



FORWARD CORNER

February is American Heart Month

FORWARD DUPAGE is pleased to join the National Institute of Health (NIH), the American Heart Association and others in celebrating American Heart month; a chance to raise awareness about heart health. FORWARD encourages early childhood and school age programs to work with families and others in the **community to jointly** promote this monthly focus. Research shows that having social support makes being heart healthy easier. Find ways to share what you, your center and individual families are doing to be heart healthy together! Consider these weekly themes from the NIH.

Week	Theme	Ideas
1	Be physically active together.	Share how you're moving more with others. Have walking meetings with staff. Start a walking club over lunch hours. Walk the dog together as a family. Need to run an errand, make it a family walk opportunity. Join an exercise class with a friend or neighbor. Share your commitment and your success on the center and individual's social media pages/platforms.
2	Eat healthier together.	Share heart healthy recipes with your families and ask them to share healthy recipes with other center families (i.e., bulletin board or backpack stuffers). Families can grocery shop together, with a focus on healthy foods. Make a heart healthy meal for a potluck. Again, share center activities on social media and ask families to do the same.
3	Track your heart health stats together.	Remind each other to keep a log of your blood pressure, healthy weight goals, and physical activity. Staff and families alike. Share on social media!
4	Manage stress and sleep better.	Share with staff and families the benefits of a good night sleep and how physical activity helps to manage stress. Use your support "squad" to remind each other to stick to the same bedtime every night and to plan and participate in daily physical activity. Do a stress reducing activity like yoga or meditation together. Share on social media!

Resources for Early Childhood Programs and Schools: Action for Health Kids has some great tips [here](#).

Resources for Families: *Six Simple Steps for Your Family to Be Heart Healthy* - Share this [link](#) with parents or print out a copy to post or share.

JOIN THE HEALTHY MOVEMENT TODAY BY TAKING ACTION!

Families: Take stock. If there is a history of heart disease in your family, commit to a plan: be active together, eat healthier, manage family stress and get a good night sleep.

Early Childhood Providers: Plan to integrate a discussion on the heart and heart health during circle time, around the lunch table or in the science corner. Check out this [curriculum](#) unit for 3-5 year olds.

For information on healthy eating and activity initiatives in DuPage, check out www.forwarddupage.org.