

## **The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in our Schools**

When it comes to healthy eating, adequate activity, and our children's health, schools can make a difference -- and there are costs if they don't. A new report from Action for Healthy Kids, *The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in our Schools*, reveals that poor nutrition, inactivity and weight problems not only cause health problems in children: they also interfere with student achievement and may even impact a school's bottom line. Schools are uniquely positioned to improve students' health, and it is in their best interest to do so.

While *The Learning Connection* cautions that more research is needed to understand the link between poor nutrition, physical inactivity and academic achievement, it makes a strong case that these factors have an adverse affect on academic performance. For example:

- \* Students participating in daily physical education exhibit better attendance, a more positive attitude to school, and superior academic performance.
- \* Physical activity programs are linked to stronger academic achievement, increased concentration, and improved math, reading, and writing test scores.
- \* Schools with high percentages of students who did not routinely engage in physical activity or eat well had smaller gains in test scores than did other schools.
- \* Well-nourished students who skip breakfast perform worse on tests and have poor concentration.
- \* Children not getting adequate nutrients have lower test scores, increased absenteeism, difficulty concentrating and lower energy levels.

Join NASPE and AFHK to help improve the health and learning potential of our youth! Access the full report of *The Learning Connection*, find out about your State Team, and discover what you can do to make a difference; visit [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org).

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