



Activity Tips and Ideas

General Activities

Nutrition and Fitness

Safety

Substance Abuse Prevention

Violence Prevention & Self Esteem

Health Fairs

HIV/AIDS Prevention



Administered by Association for Children of New Jersey

For information or additional assistance in the
development of your project, contact:

Eloisa Hernandez-Ramos
35 Halsey Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973.643.3876
973.643.9153 (fax)
Eloisa@acnj.org

or

Visit Association for Children of New Jersey
website at www.acnj.org

When planning your project consider the following suggestions:

- Consider the atmosphere. For example, instead of a traditional health fair, have a picnic style or block party health fair.
- Collaborate with the community. Your local McDonalds or Burger King may provide you with free drinks, cups or utensils. Don't forget to contact your police and fire departments as well as local hospitals and even churches.
- Involve children in the planning and execution of your project. There is no better way to learn than 'hands on'.
- Entertainment is a great way to jazz up an event. Better yet, have children be part of the entertainment. Children love to show off their talents and skills and you'll be sure to attract their families and friends to your event.
- Consider responding to a need in the community.
- Designate an awareness day, week, or month. Conducting several activities will help to reinforce the health and safety message.

NOTE: The age groups shown are of the children that the project sponsor worked with. Feel free to adapt any of the following activities and ideas suggested to a different health and safety issue or for a different age group.

General Activities

- ➔ Develop a Child Health Month Calendar of Events.
 - Have your school principal or mayor proclaim October (any month) as Child Health Month and read the proclamation to the school
 - Design curriculums for each grade specific to the needs of the community.
 - Give children a calendar with health and safety tips.
 - Hand out "Think Healthy" pencils and Child Health Month book markers.
 - Each morning read a riddle and announce the answers at the end of the day.
 - Display posters from a six-grade contest throughout the school.
 - Display seventh and eighth-grade essays in the library.
 - Put up a Child Health Month banner in the front hallway and nurses office.
 - Make daily Child Health Month Announcements.
 - Send parents materials about health and safety issues discussed in school along with flyers to encourage participation in local health and safety events.

- ➔ Acting is an excellent and fun way for all ages to learn. Get students involved in skits, plays, and video-tape.
 - Have the students research the health and safety topic
 - Older children (middle to high school) can write, direct, perform, and video-tape a skit (ex: "Mom, Please Stop" or "Mr. Butts on Trial") Younger children can perform skits already written (by a teacher.)
 - Have the class perform the skit for their classmates and then lead a discussion on the issues
 - You can also have the older children perform a play (even written by a teacher) for the 1st and 2nd grade children.

- ➔ Prepare students to be educated health consumers. Have students analyze information that influences health while reading and using the New York Times. Engage students in various health issues, ex: learning to dress appropriately after learning how to read weather maps and temperature graphs; discuss issues of sportsmanship after reading articles on the "World Series."

Age Group: 3rd to High School

Age Group: fourth and fifth grade students

General Activities

(Continued)

➔ Host a Family Feud Show.

- Have the Fourth and fifth grade students act as the contestants in a "Family Feud" type show.
- In advance have the "survey answers" provided by 3rd grade students.
- Present the show while the rest of the student population acts as the studio audience. You can also video tape it and have students watch on TV.
- Include public service announcements related to the school's health and safety activities -- for example winners of a poster contest or commercials written by students on health and safety issues.

Age Group: fourth and fifth grade students

- ➔ Organize a Mini-Conference. Devote an entire school day to the promotion of your desired health and safety issue. Solicit speakers to present on various age-appropriate topics. Have students remain in their assigned home-room groups for the entire day. Rather than rotating the classrooms you can also have the speakers rotate. (You should be able to rotate five different workshops, each lasting approximately 45 minutes.) The workshops can also be fun, and interactive activities relating to your topic. Provide or ask students to pack a "healthy" brown bag lunch.

Age Group: Middle School

- ➔ Develop a Students as Teachers program. Cross-age teaching is a great way to involve students of different age groups in learning and teaching health and safety. Pair the high school students and have them select a topic, gather information and materials and plan a nutrition lesson geared to first-graders (or other elementary grade.) The lesson should include interactive activities:

- story books, reading stories is a great way to initiate dialog
- puppets, stuffed animals are a great way of getting a message across
- posters, or poster board with pictures, magazine cut-outs, etc...
- games, puzzles, or matching games

Make sure the students rehearse the lesson many times before their debut!

Age Group: first grade and high school students

General Activities

(Continued)

- ➔ Have students produce a Slide Show Presentation. Slide shows are a great way for students to learn about a health and safety issue while using their creativity. It can also be made available to the whole school district, public library, local community agencies, health fairs, etc... Students can research areas of safety. Then design the lay-out and scenes and write the script to go with the slide show. Have students take the pictures (ex: for safety take picture throughout the community and school depicting potential dangerous situations and safety precautions.)

Age Group: Middle School, High School

Nutrition and Fitness

When introducing nutrition and fitness, rather than focusing on maintaining weight, consider relating nutrition to the prevention of diseases, improving learning, improving sleep and reducing lead poisoning.

- ➔ You can organize a "Wellness" fair that focuses just on nutrition and fitness issues. See Health Fairs.

Age Group: All

- ➔ To encourage families to be physically active and aware of good health and proper nutrition invite Kindergarteners along with a parent to attend a "Wellness Night." Design and organize fun, interactive, hands on stations, ex:
 - physical and fitness booth - to tests for endurance, strength and coordination (ex: races and jumping)
 - story booth - parents can listen to a story about health and wellness
 - human body room - children can look at difference systems of the body
 - anatomy aprons that can be worn by parent or child
 - anatomy charts where children can identify different body parts
 - the game Twister to help teach coordination
 - the game Operation to teach fine motor skills
 - the game of Memory which requires matching body parts
 - nutrition room-
 - children can categorize assorted food cards into proper food groups using the pyramid as a guide
 - children can create a cow mask while learning about the importance of milk
 - modify the game of Memory to match foods to the food pyramid groups

Age Group: Kindergarten and parents

- ➔ Conduct a "Super Lunch Program" to reinforce good nutrition among young students. On a daily basis have the children show each other's lunches and discuss the healthiest items. Post the picture of the children with the healthiest lunches on the Super Lunch Wall of Fame. In language arts class, children can learn to **write directions for making a healthy snack**.. Instead of having a traditional bake sale have a **healthy snack/healthy bake sale**.

Age Group: Elementary

Nutrition and Fitness

- ➔ Design a fitness and circulatory system journey simulating the flow of blood through the body. Students should be able to see and understand how the circulatory system works, and how oxygen and carbon dioxide is carried through the blood stream. Include pictures of the heart, lungs, the different organs, muscles, etc... Design a series of physical and learning challenges along the way. Students should feel the effects of physical exercise on various parts of the body.

Age Group: 1st and 2nd graders and Junior and High School Students

- ➔ Cross-age teaching is a great way to involve students of different age groups in learning and teaching about healthy nutrition. This activity can be done in the Family and Consumer Sciences class or the Health education class. See *Students as Teachers*. Some nutrition activities students can enjoy, include pyramid puzzles, matching foods to the right pyramid groups, and food groupies, puppets or stories.

Age Group: First grade and high school students

- ➔ Celebrate Nutrition Month (in March) Conducting several activities throughout the month allows your to reinforce your nutrition messages. Here are some activities you can conduct during nutrition awareness month.
 - Ask students to make healthy choices when choosing lunch or snacks, emphasizing the "5-A-Day" (5 servings of fruits and vegetables -A-Day) program.
 - Ask parents to assist their child while preparing their own healthy snack recipes.
 - Ask parents to plan "5-A-Day" meals and complete a calendar at home.
 - Designate a "Share a Lunch with the Nurse" day. In the company of the school nurse, have the children share a healthy lunch, maybe taste some new fruits and vegetables, or even nutritious meals from different ethnic backgrounds.
 - Help the children advocate for healthy meals in the school lunch menu and at school functions.

Age Group: Elementary Children and Parents

Nutrition and Fitness

- ➔ Organize a "Wellness Day", an entire school day devoted to the promotion of health and the prevention of injury and illness in the style of a conference. See *Mini-Conference* for more information. Include workshops that are fun and interactive activities like cooperative competitive games, cooperative team obstacle courses, and hands-on activities related to "wellness." Provide or ask students to pack a "healthy" brown bag lunch.

Age Group: Middle School

- ➔ Organize a "Movers and Shakers Club" to engage children who are often not involved in sports teams, in indoor and outdoor activities.
 - Invite students to voluntarily sign up and allow them to decide on their own name for the club.
 - Have the students schedule a calendar of activities. Include indoor and outdoor activities as well as trips.
 - sport-skilled games- volley ball, soccer, football, basket ball, racing, sprinting, etc...
 - station activities- hoola-hoops, jump-rope, gymnastics, aerobics, etc...
 - plan trips- roller-skating, swimming, bowling, etc...
 - Have children begin each session with a stretch warm-up.
 - Provide a nutritious activity such as a healthy food pyramid game that involves putting together healthy snacks that include a food from each part of the pyramid.

Age Group: Third and fourth grade students

- ➔ Organize a Pyramid Food Drive. This is an activity in which the entire school can participate and learn about nutrition while performing a valuable service to their community.
 - Have the students donate food items, analyze their choices, and discuss balanced diets.
 - Have the students make a giant food pyramid with all the donated food.
 - Have students sort the donations into bags that are nutritionally balanced to distribute to needy families.

Age Group: All

Nutrition and Fitness

- Celebrate Healthy Heart Living Awareness month. The following activities can be carried out throughout the month in a school for children with special needs. The month's activities can be recapped in a video starring the students.
 - Organize a Healthy Heart poster contest or a Favorite fruit and vegetable contest.
 - Have a "Great-Snack-Off" (who makes the tastiest healthy snacks) in cooking classes that result in some tasty nutritious snacks.
 - Students can participate in a Valentine's Day "Dance for the Heart" activity.
 - Have a TaeBo instructor give the students an introductory lesson.

Age Group: Children with Special needs

- ➔ Conduct a Safety Demonstration to encourage kindergarten children to reason and think on their own when presented with conflicting messages. This gives children an opportunity to “preach to those who normally preach to them.”
 - Select safety topics, ex: bicycle, roller blades, a car.
 - Make a list of safety gear, and or precautions for the various potentially hazardous situations
 - Select a character , ex: “Sammy the Bear”
 - If possible provide the safety gear so that it fits the character or provide cutouts of the safety gear.
 - Ask children to select the appropriate gear for each situation.

Age Group: Kindergarten

- ➔ Have students construct a Model SAFE School. Have the students brainstorm over school safety ideas, and prioritize according to budget and create a blue print of the model. Students can use a variety of skills to construct the safe school model. This project can be downsized to create a “Safe Classroom” or expanded to create an entire “Safe Community”

Age Group: Elementary School

- ➔ Slide shows are a great way for students to learn about a health and safety issue while using their creativity. See *Slide Show Presentation*. Have students take pictures throughout the community and school depicting potential dangerous situations and safety precautions.

Age Group: Middle School, High School

- ➔ Children love to work with bulletin boards. Provide teachers with pamphlet materials and appropriate information and let children’s creativity go to work. Instead of a bulletin board children can also put together a resource table. The resource table can be located in the classroom or in a high traffic area like a hallway or lunchroom.

Age Group: Any

- ➔ **Bike Rodeos** are a fun way to teach children about bike safety and the importance of using helmets. Below are some ideas to make your bike rodeo fun for all.
 - Hold an obstacle course to test children's agility and skill in riding bicycles.
 - Provide inspections of bicycles for safe mechanical operation and provide simple free repairs at no charge.
 - Hold a bike registration.
 - Provide injury prevention information and invite injury prevention characters McGruff the Crime Dog, Vince and Larry Crash Test Dummies, and the Red Power Ranger who always wears his helmet.
 - Raffle drawings of bikes, helmets, mirrors, and locks.
 - Distribute bike helmets (Bike helmets can be pre-ordered and bought in bulk.. Buying them in bulk allows parents to acquire them at a low price.)
 - Make it a picnic atmosphere and provide hotdogs, hamburgers, and soda to all participants.
 - Have stunt demonstration (bikes, roller blading, or skateboarding)
 - Utilize your community resources
 - Contact your local police department to assist in setting up the bike rodeo and for police volunteers to make the inspections and minor repairs.
 - Ask your local Trauma Center and community organizations to provide safety literature for parents.
 - Have your local cyclery donate time to make minor bike repairs and donate certificates.
 - Have the Junior High students participate by making posters for the safety fair.
 - Ask parents to volunteer to help with making repairs.
 - Have your local fast food restaurants like Burger King or McDonalds donate drinks, hot dogs, hamburgers, cups and napkins.
 - To reach out to the kids that would not attend, provide master learning packets for each grade about bicycle safety and helmet use.

Age Group: Elementary, Middle School, Junior High

- ➔ School public service announcements (PSA) and commercials are a great way for students to get seatbelt safety messages to their peers.
 - Divide students into small groups
 - Have the groups research and discuss the issues of seat belt safety.
 - Ask each group to create a slogan and short thirty-second commercial to promote seatbelt safety.
 - Have the students video tape the commercials (you can involve your communications department or local cable channel producer)
 - Ask your local cable channel air the commercials, present them at fairs, in the school, etc...

Age Group: High School Driver's Education class

Substance Abuse

- Provide a suggestion box to give students the opportunity to ask questions they might be afraid to ask.
 - If you don't already have a mascot, use a puppet as the spokesperson and main character. Select a catchy name. For example: Willabee.
 - Create a suggestion box with your mascot's name (ex: Willabee box).
 - Place the box in a convenient location (for example the library) for children to enter suggestions or ask questions.
 - Answers to these questions can later be addressed with the entire group by your mascot. For: example in a writing class.

Age Group: Elementary

- During Substance Abuse Awareness Month in addition to presentations by principals and counselors you can conduct some of the following activities.
 - Plan a trip to a Healthcare facility.
 - Plan a trip to see the Papermill Playhouse play "Jekyll and Hyde" about anti-substance abuse.
 - Have all children make posters for D-Day (Don't Do Drugs Day".)
 - Execute various lessons plans from "Here's Looking at You 2000" (an anti-drug program),
 - Have parents sign pledges to update their medicine cabinets.
- Celebrate D-Day , (Don't Do Drugs Day.)
 - Have children k thru 4 wear T-shirts about D-Day (Ask for donations from MADD, or your local businesses.)
 - Have the fifth grade students wear DARE shirts.
 - Volunteers, faculty, and staff should also wear various anti-drug shirts.
 - Throughout the day students were involved in various anti-substance abuse activities.
 - Partner with community organizations. For example ask the local PBA to supply hotdogs, sandwiches and potato chips, the local Burger King to supply cups and drinks, and the PTA to supply ice-cream.

Age Group: Kindergarten through five

Substance Abuse

- ➔ Conduct age-specific Smoke-Out activities.
 - Have Kindergarten and 1st grade students make and fly kites with anti-smoking slogans. You can entitle this project "Our Kites Soar in Smoke-Free Air."
 - Have students in the younger grades trace their hand on colored construction paper, then writing a statement on them as to why they would never smoke. Have the children attach them together to form a giant ring of hands in the hallways of the school.
 - Have students in 2nd and 3rd grade do library and Internet research for information to create a paper "Anti-Smoking Health Chain."
 - Help 4th graders reword tobacco advertisements to illustrate true effects of smoking and learn about subtle marketing approaches tobacco companies use to attract young consumers.
 - Have 5th grade students shred a huge pile of magazine cigarette ads in support of Smoke-Out Day.
 - Have the 4th through 6th grade classes research and prepare to present at a "smokeout" assembly. Have each class present their findings and include stories. (ex: "Dr. Death" crashing a party and dramatically foretelling the hazards of smoking cigarettes.)

Age Group: Kindergarten to 6thth grade

- ➔ Take advantage of Olympic Day to involve all students, staff and families in outdoor activities as an alternative to doing drugs.
 - Have a "Parade of Flags" and an academic contest on the various countries represented.
 - Decorate school bulletin boards of FACTS of each country and numerous anti-drug designs.
 - Have the classes do related activity packets.
 - Send the children home with anti-drug awareness workbooks, bumper stickers, etc.

Substance Abuse

- ➔ During National "Red Ribbon Week," give students the opportunity to make writing pen pals between the 3rd and 7-8th graders.
 - Have the 3rd graders write personal letters to the 7th and 8th graders explaining why they should say no to drugs.
 - Have the students decorate lunch bags with anti-drug slogans, for example "Hugs not Drugs."
 - Have the students fill the lunch bags with goodies such as Hershey Kisses and include the pen pal letter.
 - Allow each class to design colorful chalk drawings outside in a designated area, encouraging others to "say no to drugs."

Age Group: 3rd, 7th and 8th

- ➔ Acting out skits is an excellent and fun way for all ages to learn.
 - Have the students research the health risks associated with smoking.
 - Have the older children (middle to high school) write, direct, perform, and video-tape a skit (ex: "Mom, Please Stop" or "Mr. Butts on Trial") Younger children can perform skits already written (by a teacher.)
 - Have the class perform the skit for their classmates and then lead a discussion on health risks associated with smoking.
 - You can also have the older children perform a play (even written by a teacher) for the 1st and 2nd grade children.

Age Group: 3rd to High School

- ➔ To **promote healthy activities as alternatives**, rather than just preaching to kids to "Say No to Drugs". Organize an **anti-drug and alcohol dance**. Have the children make and decorate the gym with anti-drug posters. Allow free admission to students whose parents volunteer their time.
 - Have a **swim for your life** contest.
 - Coordinate a **Community Garden** project.

Age Group: Middle School to High School

Substance Abuse

- During "Alcohol Awareness Week" , in addition to distributing literature from law enforcement, community groups, first aid, and Highway Traffic and Safety consider the following activities.
 - Inform and give statistics to the students of the dangers of drinking and driving by running public service announcements with facts and statistics on drinking and driving through the PA system.
 - Give them the opportunity to listen to experiences and devastating outcomes by inviting speakers like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and County Prosecutors Office of Fatal Accident Bureau, allowing students to test a drunk driving simulator
 - Have the students pretended to be a person injured or killed by a drunk driver and invite parents to participate.

Age Group: Middle and High School

- Teach kids to be leaders and advocates while campaigning against smoking. Have students research tobacco and how the industry uses signs and promotional items to convince kids to think tobacco use is "Kool", the easy access kids have to tobacco products, and how kids are forced to breathe second hand smoke.
 - Have students develop packets of information for local businesses and establishments.
 - Have the students take a tour of several establishments and invite the mayor, health officials, senior citizens, and media to present them with what they had researched and learned.
 - During the tour, the students can present the establishments with a packet of information, ask them to take tobacco promotional signs down, to remove self service displays and ask restaurants to go smoke-free.
 - Advocate for ordinances to ban tobacco vending machines, and self-service machines.

Age Group: Junior High and High School students

Health Fairs

- Well organized fairs should include the participation of schools, community organizations, health and safety professionals, public servants, and local business. Interactive activities, guest speakers, and entertainment along with music, balloons, raffles can turn a typical health fair into a fun day for all.
 - Some valuable health services for children that can be provided at health fairs are dental, lead poisoning, cholesterol, hypertension and vision screening.
 - You can also offer educational presentations and demonstrations DARE Dancers presentation, and Karate School demonstration.
 - Offer hands-on child participation safety activities, such as safety stations (ex: photo ID (Kid Safe) picture taking and finger printing,) a bicycle course with completion certificate, and other physical obstacle courses or competitions.
 - Consider providing **nutritious snacks** to reinforce healthy messages.
- There are several ways to get your target audience to attend your health fair and get everyone in your community involved as well as test the effectiveness of your fair.
 - Have students and staff complete a pre-fair survey to obtain input on the topics that will meet the needs of the audience.
 - Have students participated in a **poster contest** to generate interest in the upcoming event.
 - Have older students act as guides to the younger ones.
 - Get the community involved – local hospital, fire department, police department, recreation department, local business. Strong **community involvement** will be crucial to the success of the fair.
 - When possible, provide **pamphlets in languages** commonly spoken in the community.
 - Recruit presenters that reflect the community's diversity and needs.
 - A post-fair evaluation of the targeted audience can provide interesting suggestions and positive, helpful hints for future fairs.

Health Fairs

- ➔ In addition to inviting organizations to display at a health fair, have students prepare and set up their own product information display. Students can select and research a topic, write or call organizations for pamphlets and information, design and prepare their display with information gathered, posters, etc...
- ➔ Organize a School Health Fair with grade-appropriate health and safety workshops—Wellness workshops. Collaborate with a local Emergency Medical Services EMS to provide elementary school-age wellness workshops. Design a mini-health fair with age-specific learning stations. Assign each grade level a day to visit the learning stations and experience hands-on demonstrations about various health and safety issues such as: burn and fire prevention, water safety, bike safety, disease prevention, and what to do in an emergency situation.

Age Group: 1st to 4th grade

- ➔ Make your health fair different by providing entertainment. Not only will this make your event fun for everyone, but you'll be sure to attract family members interested in seeing their child perform. After researching a topic, have the students write sections of a play, write and recite poetry, and or write and sing rap music. You can involve the art and music teachers to assist with scenery, props, costumes, and vocal coaching.

Age Group: Middle School, High School

- ➔ To encourage student to visit as many exhibits as possible, provide each student with a "passport". Ask the students to travel with their passport and visit a certain number of exhibits. At each exhibit the passport should be stamped. Students that visit a certain number of exhibits can have their passport validated for an entry in a raffle drawing or get a prize.

Age Group: 5th graders

Health Fairs

- ➔ Ask students to use their literacy skills to "get the scoop" on health resources in their community/health fair. Divide the class in small groups. Ask the group to select the student who will act as the television reporter. Have students prepare in advance a list of questions to ask a health care professional to learn the facts about how this individual helps the community with its health care needs. Students can videotape (or audio tape) the interview with the health care professionals at the health fair (or visit the health care facility.) If videotaped, ask the students to edit the videotape and create a news program. Otherwise (if audio-taped) ask the students to create a newsletter or newspaper edition.

Age Group: Middle School

- ➔ Celebrate National Healthy Kids Day. Hold the fair like a block party, outside an entire block.. Include interactive activities such as games, volleyball tournament and fitness tests as well as health screening, special guests, health resource information and entertainment.

Age Group: All

HIV/AIDS Prevention

- ➔ Use a multidisciplinary curriculum to involve teachers of all subjects in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness to high school students.
 - In Math have students study and solve problems using statistics related to AIDS.
 - In English/Journalism have speakers as part of panel discussions. Encourage students to describe their feelings or responses to questions.
 - Have science students test different brands of condoms for effectiveness.
 - Have Spanish students make posters and translate the text of AIDS brochures.
 - Have art students design panels for their own AIDS quilt.
 - Other related activities can involve students in making AIDS panels, AIDS panels remembrance cards, poster contests, poem writing, creative writing, and computer artwork.

Age Group: High School Students