



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children



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U.S. Parents Want Kids More Active During School Day: Poll A third think elementary schools should devote more time to PE, survey finds

THURSDAY, April 21 (HealthDay News) -- A new poll finds that almost all parents of young children believe it's important for elementary school kids to get exercise during each school day. However, one-third said their children don't get enough physical activity at school.

The survey findings come at a time when U.S. schools continue to cut back on physical activity due to budget cuts. Obesity is thought to affect one out of every six kids in the United States. The University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, which asked parents of children aged 6 to 11 for their views about physical activity in schools, found that about one-third of parents think their kids' elementary schools don't devote enough time to physical education, 26 percent think playground equipment is lacking and 22 percent believe recess is too short.

"Academic and budget pressures threaten schools' ability to provide outlets and opportunities for children's physical activity. Many parents are noticing that something is missing," Sarah Clark, associate director of the poll and associate director of the Child Health Evaluation and Research Unit at the University of Michigan Medical School, said in a university news release.

Parents who had extra pounds themselves were more likely to think schools need to do more, the study authors found.

"This is a new insight at the national level, indicating that parents with their own weight challenges are even more likely to see schools as a key partner in addressing the risks of obesity for their own kids," Clark said in the news release.

"School officials should note the strong support from parents for the importance of physical activity during the school day for children in the elementary grades. Parents see many reasons why physical activity is valuable for their children -- not just in preventing obesity but also in promoting healthy physical development. For parents of children in elementary school, it is critically important that children get the physical activity they need during the school day," Clark explained.