



Kids First Wellness
Advocates Series
Hathaway's Healthy Kids
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Portsmouth - At Hathaway Elementary School in Portsmouth, every single student is encouraged to take an active role in their health. Literally. And they can win a medal for it. During a yearlong program coordinated by the school's Health & Wellness group, kids participate in a calendar-based activity program that motivates them to make healthy food choices and increase their physical activity. The program, called "Hathaway Healthy Kids", doesn't just tell kids to lead a healthy lifestyle, it gives them the tools to record that lifestyle on a day to day basis and offers motivational prizes - like jump ropes and kick-balls - to keep it up. This year 73 Hathaway students who participated in the program qualified to win a medal at the June Awards ceremony.

The rules are simple. Every month a "Healthy Kids" calendar is sent home with students. On the front side, participants are asked to fill in each date with their healthy activity. Depending on the season and age of the student (Hathaway is a K-5) kids document physical activities on the calendar such as "took a long walk with Mom and Grandma" to "went sledding" to "hopped on one foot all the way to the playground". In order to count, the physical activities have to take place outside of the school day. Healthy food choice activities are also recorded on the monthly calendar and can be things like "Start Smart"-start your day with a healthy breakfast, "Food Safari"-encourages kids to try new foods or the "5 a Day Challenge"- eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Every student who completes 15 or more activities a month (about 4 healthy activities a week) is entered into a raffle to win various prizes to help keep them moving. One lucky student is selected to be the "Principals Pal" and shares a healthy lunch with the School Principal. In order to win a medal on Student Recognition Day in June, students have to complete 100 or more activities over the course of the school year.

The back side of the calendar is covered with simple and age-appropriate suggestions for both types of activities. Some teach or reinforce physical skills like the **Push Up Challenge** or **Relay Races** - encouraging an entire family or group of friends to do as many of each as they can and record the results. Other suggestions offer creative and fun ways to get active like **"Pretend the TV is Broken. Name 3 fitness activities you and your family can do together and try one"** or **"Soccer Sizzle - Try moving the ball to a friend with a controlled kick or dribble by tapping the ball with your feet and score a goal"**.

The food suggestions range from healthy snack ideas, to listing some smart choice foods for breakfast or how to use the food pyramid to build a healthy meal. Some suggestions even sneak in elementary school academic skills at the same time like the **Alphabet Hop: Hop to the tune of the alphabet. Can you hop without stop A-Z? Try naming a word for each letter of the alphabet** or **Pop and Hop: Jump in place and count in tens. Stop and count backwards. Can you do it again?.**



A colorful bulletin board in the hallway highlights the program as the year progresses. It displays photographs of the monthly raffle winners - with their prizes - and tries to promote student participation in the voluntary program.

As part of the School Improvement Plan, the "Hathaway Healthy Kids" program brings the entire school community together - from the kids

participating, to the teachers collecting the calendars, to the volunteers coordinating, to the parents helping at home - in an effort to send a positive message about the connection between good health and preparedness to learn. The Hathaway Healthy Kids program effectively shows kids at a young age how to take ownership for their health. It is a relatively easy and inexpensive program for a school to run and can be staffed by just 1 or 2 volunteers. After a year's worth of over 100 active play activities, active new food tastings and an active recording of a healthy lifestyle, 73 Hathaway kids received their medals and stood up on the stage and received their applause. Not only owners of medals, but also owners of better health.

