

The Parent's Page



Information Network

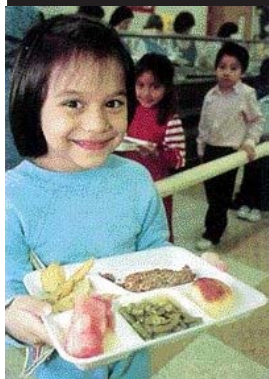


Pledge for Life Partnership

Celebrating Wise Highs ... Choices for a Lifetime

Winter 2006

Wellness:



Bringing schools and families together for the health of all our kids

Today, health experts know that it's not enough to treat illnesses and get a checkup every year. All of us – including our kids – need to take a good look at the way we live. Are we making choices every day that promote our own health and well-being and that of our families? Do we understand what our bodies need daily – nutritious food and physical activity — to stay as healthy as we can?



This whole life approach to health is called wellness and it's becoming an important focus in healthcare and education. In fact, in 2004 Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act which requires all schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program to have a wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006-07 school year.

This makes a lot of sense. Schools are in a great position to teach and encourage healthy habits for life. In addition, good nutrition and exercise can improve academic achievement and can reduce behavior problems.

It's a whole-school effort

Maybe you already know that the lunch served in the cafeteria at school must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, but what about the cookies and chips your child may buy in the ala carte line or from a vending machine?

Wellness policies can give parents answers to these important questions. A school wellness policy should include the following components:

▲ **Nutrition Standards** – food served at school meets nutritional guidelines, not only for the lunch tray, but throughout the school – in ala carte lines, vending and snack bars.

▲ **Physical Activity** – students have the opportunity and encouragement to get lots of physical activity – ideally 60 minutes per day – by safeguarding recess and P.E. classes.

▲ **Nutrition Education** – nutrition education is incorporated as part of the school day, using a variety of classroom subjects, school-wide events and activities – and even the cafeteria itself – as a hands-on learning laboratory.

▲ **Other School-Based Activities** – promote after-school activities that incorporate nutrition and physical activity and even try to make it easier for kids to walk or bike to school.

By developing a local wellness policy that meets the new federal law, each school district has the chance to get ahead of the curve and take a proactive approach to promoting good health for children. But wellness efforts should not stop at the school's front door. It's a team effort and parents play a critical role!

Source: Child Nutrition Foundation and the National Dairy Council

Mark your calendars for the Family Fun-a-thon February 19

Make sure to mark your calendars for the Pledge for Life Partnership's 10th Annual Family Fun-a-thon on February 19 at Olivet Nazarene University.

and provides an afternoon of activities for the entire family!

A karate clinic for K-4th graders and a cheerleading clinic for K-8th graders are scheduled. Cost for each clinic is \$15 and includes admittance to the Fun-a-thon for the participants.



Parents receive seated massages from Kankakee Area Career Center students at the 2005 Family Fun-a-thon.

The Fun-a-thon is the annual fundraiser to benefit the Life Education Centers' healthy lifestyle and substance abuse prevention programs. The event runs from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in McHie Arena

Pre-registration for all of these activities is required. Registration forms are available in school offices or by calling the Partnership at 936-4606. Registration forms also may be downloaded from the website at www.pledgeforlife.org.

Set Clear Rules:



Use clear and simple language when telling children what you expect. Don't leave them guessing. Be direct about not tolerating alcohol or other risky behaviors. It will help them to resist peer pressure and other influences to use.



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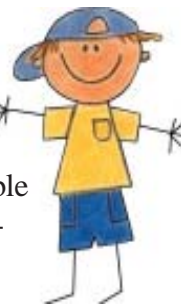
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Use Positive Communication

Everything you say and do as a parent sends a valuable message to your children.



You influence how they experience the world and how they feel about themselves. Positive parent/child communication gives your children the information they need to live and grow into secure, productive, happy, responsible and loving people.

Parents who communicate well will help their children develop a positive self-image; feel confident about expressing themselves; and build the skills needed to get along well with people.

From The Bureau for At-Risk Youth

Additional Fun-a-thon activities not requiring pre-registration include mad science demonstrations with ONU Professor Larry Ferren, arts and crafts with instructors from Art Start Studio, a Fun-a-thon Fair for young children and a Fun-a-thon Family Challenge for older kids and their parents. Students from the Kankakee Area Career Center's Cosmetology program will be back again to pamper parents with seated massages and manicures.

Domino's Pizza and other refreshments also will be available. General admission to the Fun-a-thon is \$5; children under 3 years old are free. To learn more, call the Partnership at 936-4606 or visit www.pledgeforlife.org.

As critical as reading, writing and arithmetic!

The Illinois State Board of Education has developed learning standards to address the social and emotional well-being of all Illinois school-aged children.

Learning standards describe what students in public schools should know and be able to do from preschool through high school in areas like language arts, math, science, social studies and the fine arts. Illinois is one of the first states to adopt Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as a required area of learning and now, in addition to traditional academic work, children will learn social and emotional skills.

SEL is the way children become aware of, manage and appropriately express their emotions; make and meet personal goals; develop positive relationships; make good decisions; and become good citizens. Research shows that SEL skills improve readiness and motivation to learn; encourage positive

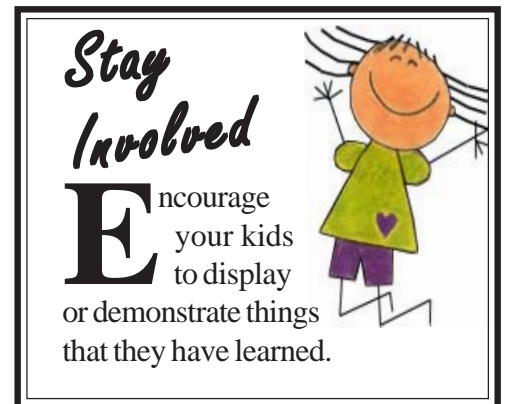


classroom behavior; improve academic performance; and encourage good health. They safeguard against bullying, peer pressure and dangerous risk-taking behaviors.

SEL standards include three broad base goals for Illinois students. Beginning in preschool and continuing through high school, students will learn to develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success; use these skills to establish and maintain positive relationships; and demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors.

Most schools already have programs that address at least some of the SEL skills. Programs offered through the Life Education Center's *Wise Highs* and Project Northland curriculums are an example.

Parents, guardians and other family members play an important role in their children's success in SEL skills. The next issue of the *Parent's Page* will examine what you can do at home to help your child develop these skills.



Students tackle tough topics

Eighth graders participating in the PowerLines class at Aquinas Catholic Academy in Kankakee recently shared their research projects with parents, teachers and fellow students.

PowerLines is part of Project Northland — a three-part research-based underage drinking prevention curriculum that is proven to deter and delay the onset of underage alcohol use. PowerLines uses shared leadership to reinforce what students learned in the 6th and 7th grade classes while introducing them to the professional and political groups that may influence an adolescent's decision to use alcohol.

Top left, Taylor Boudreau, Grant White and Reed Hoekstra discuss what they learned about boating laws and alcohol use: below left, Michael Hodak and Tyler Calvert researched how alcohol companies target teens in their advertising strategies.

At right, Emily Themer and Jami Anderson conduct an experiment using a raw egg and rubbing alcohol to illustrate the physical affects of alcohol on adolescent brain tissue.

Eighteen schools in Iroquois and Kankakee counties currently participate in Project Northland. For more information, contact Brenda Wetzels, Life Education Center coordinator, at 937-2950.



KAN-I HELP Network News ...

Support group established for parents of children with disabilities

Parents of children age birth to adult who have special needs are invited to participate in a new monthly support group. The group is being sponsored by the Easter Seal Society of Kankakee County, Options Center for Independent Living and the Bourbonnais Public Library. Meetings will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month at the Bourbonnais Public Library at 250 W. John Casey Road.

The group is planning several guest presenters. Scheduled topics and speakers include:

5:30 TO 7:30 P.M. MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6: *“Positive Behavioral Interventions”* with Chris Bagglio. For details call 939-8340.

5:30 TO 8:30 P.M. MONDAY, MARCH 6: *“IEP Planning & Participation”* with Vickie Henley of Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center. For more information, call (217) 529-3009 or e-mail Ms. Henley at Vichenley@warpsnet.com

5:30 TO 7:30 P.M. MONDAY, APRIL 3: *“With the Right Tools, Kids Can Do Anything”* with Ceila Sluga of the Illinois Assistive Technology Project. For more information e-mail Ms. Sluga at csluga@iltech.org.

All programs are free. Childcare will be provided in the children’s program room of the library. Parents who are planning on attending, should contact Ann Martinec at Easter Seals at 932-0623 to inform her of the number of children that will be needing child care.

Parent volunteers needed

Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center is seeking parents to help get the word out to parents and educators in local school districts about upcoming Family Matter workshops and trainings.

Family Matters provides information, referral and training to parents, students with disabilities and special education professionals. Through a toll-free help line individuals can get assistance with special education problems or concerns, obtain information and request training opportunities. Regional coordinators in Illinois offer free workshops on special education rights and responsibilities and related topics.

Parent volunteers are needed to hand deliver training announcements to district offices or special education cooperatives. For more information, contact Vickie Henley, Family Matters information specialist, at (217) 529-3009

Volunteers also are needed to help with childcare at the parent support group. If you are interested in helping, call Ann at 932-0623.

Establish Traditions



At the beginning of this New Year, designate one weekend every month for each one of your children and let them take turns choosing an activity that they enjoy. Suggestions include backpacking, going to the zoo and fishing. It can be anything, as long as it fits the limits that you define. When your children are older, they will have a storehouse of wonderful memories from these special family weekends.

From *“Celebrating Special Times With Special People”*
by Gloria Gaither & Shirley Dobson



Information Network

More than 1,000 services listed

Connecting the people of Kankakee and Iroquois counties with the resources they need to succeed.

Visit the website at
www.kan-i-help.org