



Division of **Nutrition & Physical Activity**

Indiana Healthy Schools Newsletter

May Edition 2024

May is Mental Health Month

May is Mental Health Month! The world is constantly changing, for better or for worse – and it can be overwhelming to deal with everything going on around you. While society is getting more comfortable discussing mental health, it can still be hard to know “Where to Start” when it comes to taking care of your own well-being.

This May, [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#) will help you:

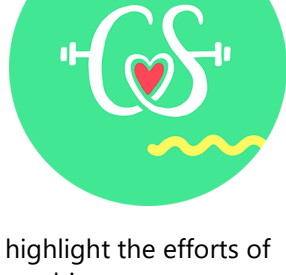


- **LEARN** how modern life affects mental health with new resources to navigate our changing world.
- **ACT** by building your coping toolbox so you can manage stress, difficult emotions, and challenging situations.
- **ADVOCATE** to improve mental health for yourself, your friends and family, and your community.

Make sure to check out MHA’s 2024 Mental Health Toolkit ([English version](#) and [Spanish version](#)).

Character Strong Webinar: “10 Ways to Prioritize Your Mental Health as an Educator” on **May 21 at 2 p.m. ET.**

As an educator, it’s easy to put the needs of your students first, but self-care is paramount to maintain a healthy and productive teaching environment. Character Strong will provide 10 practical strategies to prioritize your mental health, from mindfulness exercises and stress management techniques to setting boundaries and seeking support when needed.



[Click here](#) to register.

Project AWARE Highlights Mental Health Month!

In honor of Mental Health Month, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) would like to highlight the efforts of Project AWARE Indiana in supporting Hoosier students’ mental wellbeing. Project AWARE is a multi-year grant awarded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered by IDOE in partnership with the Family and Social Services Administration’s Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA). To date, Indiana has been awarded three rounds of Project AWARE funding from SAMHSA, spanning from 2018 to 2026, and involving 19 local education agencies.

The overarching goals of Project AWARE are to: increase awareness of youth mental health statewide and locally, provide mental health trainings to school personnel, connect youth and their families with mental health services if necessary, reduce stigma associated with mental health topics, and advocate for sustainable mental health awareness practices for educators, youth, and their families. Project AWARE funds are used to support Indiana school districts and charter schools in creating comprehensive school mental health infrastructures that are responsive to their specific local needs and existing resources.

Project AWARE past and present partnerships include several state agencies and youth-serving organizations in Indiana. To learn more about Project AWARE efforts and initiatives, visit [ProjectAWAREIN.org](#).



Summer Meal Resources

Summer can be a difficult time for families facing food insecurity to ensure that children receive a full and well-balanced diet in the absence of reliable school meals. Here are some resources for families to help fill that nutritional gap in the summer:

Indiana SUN Bucks — Website and application now open!



Indiana SUN Bucks is a new benefits program that provides families \$120 for each eligible school-aged child to buy groceries when school is out. Visit the [Indiana SUN Bucks website](#) for resources and information about this exciting new program in Indiana. The website includes a communications toolkit for both schools and community partner organizations, frequently asked questions, eligibility information, a link to the application, and more! Questions about SUN Bucks can be directed to the [online help form](#).

- [Summer Food Service Program](#) Meal sites provide free meals to children aged 18 and younger (2024 sites forthcoming)
- [No Kid Hungry’s Free Meals Finder](#) (or text FOOD to 304-304)
- [Feeding Indiana’s Hungry Find Your Food Bank map](#)
- Dial 211 or visit [the Indiana 211 website](#) to get connected to various local resources from food pantries to housing assistance
- Call USDA’s National Hunger Hotline (1-866-33-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE) to find meal resources near you
- Download the [Community Compass](#) app to find free groceries, free meals, SNAP stores, WIC stores, and WIC clinics near you



Grants and Opportunities

Youth Adolescent Physical Activity (YAPA) Grant — Application deadline is May 17

The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA) has released the 2024 – 2025 YAPA grant application. This one-year grant is focused on providing physical activity and physical education opportunities for youth and adolescents, 6-17 years of age (K-12) in the classroom, school, and before or after school program settings. Schools and youth-serving organizations are eligible to apply! [Click here](#) for the application.

Good Sports Equipment Opportunity—Applications accepted May 7-June 7

Good Sports focuses on supporting organizations and schools with safe and appropriate equipment needed to encourage kids to be physically active. They are offering an [opportunity](#) to provide equipment donations for organizations and schools who work with ages 3-18 in high poverty areas. Good Sports hosted a 45-minute, information session for prospective organizations and schools. [Click here](#) to view the recording.

Camp To Belong Indiana will host a free, annual, week-long summer group camp from June 2-June 7 for ages 8-17 Hoosier siblings who are separated because they live in different foster homes or other out-of-home placements. [See attached flyer in this email for more details.](#)

Healthy Meals Incentives Recognition Awards Program — Applications accepted until June 30, 2025

[Action for Healthy Kids \(AFHK\)](#) is offering recognition awards to celebrate School Food Authorities (SFAs) that have made significant improvements to the nutritional quality of their school meals. The recognition awards will spotlight innovative practices, student and community engagement, and strategies schools have used to provide meals that are consistent with the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). To learn more and apply, [click here](#).

We Want To Hear From You!

Indiana School Health Professional Development & Technical Assistance Interest Form

The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, was recently awarded a five-year CDC grant to help improve student health and wellness in Indiana schools and communities. As part of this work, we would like to develop health-related professional development and technical assistance learning opportunities for school-based staff and community-based partners that is relevant, timely, and actionable.



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Please help us by filling out [this interest form](#) to help us plan future learning opportunities.

Indiana Food Vision Survey

The Indiana Food Vision is for every Hoosier who eats or grows food and who wants to have a voice in shaping our future! Together, we are creating a road map for cultivating a robust, nourishing, and equitable food system where all communities in Indiana thrive. The Indiana Food Vision is a ‘by the people for the people’ effort to center the voices of Hoosiers who eat, grow, or buy food in Indiana - that means YOU!



Please take a few minutes to share about your day-to-day food system experience by [clicking this link](#) to the survey.

Upcoming Changes to School Meals

K-12 schools serve nutritious breakfasts and lunches to nearly 30 million children every school day. These meals are the main source of nutrition for more than half of these children and help improve child health. That’s why the USDA is gradually updating the nutrition standards for school meals to include less sugar – for the first time – and more menu planning options between Fall 2025 and Fall 2027.

The USDA arrived at these changes after listening closely to public feedback and considering the latest science-based recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This gradual approach will give schools, kids, and industry plenty of time to adjust. School meals will continue to include fruits and vegetables, emphasize whole grains, and give kids the right balance of nutrients for healthy, tasty meals.



Implementation timeline for updating school meal standards:

- **Spring 2024:** USDA issues [final rule](#) on long-term school nutrition standards after listening to public feedback and following recommendations from the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- **Fall 2024:** Schools will have additional menu options that will make it easier to offer local, vegetarian, and culturally appropriate menu items. There will be no changes to flavored milk standards.
- **Fall 2025:** Limit on added sugars in cereals, yogurt, and milk. Schools will still be able to offer flavored milk with limits on added sugars.
- **Fall 2026:** There are no required changes; schools can voluntarily continue to gradually reduce added sugars and sodium.
- **Fall 2027:** No more than 10% of the weekly calories can come from added sugars. There will also be a 10% reduction in sodium for breakfast and a 15% reduction in sodium for lunch.

For more information about how school meals will be strengthened, visit [CN Rule Updates](#).

Upcoming Events

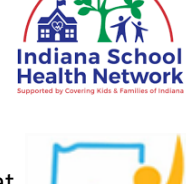
Freewheelin’ Bikes Program Spring and Summer Camps

These camps include bike rides, outdoor recreation activities, arts & crafts, bike safety instruction, field trips, guest presenters, bike mechanics basics, games, and more! [See attached flyer in this email for more details.](#)



Indiana School Health Network Conference — June 4-5

This year’s theme is “*Seeds of Hope: Growing a Strong Future for Hoosier Kids.*” This conference will encourage discussions and initiatives that highlight innovative approaches, community involvement, policy changes, and evolving opportunities, that with collective actions, can make a significant impact for Hoosier kids. [Click here](#) to learn more.



INSHAPE Professional Development Training—June 22

INSHAPE is hosting a **free** regional, professional development training for all K-12 Indiana PE teachers at Hamilton Heights Elementary School from 9-12:30 p.m. ET. This training is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA). [See attached flyer in this email for more details.](#)



Playworks Combine for a Cause: An Indoor Recess Experience

Playworks is celebrating 10 years of programming in the state of Indiana by hosting a fun, new event to celebrate on Saturday, July 13! Showcase your physical, mental, and social skills at this indoor recess experience, presented by the Indianapolis Colts. [Click here](#) for more details.



If you would like more information on school health or have content to share, please contact the Indiana Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (IDOH, DNPA).

[Click here](#) to subscribe or unsubscribe to our newsletter.

Visit our [webpage](#) for other resources and archived newsletters.

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To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

Indiana Department of Health

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