Using Pedometers in Schools

Why use pedometers in schools?

- To measure physical activity in physical education classes, recess, staff wellness programs, during before and after school activities or other specified times.
- To motivate students and staff to be more active.
- To enable participants to set and meet activity goals.
- To create staff challenges.

How?

- Develop a monitoring system for distribution of pedometers and collection of data.
- Instruct students and staff on proper mounting and use of pedometers. Placement is critical to accurate performance of the device.
- Help students and staff set personal goals to increase number of steps over time.
- Collect and record step counts on a daily basis.
- While minimum step count guidelines for children do exist, it is recommended that each participant collect baseline data without emphasis on increasing physical activity.
  - Minimum step count guidelines for school age children:
    - **Girls**: 11,000-12,000 steps per day
    - **Boys**: 13,000-15,000 steps per day

Tips

- Have teachers model pedometer use before introduction to students.
- Provide professional development on pedometer use prior to implementation into programs.
- Use pedometers with an end goal in mind.
- Anticipate challenges and pitfalls:
  - Clothing styles may not be adequate for mounting pedometers
  - More active students may not embrace pedometer use
  - Potential pedometer loss and damage
  - Record keeping could be cumbersome and time consuming
  - Classroom teachers may not want to participate in cross-curricular instruction
  - Students that manipulate their results by jumping around or tapping their feet

Purchasing pedometers

- Purchase the best pedometers your school can afford. Price usually correlates to performance, accuracy and durability.
- Purchase single function step counters unless other features, such as distance, time, calories or internet upload, are essential to program results.
- Many pedometer manufactures will offer special pricing for bulk orders or discounts for schools and non-profit use. Contact the company and ask about special pricing.
- Some popular pedometers include:
  - **ACCUSPLIT**: Eagle 1620 Step Activity Pedometer
  - **Omron**: HJ112 Multi-Function Pocket Pedometer
  - **Sun Pedometers**: HealthLINQ Step Counter
  - **Walk4Life**: W4L Classic w/3D Sensor Pedometer
  - **YMAX**: CW200 Digi-Walker Pedometer

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