 minutes        |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |
| <b>Total</b>      |     |      |     |       |     |     |     |