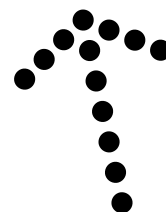


CATCH  
COMPONENT  
**GUIDE**

Parent Leaders  
Parent Support Specialists  
Home Room Parents  
PTA & PTO Reps



“... the current generation of children could have shorter life expectancies than their parents...”



BOSTON, MARCH 16, 2005 - For the first time in two centuries, the current generation of children in America may have shorter life expectancies than their parents, according to a new report, which contends that the rapid rise in childhood obesity, if left unchecked, could shorten life spans by as much as five years. The report, published Thursday in The New England Journal of Medicine, says the prevalence and severity of obesity is so great, especially in children, that the associated diseases and complications - Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, kidney failure, cancer - are likely to strike people at younger and younger ages.

New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/17/health/17obese.html>

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## The CATCH Program: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

With growing numbers of children facing obesity, diabetes, asthma and other chronic illnesses at younger ages, the time for action is now. We owe it to our children to safeguard and promote their health and well being. Their success as students, their quality of life and their future happiness depend on it.

The CATCH Program provides a proven – and easy to implement – action plan for:

- Teaching children to make healthy choices; and
- Creating a school environment that encourages healthy eating and physical activity.

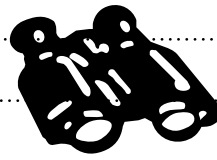
CATCH coordinates health messages and activities in **four program components** – **school nutrition, classroom curricula, physical education and family**. With all program components aligned, students are virtually surrounded by positive health messages and an environment that encourages healthy choices.

For over 10 years, the CATCH Program has not only helped school children learn about the benefits of eating healthier diets and getting more physical activity, it has encouraged schools and parents to create environments that promote healthier behaviors. Today, it is reaching more than a half-million children in over 2,000 Texas schools.

Before its implementation as a program, CATCH was the largest school-based health promotion research study in the U.S. The CATCH study demonstrated that childhood behaviors, such as eating foods high in saturated fat and physical inactivity, can be changed. To learn more about the CATCH Program, visit [www.CATCHTexas.org](http://www.CATCHTexas.org) or [www.CATCHInfo.org](http://www.CATCHInfo.org).



## Your CATCH Role: : “Healthy Living” Parent Leader



As a parent leader, your role as a member of your school’s CATCH team is critical. As you know, parents and guardians are extremely influential in shaping their children’s health choices. Children need their parents to teach them about healthy and unhealthy choices, define expectations, set limits, encourage physical activity and wise food choices and be a good health role model.

As the parent leader, you play an important part in developing programs to help parents understand their importance of helping their children make healthy choices. You can also encourage parents to participate in and influence changes to school policy that benefit the health and wellness of their children. The CATCH Program refers to your role as the “Healthy Living” parent leader.

A key goal of the CATCH Program is to create an environment – at school and at home – that encourages students to make healthy choices. Without parents reinforcing the lessons of CATCH, children will find it difficult to choose nutritious snacks over junk food, turn off the TV and go outside to play after school and on weekends. That’s why parents – and parent leaders – are crucial.

The CATCH Program needs parent leaders who will take steps to bring parents on board to create a “Healthy Living” environment. In addition to asking parents to support the CATCH Program, steps you can take include:

- Creating opportunities for parents to learn about teaching their children healthy living skills; and
- Developing programs designed to encourage parents to become healthy living role models.

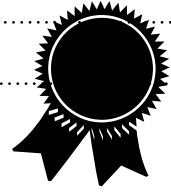
Later in this packet, you will find recommended initiatives under each of the four CATCH themes. In addition to implementing one or more of the initiatives during each theme period, please feel free to use your imagination to help involve parents in creating an environment at home in which the healthy choice is the easy choice for their children.

CATCH provides an opportunity for you – and for all parents – to have an impact in an area that is increasingly critical to our children: their lifelong health and wellness.

Thank you in advance for your support of the CATCH Program, your leadership and the imagination you bring to creating an environment in which the healthy choice is the easy choice.



## Your CATCH School: What Does It Take to Be An MVP?



The goal of the CATCH Program is **healthy kids in a healthy school** – a CATCH MVP school. In sports, a Most Valuable Player (MVP) is one who leads, consistently produces results and sets a standard for success. A CATCH “MVP” school aims for new standards of healthy behavior and positive outcomes in the following areas:

### **M**ove & stay active.

#### A CATCH MVP School:

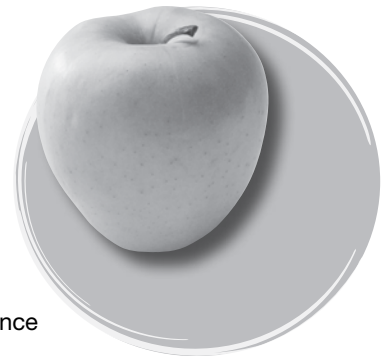
- Structures schedules so students can accumulate 30 or more minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity during the school day.
- Seeks to provide additional physical activity opportunities for students before and after school.
- Reinforces and advocates the importance of physical activity through posted signage, ongoing messages to teachers and communication with parents.
- Encourages parents to devote 30 minutes or more daily to family physical activity at home.



### **V**alue healthy eating.

#### A CATCH MVP School:

- Encourages students to eat 5-plus servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Promotes the consumption and availability of healthy **GO** foods in the cafeteria, classroom and at school meetings and special events.
- Restricts, or strictly limits, the availability and consumption of **WHOA** (high-calorie, low-nutrition) foods on the campus.
- Educates students on appropriate food portions for their age.
- Advocates the benefits of drinking water or fat-free milk instead of sweetened beverages.
- Reinforces and advocates the importance of eating healthy through posted signage, ongoing messages to teachers and communication with parents .



### **P**ractise healthy habits.

#### A CATCH MVP School:

- Cultivates a belief that school staff should model healthy behaviors.
- Institutes school policies that promote and raise expectations about health and wellness.
- Encourages students and parents to reduce sedentary activity by limiting TV to no more than one hour per weekday and two hours a day on weekends.
- Urges students to consume a healthy breakfast and get nine to 10 hours of sleep a day.

## CATCH: A Coordinated Approach To Child Health

CATCH recognizes that coordination is key to improving children's health choices: It is not a task for just one person. That's why the program has been designed to surround children with support from administrators, teachers, lunchroom staff and parents, adults that are most likely to influence children's health choices and behaviors.

As you carry out your tasks, be assured that they align with initiatives occurring in other program components. Collectively, CATCH initiatives add up to a campus-wide Coordinated Approach To Child Health.

### Using this Guide: Four Themes over Four Nine-Week Periods

The CATCH Coordination Kit is organized around four themes. Each is the focus for a nine-week period. The four themes – and the broad objectives for each – are:

#### Theme I:

Our CATCH School – Creating Healthy Change

Objective – Advocate good health and build awareness of CATCH

#### Theme II:

Talk the Talk – Speaking the Language of CATCH

Objective – Teach a common CATCH vocabulary

#### Theme III:

The Home Team – Family Matters

Objective – Build a bridge between CATCH on campus and at home

#### Theme IV:

CATCH MVPs – Celebrating Success

Objective – Reinforce CATCH behaviors through recognition and celebration

## Making It Happen: What You Need to Do

The following pages provide recommended initiatives to support each of the themes.

This is what the CATCH Program asks of you:

★ Carry out the first initiative listed under each theme during the nine-week period.

★★ Implement the second and third  
★★★ initiatives under each theme as you are able. Doing so will help further enrich the healthy environment we are creating at our school.

Consider implementing the “My Health Booster.” It is a recommendation for you, something you can do to support your own good health.



Resources needed to implement the tasks are in the back of this packet. Check with your school's CATCH Champion or Committee if you need an original or need to make extra copies. A CATCH Resource CD containing an electronic copy of each resource (in color and black and white) has been included in the Champion's folder.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of  
CATCH – and the health of our students.

## OUR CATCH SCHOOL—Creating Healthy Change

### ★ Include CATCH as an agenda item at your first PTA, PTO or parent meeting.

Some ideas...

- Ask the CATCH Champion to speak about the CATCH Program.
- Use the flyer, Our CATCH School, as a presentation guide and take-home piece for parents.

### ★★ Speak directly with the PE Teacher, Cafeteria Manager or a Classroom Teacher. Ask how you can assist them with their CATCH implementation efforts.

Things they might appreciate...

- Help with the CATCH bulletin board.
- Offers to make copies of CATCH flyers.
- Offers to download resources from the CATCH website.

### ★★★ Choose to be a healthy role model.

Let students “CATCH” you...

- Drinking water instead of sweetened beverages.
- Eating fruits and vegetables at lunch.
- Eating healthy snacks.
- Walking the track with them at recess.

### MY HEALTH BOOSTER

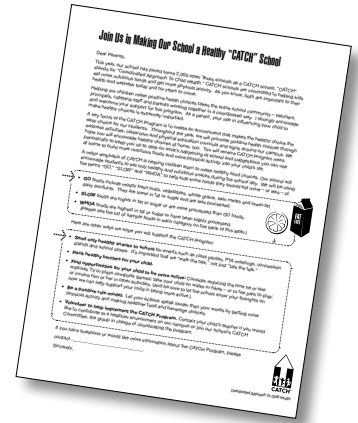
**Commit to one small change to improve your own health and wellness. Small steps eventually lead to a big difference.**

Consider...

- Eating an additional fruit or vegetable each day. Work toward five servings per day.
- Reducing sedentary activity by eliminating 30 minutes of TV watching per day.
- Walking with co-workers before, during or after school.

### Resources:

*Our CATCH School*  
Take-Home Flyer  
(English/Spanish)



# theme II

## TALK THE TALK—Speaking the Language of CATCH

### ★ Post the CATCH MVP Eat Smart & Be Active posters in your area.

Keep in mind...

- The CATCH Committee can provide both color and black and white electronic copies that are easily distributed via email to staff and parents.

### ★★ Chuck the junk food! Do your school's concession and fundraising policies reinforce healthy lifestyles? If not, work to change them.

You can use these healthy fundraising resources...

- [www.healthy-fundraising.org](http://www.healthy-fundraising.org)
- [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

### ★★★ Work with the PTA or PTO to provide the CATCH MVP Eat Smart & Be Active posters to each family.

Some ideas...

- Ask the CATCH Champion to post the posters on the school website.
- Work with a community partner to fund copies of the poster to send home to families.
- Ask the PTA to include information about the posters as part of their regular parent correspondence.

### MY HEALTH BOOSTER

**Monitor portion distortion. Food portion sizes have increased significantly over the last 20 years. Be “super wise” before you “super size.”**

Some ideas:

- Take the portion distortion quiz at <http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion/index.htm>
- Read food labels for portion size.
- Split meals at restaurants or plan to take half of the meal home.

### Resources:

CATCH MVP  
Eat Smart & Be Active  
Posters  
(English/Spanish)



★ **“CATCH” students being healthy! Distribute copies of the Caught You Being Healthy postcards to students you “CATCH” making healthy eating and physical activity choices.**

Some ideas...

- Include the names and photos of children “caught being healthy” in the PTA newsletter.
- Send postcards home in the mail.
- Distribute postcards at school assemblies.

★★ **Host a Healthy Habits at Home discussion group for parents. Provide parents with information on how to eat healthier and be more physically active.**

A great resource...

- The WE CAN! Program offers great resources for reducing screen time, eating out and managing healthy weight. ([www.wecan.org](http://www.wecan.org))

★★★ **Showcase parent health leaders at a Family Health Happening. Ask different families to volunteer to host a booth. Check the Texas A&M Cooperative Extension website for fantastic ideas.**

[http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity\\_fair\\_planning\\_guide/index.php](http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/nutrition_physical_activity_fair_planning_guide/index.php)

Some booth ideas...

- **Photo Opportunities** – milk mustaches, cardboard fruit and vegetable face cut-outs
- **Nutritional Booths** – portion sizes, healthy fast food fare, healthy snack demonstrations, family meal time
- **Physical Activity Ideas** – family walk kick-off event, boom box boogie, activities with household items
- **Wean the Screen** – suggestions for reducing screen time and increasing “lean time”

### MY HEALTH BOOSTER

Move a bit more. It doesn't take an expensive gym membership to get the daily recommended amount of physical activity. Try to accumulate 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Some ideas...

- Park farther away to increase the amount you walk each day.
- Stretch during a TV show.
- Invest in a pedometer.
- Walk with students.

### Resources:

*Caught You Being Healthy*  
Postcards  
(English/Spanish)



# theme IV

## CATCH MVPs—Celebrating Success

### ★ Strut your healthy stuff!

Coordinate with the PE Teacher and the Cafeteria Manager on how you can contribute to their CATCH projects.

You can...

- Contribute a picture of yourself practicing healthy habits to include on their bulletin boards (PE – *I Like to Move It, Move It!*; Cafeteria – *I Like to Cook It, Cook It!*)

### ★★ Invite a parent Community Health Hero to speak about or organize a field trip to his or her place of business. Showcase these Heroes by creating a bulletin board with pictures and stories.

Among those to consider as Health heroes...

- The CATCH Champion or Cafeteria Manager.
- A parent with a gardening green thumb.
- Recreation leaders from local recreation centers.
- A cook or chef at a nearby restaurant.
- A parent who is an avid walker.
- A health care professional.

### ★★★ Recruit one to two Community Health Heroes to serve on the CATCH Committee next year.

Possible recruits...

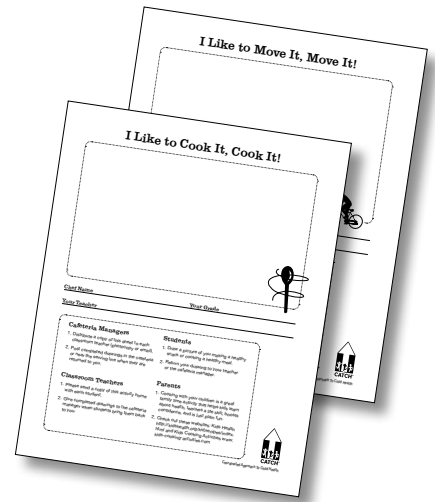
- A student, community leader, parent – or yourself!

### MY HEALTH BOOSTER

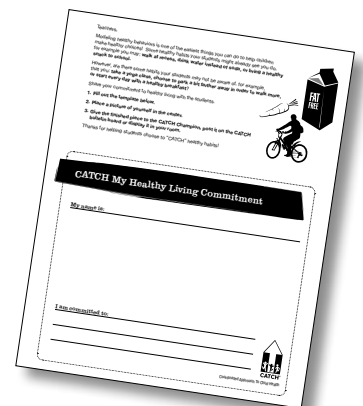
You are fully aware that students learn as much from your actions as they do from your lessons. Use the *CATCH My Healthy Living Commitment* resource to share how you model healthy habits. Identify a habit you are already committed to, or pledge to try a new health habit.

### Resources:

*I Like to Move It, Move It!*  
*I Like to Cook It, Cook It!*  
Activity Frame and  
Drawing Templates



*CATCH My Healthy Living Commitment*



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The Michael & Susan Dell Center  
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THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
AUSTIN REGIONAL CAMPUS

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