

PARK & WALK

An opportunity for more children to experience the joys and reap the benefits of walking to school, regardless of the distance of their homes from school.

active kids learn better


ACTIVE LIVING RESEARCH

physical activity at school is a win-win for students and teachers

GRADES:



20% more likely to earn an A in math or English

STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES:



increased **6%** over 3 years

JUST ONE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LESSON CREATES:



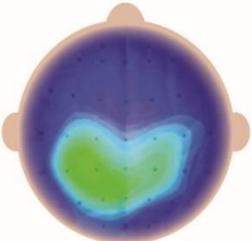
13% increase in students' physical activity for the week

21% decrease in teachers' time managing behavior

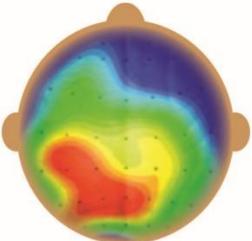


physically active kids have more active brains

BRAIN SCANS OF STUDENTS TAKING A TEST:



after 20 minutes of sitting quietly



after 20 minutes of walking



Red areas are very active; blue areas are least active.

MORE RESULTS:

after 20 minutes of physical activity:
students tested better in reading, spelling & math and were more likely to read above their grade level

after being in a physically active afterschool program for 9 months:
memory tasks improved 16%

SOURCES: Donnelly J.E. and Lambourne K. (2011). Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement. *Prev Med.* 52(Suppl 1):S36-S42. Hillman C.H. et al. (2009). The effect of acute treadmill walking on cognitive control and academic achievement in preadolescent children. *Neuroscience.* 159(3):1044-1054. Kamijo K. et al. (2011). The effects of an afterschool physical activity program on working memory in preadolescent children. *Dev Sci.* 14(5):1046-1058. Kibbe D.L. et al. (2011). Ten years of TAKE 10!: integrating physical activity with academic concepts in elementary school classrooms. *Prev Med.* 52(Suppl 1):S43-S50. Nelson M.C. and Gordon-Larsen P. (2006). Physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns are associated with selected adolescent health risk behaviors. *Pediatrics.* 117(4): 1281-1290.

Learn more about why active kids learn better and how schools can help at activelivingresearch.org/activeeducationbrief.

What is a Park & Walk?

- A Park & Walk is when parents and caregivers drop students at a predetermined location approximately 0.5 miles from school (a 10-12-minute walk) instead of the front door of the school.
- School staff and volunteers meet students at the drop-off site and accompany them along a designated route to school.

Why start a Park & Walk?

- Research shows a positive correlation between physical activity and academic achievement. mnsaferoutestoschool.org



- The walk to school helps students meet the goal of 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Park & Walks build community through positive exposure for the school in the neighborhood.
- Park & Walks provide leadership opportunities for older students as they help younger students on the way to school.
- Students that walk to school have increased environmental awareness and learn lifelong pedestrian safety skills.

How do I start a Park & Walk?

Below is a summary of the main steps involved in planning a Park & Walk.

- Identify a Park & Walk School Leader to meet and greet the vehicles.
- Work with the school district transportation department to identify a drop-off location and communicate with parent and caregivers who transport students.
- Determine strategies to involve students of all abilities.
- Identify school staff and adult volunteers to support the walk.
- Communicate with parents about Park & Walk purpose and schedule.
- Establish a back-up plan for weather, illness, etc.
- Share behavior expectations with students, parents and staff.
- Greet vehicles at the drop-off location and have fun!

Additional Resources

The Minnesota Safe Routes to School Resource Center has developed several resources including the Organizer's Guide to Park & Walks, letter templates, and a PowerPoint presentation to help pitch the idea to school administration. Find them all on the Minnesota Safe Routes to School Resource Center website!