

Walking Clubs

A walking club is an easy, inexpensive, and fun way to encourage children to walk by keeping track of their mileage and/or minutes and rewarding them for being physically active. A walking club can get students and staff excited about making walking a part of their daily routine. A club can be incorporated into an existing walk or bike to school program, or it can stand alone as an at-school activity club.

How to Start Your Walking Club

- Meet with school administrators, teachers, and parents to identify coordinators that can lead the club. Also, identify existing walking opportunities and consider new programs that could increase walking.
- Decide on the basic rules of the club; when and where children can accrue mileage (walking to/from school, at school, at home, on weekend), what rewards will be given and at what milestone, will the club involve competition between students, classrooms, and/or other schools.
- Create a system for tracking mileage and/or minutes. You can use a spreadsheet, passports, or punch cards to track each child's mileage and/or minutes.
- Promote the club and plan a kick-off event (consider a walk-a-thon for healthy fundraising as the first event)
- Track and reward participation. Engage local sports businesses to sponsor a club by donating rewards such as water bottles, t-shirts, key chains, or discounts on merchandise.
- Evaluate success and make changes if needed.

Creative Ideas for Your Club

- Morning Mile or Active Afternoon walking clubs -- have volunteers walk a mile around the track with students.
- Build in 10 minutes between classes or before lunch to walk around the school as a class.
- Schedule a weekly walk with the entire school (Walk on Wednesdays), pairing older and younger children together.
- Encourage students to walk during recess.
- Schedule once a week "Walk and Talk with the Principal" (or Mayor, other local leaders).
- Identify the mileage to fun destinations (Walk to Disney World, Walk to the Beach, Walk Across America, etc).
- Paint animal footprints of the school mascot on sidewalks surrounding the school.