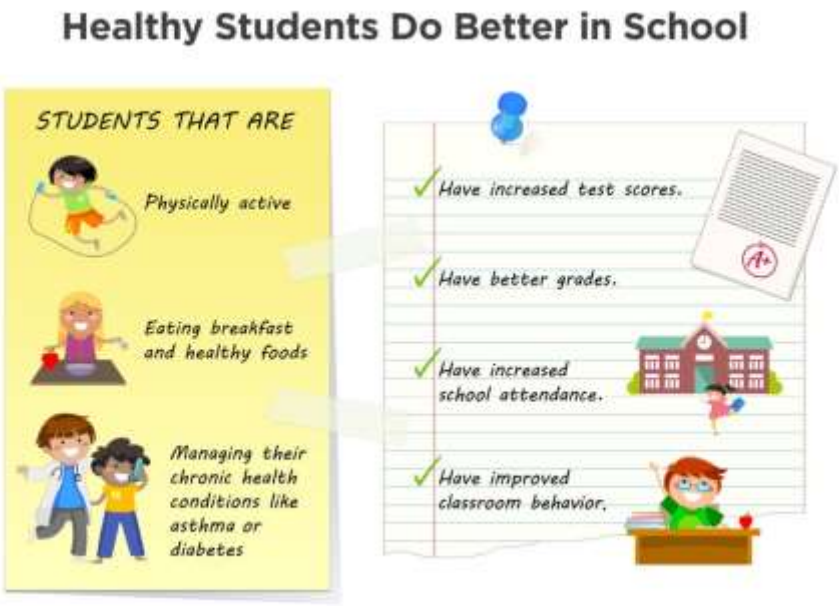
CATCH®
COORDINATED APPROACH TO CHILD HEALTH

Why is school wellness important to our children?

Health education builds students' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes about health. Every child deserves the best start to create the brightest future.



Schools reach the majority of children

- Children spend a minimum of 1,098 hours a year in school.
- According to Healthy People 2010, schools have more influence on the lives of young people than any other social institution except the family.
- Schools provide a setting in which friendship networks develop, socialization occurs and behavioral norms are developed and reinforced.
- Schools often provide services, education and opportunities that might not be available elsewhere.

The rapid growth in childhood obesity may result in today's youth being the first generation in modern times not to outlive their parents. *(NCBI, Childhood Obesity)*

Efforts to increase student achievement must include a focus on health

- Healthy students earn higher academic achievement.
- Lack of adequate consumption of specific foods such as fruits and vegetables, or dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.
- Deficits of specific nutrients are associated with lower grades and higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness among students.
- Hunger due to insufficient food intake is associated with lower grades, higher rates of absenteeism, repeating a grade, and an inability to focus among students.
- Students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance and classroom behaviors. *(Centers for Disease Control & Prevention)*

Why is school wellness important to our school districts and state?

Our children hold the future in their hands. Investing in their health contributes to healthy communities in the future.

There is a long term & financial impact.

Children who have obesity are more likely to become adults with obesity. Adult obesity is associated with increased risk of several serious health conditions including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

According to the CDC, the medical care costs of obesity in the United States are high.

- The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are a staggering $190.2 billion or nearly 21% of annual medical spending in the United States.
- Childhood obesity alone is responsible for $14 billion in direct medical costs. *(National League of Cities)*

School wellness policies are required!

- Every school district participating with the USDA meal program MUST have a wellness policy.
- School districts MUST have a wellness committee (CATCH Committee)
- The MDE conducts audits and reviews wellness policies every 3 years.
- The district MUST inform the public and parents about the policy and updates.

Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community

The WSCC model is CDC's framework for addressing health in schools. Consistent with the WSCC model, CATCH has 10 components:

1. Physical education & physical activity
2. Nutrition environment & services
3. Health education
4. Social and emotional school climate
5. Physical environment
6. Health services
7. Counseling, psychological & social services
8. Employee wellness
9. Community involvement
10. Family engagement

CATCH is based on 2 assumptions.

1. Behavior change is influenced or determined by the environment – because environments value and reward certain behaviors.
2. To address the obesity problem we need to change the environment. We need to create an environment that teaches, reinforces and rewards physical activity and healthy eating habits.

Why is CATCH supported by Corewell Health Gerber Hospital?

The hospital conducts a community health needs assessment once every 3 years. The goal is to adopt an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs identified through the assessment. Key findings specific to obesity and weight issues include:

- The prevalence of obesity is higher in Newaygo County than across Michigan or the U.S.
- Area adults consider obesity to be the top health issue in the community.
- 46.2% of Key Informants say that programs targeting obesity reduction are lacking in the community.
- Half of youth in Newaygo County receive inadequate amounts of physical activity.
- Between 1/3rd and 1/4th of youth consume inadequate amounts of fruits and vegetables per day, which is defined as five or more times per day.

What steps should you take?

- Advocate for and communicate health campus wide.
- Align CATCH with already existing initiatives.
- Make sure your wellness policies have been or are updated to meet new USDA requirements.
- Encourage staff, student and parent participation in CATCH efforts.