

FORWARD CORNER

April is Move More Month and Every Kid Healthy Week

April is National Move More Month and the objective of the month is clear and simple: get up and move! Created by the American Heart Association as a way to help improve health of Americans everywhere, National Move Month is aimed at getting more of us to hit 10,000 steps every day or, even better, to hit that 20-minutes of aerobic exercise mark every day. FORWARD would like to challenge early childhood educators and families to make sure children get in at least two hours of physical activity each day, some of it vigorous. Also this month, Action for Healthy Kids is sponsoring **Every Kid Healthy Week**, to celebrate school health and wellness achievements.

During the week of April 26-30th, **Action for Healthy Kids** asks us to focus each day on a specific wellness strategy.

- Mindful Monday (social-emotional health). Select books from your program library that allow you to follow the story with a discussion about caring for friends and showing interest in others and/or recognizing, labeling and managing emotions.
- Tasty Tuesday (nutrition and food access). Engage children in a “taste test”: different kinds of apples; water w/ ice, lemon, cucumber, sparking; green vegetables; apple slice, juice, sauce, pie; etc. Discuss the elements, vote for and graph favorites.
- Wellness Wednesday (self-care strategies). Introduce a little Yoga to children or try waving (dancing) scarves to mellow and relaxing music to slow down and unwind.
- Thoughtful Thursday (connectedness, relationship skills and social awareness). Complete a service learning/volunteer project for a local not for profit, senior center, health-related fundraiser, military/soldiers, Humane Society, etc.
- Fitness Friday (physical activity and active play). Go on a Bug Hunt: During outdoor time, look for bugs. Be sure you lift and look under rocks, dig into the dirt, check under leaves and observe your surroundings. As a following up, encourage children to move like bugs: crawl, fly, flit, creep, slither, scoot, jump, etc.

Or from the American Heart Association, try these 10 ways to get children moving at home or school: 1. Run in place for 30 seconds; 2. Dance party for 1 minute; 3. Stand up and sit down 10 times; 4. Hot lava! Keep a balloon in the air without touching the ground (make it harder by only using heads or elbows); 5. Jumping Jacks; 6. Do the hokey pokey; 7. Stretch your hands high over your head, wave them around; 8. Frog jumps; 9. Standing mountain climbers for 30 seconds; 10. High knees for 30 seconds.

JOIN THE HEALTHY MOVEMENT TODAY BY TAKING ACTION!

April Call to Action for Families: During each of the four weekends in April, challenge your family to get to 10,000 steps: Track it on your phone with a free fitness app or an inexpensive pedometer. Take a family walk, take a longer hike in a nearby Forest Preserve; walk the dog; play a running game in the yard, dance, play Follow the Leader, go on a scavenger hunt throughout the house or yard, walk to the nearest park, etc.

April Call to Action for Early Childhood Providers: Commit to five days of wellness: Mindful Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Thoughtful Thursday and Fitness Friday. Introduce the daily activities shared in this newsletter or design your own. Share with families in a memo home or with a photo display.

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