



## WHAT CAN COMMUNITY LEADERS DO to support students' health from head to heart?

A healthy lifestyle begins in childhood and adolescence. Children and adults need access to safe, affordable and conveniently located places to be physically active. Community leaders play a key role in prioritizing and investing in physical activity opportunities for all.



### **Provide Safe Spaces.**

Develop safe, well-maintained parks, playgrounds, green spaces and recreational facilities that are easily accessible to community members. Offer a variety of activities like sports fields, walking paths, and bike lanes that cater to different interests, ages and abilities.



### **Create Accessible Spaces.**

Provide residents with free or affordable spaces that are suitable for people of different interests, ages and abilities. These inclusive environments play a vital role in encouraging and enabling individuals to engage in regular physical activities.



### **Design Inviting Spaces.**

Design spaces that are not only clean and well-maintained but also enriched with elements such as greenery, artwork, shaded areas, and seating. Attractive environments encourage people to spend more time outdoors and engage in physical activities.



### **Organize Events.**

Host community-wide events that promote physical activity, such as fun runs, play streets, walkathons, sports tournaments, or family fitness days. Collaborate with local businesses and organizations to offer activities for all age groups.



### **Promote Active Transportation.**

Encourage walking, biking, or using alternative modes of transportation for short distances to schools, parks, and community centers. Advocate to your City Council for safe walking and biking routes, sidewalks, and crosswalks.



### **Support Recreation Programs.**

Advocate for affordable recreational programs that cater to children and teenagers, including sports leagues, dance classes, martial arts, and other activities. Seek sponsorships to reduce financial barriers.

## For Community Leaders

- ✓ **Work with partners** to establish or update plans (i.e., land use, transportation, recreation) that prioritize equitable and inclusive access to physical activity.
- ✓ **Share physical activity resources** such as community centers, sports programs, parks, and recreational facilities, that offer opportunities for physical activity.
- ✓ **Participate in walk/move audits** with local decision-makers and community members to assess and improve safe access to everyday destinations (i.e., schools, parks, stores).
- ✓ **Educate parents and children** on the importance of physical activity for overall health and well-being. Provide information on age-appropriate activities, recommended durations, and the benefits of regular exercise.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Adults need at least 30 minutes and children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

## Work with Schools to...

- ✓ Provide resources to Implement **policies and practices that support K-12 health and physical education** to ensure children receive the knowledge and skills to lead a healthy life.
- ✓ Encourage school districts to adopt the **Open Community Use of School Recreational Areas** policy to expand access to safe, convenient, and free places for physical activity in communities.
- ✓ **Share data** (i.e., FitnessGram) to inform decisions that support physical activity at school and in the community.
- ✓ Use multiple tactics (social media, local media, signage) and partners (libraries, schools, organizations) to **create awareness of spaces for physical activity**.

## Where to go for resources:

Communities can use the SC Health & Planning Toolkit to incorporate healthy eating and active living best practices into planning/design: <https://dph.sc.gov/sites/scdph/files/Library/SCHealthPlanningToolkit.pdf>.

Learn more about the Open Community Use of School Recreational Areas policy: <https://dph.sc.gov/sites/scdph/files/Library/CR-011555.pdf>.

South Carolina offers hundreds of scenic trails and walking paths. Visit [sctrails.net](http://sctrails.net) to find your favorite trail or path with all the necessary information at your fingertips.



Join the movement to support students' health from head to heart: [dph.sc.gov/fitnessgram](https://dph.sc.gov/fitnessgram)