Health and Education-Partnerships in Practice

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Health Promoting Schools

Emerges from a global movement that recognizes 2 key ideas

• Healthy children learn better

• Schools can directly influence the health of children
Global Perspective

“Health is directly linked to educational achievement, quality of life and economic productivity

School health programs can:
• simultaneously reduce common health problems
• increase the efficiency of the education system
• advance public health, education and social and economic development in each nation.”

World Health Organization (1998): Helping schools Become Health Promoting Schools, WHO Fact Sheet 92
Health and Learning are Linked

• Evidence shows that health and education are interdependent

• Both are affected by a child’s social and environmental world
Determinants of Health

Healthy Schools
The Challenges We Face

Relationship between Health Status & Determinants of Health

Regional rank on determinants of health

Regional rank on health status

Health Goals Regional Index 1999
A+ Health = A+ Learning

Students who are healthy, feel wanted, supported and engaged:

• More ready to learn

• Perform better academically

• Absent less often from school

• Less likely to develop chronic disease
A+ Health = A+ Learning

• Function better behaviorally and emotionally

• Less anxious, depressed and hyperactive

• Better able to make positive health, social and emotional choices as adults
What does the Evidence tell us?
Evidence Says...

Children and youth struggle with several issues related to achieving optimal health:

Inadequate Nutrient Intake

a majority of children and youth do not consume nutritional or balanced diets
Evidence Says…

Decline in Breakfast Consumption
children in B.C. under 12 years tend to eat breakfast, but this declines as they move into adolescence

Increased reliance on fast foods/restaurants
Evidence Says...

Increased daily consumption of soft drinks and lower consumption of milk products

Adapted from: Liquid Candy – How soft drinks are harming Americans’ Health, 1998
Evidence Says...

Inactivity

Two-thirds of Canadian children and youth aged 5-17 are not active enough to promote optimal growth and development

Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute Physical Activity Monitor
Evidence Says…

Obesity Outcome

Increased probability of obese children becoming obese adults

Higher risk of Chronic diseases
Evidence Says…

Mental Health

Lack of emotional and social support leads to:

• Depressive symptoms
• Regular smoking and alcohol use
• Poor academic performance
The Time to Act is Now

“Children growing up in North America today are at risk of being the first generation in modern memory that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.”

Lost Opportunities

B.C. Ministry of Education 2005

Vancouver Coastal Health
Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.
Youth and Seniors in BC

B.C. Ministry of Education 2005
Schools can Directly Influence Health

• If schools and society are to function well, the factors that interfere with student learning and success must be addressed

HOWEVER

• Schools cannot address children’s serious health and social problems on their own...
An Easy Target for Every Lobby Group of Enthusiasts:

- Environmental Programs
- Green Street
- HIV/AIDS
- Safe Sex
- The Real ABCs
- Drug/Alcohol Prevention
- Quality Physical Education
- Active Recess
- Jump for Health
- Body Image
- MADD
- Breakfast for Learning
- Testing Initiatives
- Automobile Safety
- Ever Active Schools
- Bike Safety

O’Haire Canadian Teachers Federation 2008
Initiatives that Support Health

• Bill 10 – Tobacco Control Act
• ActionSchools BC!
• Food and Beverage Guidelines
• Daily Physical Activity
• Anaphylaxis Framework
• Health and Career Education
• McCreary Survey
Working in Partnership
Comprehensive School Health

“...a broad spectrum of programs, policies, activities and services that intersect to provide students with a range of cognitive, affective and skill development opportunities that contribute to overall health...and educational outcomes of children and youth.”

Canadian Consensus Statement. rev. 2007
Factors for Success

When approaching schools:

• Do your homework

• Develop personal relationships and contacts through face to face

• Take a whole school approach

• Be respectful of the school’s mandate and their knowledge of health – build on links
Factors for Success

• Ask schools what *their* needs are

• Work with a range of school staff

• Be enthusiastic about working together

• Clarify language

• Celebrate successes
Factors for Success

• Recognizes strategies and activities vary between each school and community

• Actions coordinated between all parties involved

• Process not a Program
Factors for Success

What do schools/teachers need:

- Resources

- Professional development
  - In and beyond classroom teaching as it requires teachers to be proactive in a number of areas
The Opportunity

• Coming together is a beginning,

• Keeping together is progress,

• Working together is success

Henry Ford
Thank You!

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