

Let's Talk About SWAP Policies

End the use of food as a reward in the school classroom.

Children naturally want to explore, discover and learn. Rather than reward them with food for learning, other classroom management strategies can be used.

Providing food as a reward undermines other messages children receive about healthy eating and behavior.

Children who attend schools where food is commonly used for reward have higher BMIs and overall caloric intakes.

By using food as reward, children begin to associate foods with positive reinforcement and build an unhealthy dependence on it for comfort.

An unhealthy emotional connection to non-nutritive rewards is associated with higher levels of binge and disordered-eating behavior in adolescence and adulthood.

Reward-based eating can override the signals telling our brains that we're full, leading children to overeat beyond their caloric need.

Children's internal motivation decreases when external rewards are used. Food becomes the focus instead of the activity.

Children's desire for sugary, fatty food increases when the food is used as a reward.

Ensure every elementary student has at least 20 minutes of recess every day.

Children spend 6-7 hours in school each day. Incorporating at least 20 minutes of recess per day is the best way to help them get physical activity.

Physical activity is a leading learning indicator. It increases cognition through blood flow, attentiveness, concentration, memory and comprehension.

Physical activity decreases misbehavior in classroom settings. Providing recess breaks can improve children's focus on instructional material.

Physical activity promotes critical health benefits, reduces risk for obesity, and promotes academic achievement among youth.

Recess should not be taken away as punishment. It is often taken away from the students who need the physical activity break the most.

Recess should be treated as an integral part of every day. By investing in recess, time in the classroom is likely to be more productive as kids are less disruptive.

Inclement weather should not be an excuse to have children sit on computers. Indoor recess strategies are fun, free and available on www.gonoodle.com.

At least 50% of food served at classroom celebrations and school events should meet health guidelines.

Serving at least 50% healthy food at school events can help shift students' taste expectations and make nutritious food the "new normal".

One in three Kentucky children are overweight or obese. Kentucky ranks number one for overweight and obese high school students.

Children who attend schools where unhealthy food is used in celebrations have higher BMIs and overall caloric intake.

A study done at Yale University found that when chocolate cake and fruit punch were served at a classroom birthday party, kids ate as much as 455 calories. When fruit was added to the menu the average caloric intake dropped to 332 calories.

Healthy eating in childhood and adolescence is important for proper growth and development and can prevent health problems such as obesity, dental caries, iron deficiency, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

Sugar and fat-laden foods provide the same dopamine release as addictive drugs. Children's brains are literally rewired to crave non-nutritive, highly processed foods.

70% of the state's youth already have at least one cardiovascular risk factor and one third have untreated dental diseases.



CONTACT US! www.twenslex.org • twens.schoolwellness@gmail.com



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