



HEALTHY | **BC**
SCHOOLS

Action Guide

www.healthyschoolsbc.ca

Physical Activity Action Guide



HealthyFamiliesBC 



Physical Activity Action Guide

The Healthy Schools BC Action Guides share evidence-based practices and promising innovations that are showing results in creating healthy schools in BC. The guides are organized into four topic areas:

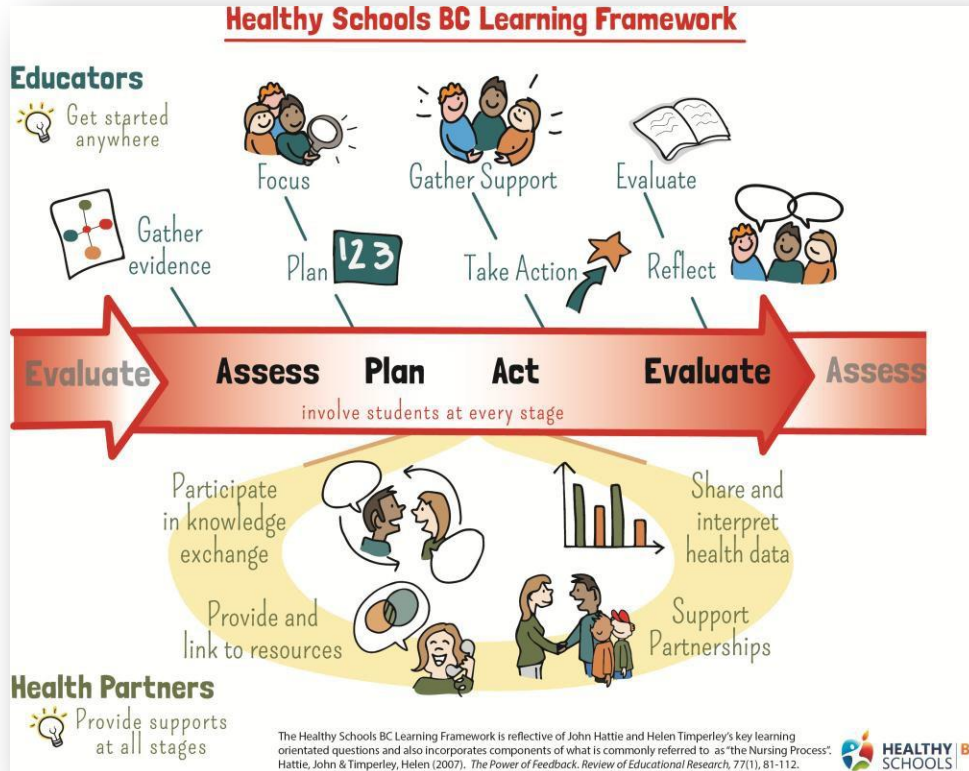
1. School connectedness
2. Healthy eating
3. Physical activity
4. Injury prevention

Some of the actions in these guides take little effort, while others may take a bit more. Select actions that meet the needs of your students and the capacity of your school or district.

The greatest impact on student health and learning is achieved when action is taken across the entire school, broken down into four key areas: teaching and learning, relationships and environments, our school policies, and community partnerships. Consider planning activities your school or district can initiate or build upon in these four key areas. (JCSH, 2013)

In addition to the actions suggested here, you can find other programs and supports that are available by visiting the Healthy Schools BC [website](#). You can also learn about healthy schools activities taking place around the province by visiting the [healthy schools stories map](#).

The healthy schools process supports school communities and partners to work together through four main steps: Assess → Plan → Act → Evaluate. This guide can support you in the planning step of this process. If you have not yet completed a healthy school assessment, the [Healthy Schools BC assessment tools](#) can help you get started.



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Physical activity is any body movement that works the muscles. Promoting physical activity can involve supporting sport and recreational activities, encouraging active transportation, and providing opportunities to be in nature. Students who are physically active every school day are almost twice as likely to report satisfaction with their learning¹.

Actions



Teaching and Learning

- Support student led-inquiry initiatives to promote physical activity by encouraging students to join the [BC Student Healthy Living Network](#), participating in the [Healthy Schools Network](#), and/or using the [Resource Guide for Teaching and Learning](#).
- Encourage students to include physical activity in their daily routine through spontaneous games and activities. Access the [Bring Back Play app](#) for ideas of games and activities.
- Introduce students to new and different types of activities and sports, such as cricket, ultimate frisbee, and dance.
- Create an outdoor classroom with available [grants](#).
- Support students in developing leadership skills in physical activity by:
 - volunteering, teaching, and coaching younger students
 - [student leadership training](#)
 - having older students mentor younger students on the playground
- Support curriculum delivery by integrating resources, such as [Action Schools! BC](#), [Screen Smart](#), or [others](#).

Relationships and Environments



- Promote the benefits of walking or bicycling by:
 - registering your school in [International Walk to School Week](#)
 - starting a [Walking School Bus and Bicycle Train](#) program.
 - creating a walking/running path to encourage safe and active breaks.
- Be conscious of unique challenges for rural communities and consider ways to adapt initiatives:
 - Drop students off at a central location to walk/bike to school from there
 - Organize a walking school bus on the way to a bus stop

¹ Ministry of Education (2013/2014). *Research brief: association between achievement and physical activity*.

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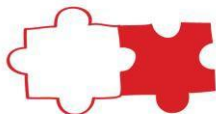
Actions

- Support students to travel safely to and from school by:
 - Advocating for crossing guards, cross walks, designated pick-up/drop-off zones, slower speed limits, enhanced lighting, and/or traffic calming measures on school property.
 - Creating maps of the safest routes to school.
- Provide an open gym before and after school and at lunch for supervised play.
- Promote safe, inclusive, and non-competitive physical activity opportunities by setting up intramurals with students.
- Install safe and accessible bicycle racks to support students and teachers to ride to school.
- Ensure safe and accessible change rooms and showers for students and teachers who use active modes of transportation to and from school.
- Promote physical activity among staff by implementing the physical activity module of [WellnessFits](#).



Our School Policies

- Create a school daily physical education policy.
- Help students achieve their *Daily Physical Activity* by taking them for a brisk walk or stretch and move breaks throughout the day.
- Establish [Fair Play Codes](#) for all students, staff, parents and spectators involved in sport.



Community Partnerships

- Connect students and teachers with the [Physical Activity Line](#) for information about physical activity.
- Partner with a volunteer yoga or dance instructor to introduce students to new types of physical activity.
- Partner with local bike shops or police departments for safety education on bicycling.
- Partner with a local community centre or sport facility to allow for more spaces for physical activity programming.
- Engage school boards, municipal transportation planners and engineers, public health, police, parents, students and school staff to develop plans that support active transportation.