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Supporting Good Health at School: Tips for Parents

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School meals provide students with their choice of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins. This is a great value and a huge convenience for busy parents. School meal programs offer students a variety of healthy choices and help children learn how to assemble a well-balanced meal.

As a parent, when you take an active role at your child's school, you can support nutrition and fitness in your school community. You are also taking steps to help your child make healthful choices when it comes to nutrition and fitness behaviors for a lifetime.

Getting to know school nutrition programs is easy. Start with these easy steps:

Nutrition

- **Become familiar with your school's menus.** These may be sent home with your child or posted on the school district's website. If not, you can ask for nutrition information about the menus from the school food service director.
- **Review weekly menus with your child.** Talk about making balanced choices at the cafeteria line. If your school district subscribes to an online menu service like MyTray from MyNutrikids.com, help your child plan meals interactively.
- **Get to know the school food service staff.** Volunteer to help and build relationships with the people who prepare and serve your child's meals.
- **Encourage school clubs, teams and parent associations to serve healthy snacks and drinks** at fund-raising events, school parties and in vending machines.

In addition to healthy eating, good fitness habits are essential to lifelong health. Encouraging your child to be active at home, in physical education class and in out-of-school activities is a great start. **Here are a few suggestions:**

- Encourage your children to actively participate in gym class, recess and after-school activities.
- Get your child involved in activities like sports, martial arts, dance etc.
- Be active with your children. Family time can be active time!
- Encourage active play at home and in your neighborhood.

For more information about school meals:

Tray Talk, <http://www.traytalk.com>
CDC Body and Mind, http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity

