

# ***WELLNESS WEEK GUIDE***



## **INTRODUCTION OF CHILDREN’S WELLNESS FOUNDATION AND WELLNESS WEEK**

The Children’s Wellness Foundation is a public charity whose core mission is to teach children important health concepts at early stages in life helping them establish life-long patterns for healthy, productive lifestyles. In this aspect our mission coincides with the established goals of the National PTA so the Children’s Wellness Foundation is excited to join with them in providing “Wellness Week” to elementary schools, like yours, throughout the nation.

### **Goals of the Children’s Wellness Foundation**

"Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime" is a parable that best illustrates the vision of the Children’s Wellness Foundation. We want to reach children individually, to teach each child about wellness, and ultimately, to change his or her life. To reach children, and to reach our goal, we are encouraging schools to host an annual “Wellness Week”. To make it easy for schools to teach children about wellness we have brought together important resources and combined them into a “Wellness Week Kit”. Hosting a Wellness Week helps your school meet important requirements of the Local Wellness Policy law and the resources in the Wellness Week Kit are great aids to wellness education.

For our good nutrition and exercise wellness program we want to help children discover the natural link between good nutrition and active play—a link that we feel is vital to reversing childhood obesity trends.

### **Contents of the “Wellness Week Kit**

We have provided your school a “Wellness Week Kit” full of resources to help you run a “Wellness Week” at your school. In your kit you will find:

- 75 “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROMs. This nutrition-themed interactive CD-ROM promotes the new USDA MyPyramid and healthy lifestyles in children who can read (usually ages 8 through 12; or grades 3 through 6) and encourages them to make good nutrition and daily exercise a key component to healthy lifestyles. While playing this CD-ROM each child goes through an interactive experience that personalizes the MyPyramid concept and what it means to them. They are also introduced to the concept of calories as an energy unit and make the connection between daily active play and nutrition. “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” takes about 40 minutes to complete, but many children enjoy playing it multiple times.
- 50 "Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day-Junior!" CD-ROMs. This exciting learning tool is full of age-appropriate games and learning activities for children ages 3

through 7 (non-readers; preschoolers through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade). Using the USDA's MyPyramid as its foundation "Junior" teaches children about how to balance foods from different groups in order to meet their nutritional needs. Colorful interactive activities, games, and songs lead the children across MyPyramid where they learn about why making good food choices is important.

- 150 Pedometers. A pedometer is a fun way for children to learn how much exercise is needed to stay in good shape. Counting steps gives children instant feedback on the importance of physical activity and active lifestyles. During “Wellness Week” it also helps make the tie between active play and nutrition.
- Four 2’ by 3’ foot USDA MyPyramid posters to be used for display in the school during Wellness Week. This poster was developed by the USDA to better communicate the ideas of MyPyramid to children.
- One roll of 1,000 “Wellness Week” stickers. These stickers are given as rewards for each child that completes the “Good Food and Play” CD-ROM during “Wellness Week”.
- One roll of 1,000 “Multi-Miler” stickers. These stickers are given as rewards for each child that completes their steps when using the pedometer during “Wellness Week”.
- 6 “Wellness Week” T-shirts to be used as rewards during Wellness Week as prizes.
- One “National Wellness Week Pilot Program” coaster for each participating school. This coaster is for your school principal to use in their office.
- One “Wellness Week” Pilot Program Guide (this guide).

# HOW TO RUN A “WELLNESS WEEK” AT YOUR SCHOOL

## Choosing a Leader

To fully organize your Wellness Week you will need a leader to help execute the Wellness Week Pilot program. This leader might be a member of your PTA, a health advocate from your community, the person responsible for implementation of the Local Wellness Policy at your school, or the health/physical education specialist at your school. Many schools have a full-time or part-time nurse who may be interested in getting involved in organizing Wellness Week activities. Your Wellness Week leader needs to follow through with the day-to-day activities of Wellness Week. All of the materials needed to run a Wellness Week are contained in the Wellness Week Kit; so assure this leader that much of the program is already organized.

Of course your school or community may want to expand the Wellness Week using the resources provided in the Wellness Week Kit. It is easy to include additional physical education or nutrition education activities during the week. For example, Wellness Week is a great program to run in correlation with the PTA’s Healthy Lifestyles month in November; or during your annual Field Day in the spring. Your community may choose to do a community Fun Run or Fun Walk that also involves parents as part of your Wellness Week activities. Competitions between children and faculty add a fun element—a free-throw shooting contest between some of the kids and the principal; a jump rope contest with faculty members; a softball game with the faculty; a hula-hoop contest; a neighborhood walk, etc.

As you involve teachers, community leaders, PTA members, or health advocates in your area you will find that many of these people have great ideas and are willing to help organize additional wellness activities during your school’s Wellness Week.

## Who Needs to be Involved

Organizing a Wellness Week takes collaboration with the principal, teachers, PTA leaders and perhaps community leaders. These leaders can contribute valuable ideas. Their involvement in the planning process will make them more invested in wellness programs.

The amount of work needed for Wellness Week is not large, but dividing it among several people can lessen the load for the person who is put in charge. These are the specific items that need to be accomplished:

- 1) A 10-15 minute Wellness Week Kick-off Assembly needs to be planned for Monday.

- 2) a.) Computer lab time needs to be scheduled for each class to use the “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROMs. Plan to schedule a one-hour block for each class. This time should be scheduled after the Monday morning assembly and before the Friday final assembly/super activity. Upon completion of the CD-ROM the computer lab instructor can pass out Wellness Week stickers to participating children.

b.) If your school chooses to send the “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROMs home as a take home activity a schedule needs to be created so that each class can be involved. There are 125 CD-ROMs (75 yellow CD-ROMs for students who can read; 50 green CD-ROMs for non-readers). Please view the CD-ROM to determine the appropriate viewing for your grades—your second grade classes may be comfortable with either CD-ROM.)

For a take home program the CD-ROMs need to be passed out to classes the first day and then each morning someone needs to collect the CD-ROMs from the classes that used them the night before, then pass them out to new classes so that they can use them that evening as a take home assignment. This same person can also hand out the Wellness Week reward stickers for the children who complete the assignment.

- 3) A schedule needs to be created so that each class can use the pedometers either for the take home challenge, or as part of recess activities during the week. There are 150 pedometers and each child in your school needs to have an opportunity to use a pedometer. The instant feedback of the pedometers is a great way to educate children about the importance of physical activity, and, perhaps more importantly, it is a great way to emphasize the importance of making good food choices and the importance of physical activity.

For a take home challenge the pedometers need to be passed out to classes the first day and then each morning someone needs to collect the pedometers from the classes that used them the night before, and pass them out to new classes so that they can use them that evening as a take home assignment. This same person can also hand out the Multi-Miler reward stickers for the kids who complete the challenge of 5,000 steps (approximately 1 mile).

- 4) A 30-45 minute Wellness Week Final Assembly/Super Activity needs to be planned for Friday. You will find ideas, resources and an outline of this assembly in this guide.

## WELLNESS WEEK PROGRAM SPECIFICS

### Wellness Week Calendar

**Monday**— Wellness Week Kick-off Assembly. This is an educational assembly to tell each student about the concept of personal wellness and why good nutrition and physical activity are so important to overall wellness. Show the MyPyramid posters that will be displayed in the school during the week. Explain the new pyramid and tell how it encourages good nutrition choices and physical activity (see the section titled MyPyramid for Kids Notes at the end of this guide for more information).

*NOTE: Your school may prefer to do this short assembly with grade level groups as opposed to the whole school at once.*

Explain that each child will have an opportunity during the week to go through the “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROM (which will either be used in your school’s computer lab during the week; or as a take home assignment). Show samples of the CD-ROM and tell how it teaches about the new MyPyramid (please view the CD-ROM before talking about it so you can give examples of concepts the children will learn). Hold up the sticker that each child will receive when they return the CD-ROM and demonstrate they have completed viewing it. (If you are using the CD-ROM as a take-home assignment make sure the children know they will receive their sticker when they return the “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROM.)

Demonstrate how to use a pedometer. Invite children to “test” the pedometer as part of this demonstration. Children have fun with pedometers and love the immediate feedback. By demonstrating how the pedometer works you will help build anticipation. Tell the children that each of them will be given a pedometer in their classroom during the week as either a take home challenge, or for a recess activity. Each child in the school will be challenged to take 5,000 steps (approximately 1 mile) on their pedometer the day they receive it. Emphasize that it is important that all pedometers are returned to their teacher the following morning so that all of the kids in the school can use a pedometer during the week. Show the sticker that each child will receive when they return the pedometer and show they have completed their 5,000 steps.

*NOTE: Teachers who have tested the program have told us that the pedometers can be distracting if handed out during the school day (the kids really enjoy the instant feedback and the pedometers tend to take their attention away from their school work). To avoid distracting your kids, please hand out the pedometers at the end of the day. Other schools have chosen to hand out the pedometers at the beginning of recess and then to have the children count their steps during recess and hand them back to their teachers at the end of recess as they have concerns about getting pedometers back after a take-home activity.*

The Wellness Week Kick-off Assembly does not need to be long. An assembly with more activities will be held on Friday at the end of Wellness Week. Allow 10-15 minutes

for the Monday Kick-off assembly. Be sure to emphasize the importance of both good nutrition and physical activity.

***Tuesday through Thursday***—All students should view the “Good Food and Play Make a Balanced Day” CD-ROM during the week. If this is to be done through your school’s computer lab then arrange for each class to visit the lab during the week and view the CD-ROM. The CD-ROM takes approximately 40 minutes to play straight through (it can take longer if children choose to play the games more than once—which should be encouraged). Schedule one hour per classroom for this activity. Use some of the 1,000 Wellness Week stickers as rewards when students complete the CD-ROM. You can also use the stickers during the Friday assembly, or during other activities. Use of the stickers may depend on your school’s student population, but they should be used as participation awards during Wellness Week.

Arrange for each classroom use the pedometers during a challenge activity. If you decide on a take-home challenge, children will have the pedometer upon leaving school and must bring the pedometer back to school so other classrooms can use them the next day. Each student should be challenged to record 5,000 steps (which is basically a mile), so this is an attainable goal. There are 1,000 Multi-Miler stickers that can be handed out as rewards. Depending on your student population choose to use the stickers upon completion of the Multi-Miler challenge and/or during the Friday activities.

*NOTE: If you have a large school population and can not hand out stickers both during the week day activities and during the Friday assembly, you may wish to use the Multi-Miler stickers during the week when the students complete their Multi-Miler pedometer challenge, and then use the Wellness Week sticker during the Friday Assembly/Super Activity. By giving Multi-Miler stickers upon the return of their pedometer you are giving the children an extra incentive to make sure they bring their pedometer back to school.*

***Friday***—The Friday Assembly/Super Activity emphasizes the role of good nutrition and physical activity and how they are tied together in helping children become healthy. The Wellness Week Kit contains rewards for each student (these rewards can also be given out as part of the Field Day activities) such as stickers and T-Shirts.

*NOTE: There are six T-Shirts included in the Wellness Week Kit. Besides the T-Shirts and stickers you can also give out the extra CD-ROMs as rewards.*

A speaker from your school and/or community should be invited to talk with the children. Examples of speakers would be your school district’s nutritionist, the school nurse, the district administrator in charge of the Local Wellness Policy, etc. Community health advocates or local pediatric doctors or dentists would also be good speakers. The assignment for this speaker is to make a tie between good nutrition and active play. Encourage the speakers to once again use the MyPyramid poster as a visual as it now makes an important graphic tie between nutrition and exercise.

For other fun possibilities you might invite a local aerobics instructor to lead the kids through several minutes of aerobics. If your school (or district) has a dance program, the person who runs that dance program could make a fun presentation. Many high schools have dance programs as part of their P.E. curriculum. A group of these kids could put on a fun dance presentation that also involves your children.

Competitions between the children and faculty add a fun element—a free-throw shooting contest between some of the kids and the principal; a jump rope contest with faculty members; a softball game with the faculty; a hula-hoop contest; or create a station for each of these activities and rotate the children through each station as part of your final day activities (see “Other Ideas for Wellness Week for more ideas).

During their presentations the speakers or participants can give out rewards such as T-Shirts, “Good Food and Play” CD-ROMs and pedometers, as well as prizes or coupons supplied by local businesses—fitness items; whole wheat bread; fruit baskets; sporting goods; local sporting event tickets; swim park/amusement passes; etc. This will keep the kids interest and attention peaked during the half hour assembly/activity. To cap off the week you need to once again make the connection between making good food choices and physical activity.

### **When to Run Your Wellness Week**

A Wellness Week can be held at any time during the school year according to your discretion. Physical fitness activities are easier to do when the weather is warmer during the fall and spring, but the importance of physical activity and play should be stressed all during the school year—especially in the winter when children are less active. The Children’s Wellness Foundation is working closely with the National PTA to make sure that all elementary schools throughout the nation get an opportunity to have a Wellness Week, but when you host your Wellness Week is up to your school.

### **Other Ideas for the Wellness Week**

- Fun Run with different activities all along the course—a section for skipping, running backwards, long strides, baby steps, link arms and race 3-5 across, zig-zagging, etc.
- Jump-a-thon. Children get in groups of 6-8. For one hour the jump rope(s) never stop turning. Kids in each group take turns jumping for one or two minutes each. Two ropes could turn for double-dutch with team members taking turns jumping and turning the ropes. Fun music is broadcast outside to keep the jumpers motivated. Pedometers can also be used to show the number of steps taken while jumping.



- Plan activities during Field Day that would make good use of the pedometers—such as relay races. Record each child’s steps during Field Day and come up with a school Grand Total! Call the local paper and report how many steps/miles your school jumped, hopped, skipped and ran during your Field Day.
- Fun treats to cap off super activities might be individual yogurts, individual frozen yogurt, juice bars, sectioned oranges, cut up fruits, healthy sandwich segments, etc. Be sure that you encourage healthy snacking as part of your nutrition education efforts.

### **MyPyramid For Kids Notes**

There are many great resources available at the [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) web site. In particular the <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html> area provides information specifically for elementary school children. Information on MyPyramid is readily available to help your presenters/speakers in teaching the children at your school. We have included a coloring page at the end of this guide that is available in PDF format at MyPyramid.gov. These are their notes for explaining MyPyramid for Kids:

#### *A Close Look At MyPyramid*

MyPyramid for Kids reminds you to be physically active every day, or most days, and to make healthy food choices. Every part of the new symbol has a message for you. Can you figure it out?

#### *Be Physically Active Every Day*

The person climbing the stairs reminds you to do something active every day, like running, walking the dog, playing, swimming, biking, or climbing lots of stairs.

#### *Eat More From Some Food Groups Than Others*

Did you notice that some of the color stripes are wider than others? The different sizes remind you to choose more foods from the food groups with the widest stripes.

#### *Every Color Every Day*

The colors orange, green, red, yellow, blue and purple represent the five different food groups, plus oils. Remember to eat foods from all food groups every day.

#### *Choose Healthier Foods From Each Group*

Why are the colored stripes wider at the bottom of the pyramid? Every food group has foods that you should eat more often, these foods are at the bottom of the pyramid.

#### *Take One Step at a Time*

You do not need to change overnight what you eat and how you exercise. Just start with one new, good thing, and add a new one every day.

## **ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S WELLNESS FOUNDATION**

The Children’s Wellness Foundation has worked with community leaders, the National PTA, principals, teachers, local PTA leaders, and others to find the best way to reach children with the important message about making good food choices and getting consistent daily physical exercise. Understanding these basic concepts is the key to creating healthy lifestyles for children and turning back childhood obesity trends. We understand the challenges of the “No Child Left Behind” teaching environment and understand the need for a program that is flexible.

The Wellness Week Kit is our way of providing schools with important resources that are needed to communicate this very important message. The goal of Wellness Week is to teach children the connection between good nutrition, active play and healthy lifestyles. The new Local Wellness Policy places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level, so that the individual needs of each district can be addressed. According to the requirements for the Local Wellness Policy, school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Additionally, districts are required to involve a broad group of individuals in policy development and to have a plan for measuring policy implementation. We want to help schools district and schools meet these requirements and feel that our Wellness Week is a great starting point for meeting policy requirements.

### **Future Wellness Topics**

While this year's focus is childhood obesity and physical activity the Children’s Wellness Foundation will add other Wellness Week as we expand the program and what children learn about wellness. In the future the Children’s Wellness Foundation will offer Wellness Week Kits that focus on Oral Health and Hygiene/Hand-washing/Food Safety, as well as Good Nutrition and Exercise.

Teaching health in the future will require collaboration from the private sector, government, and communities across the nation. We believe that the Children’s Wellness Foundation’s Wellness Week is a great way to provide resources that reach each individual child and teach important health concepts that can be life changing. Thank you for taking the initiative to try our program. We are proud to have your school as a partner in this important life-changing effort!

## **ATTACHMENTS**

MyPyramid Coloring page from [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) web site.

Letter from East Layton (Utah) Elementary School and outline of their Wellness Week program from spring of 2007.