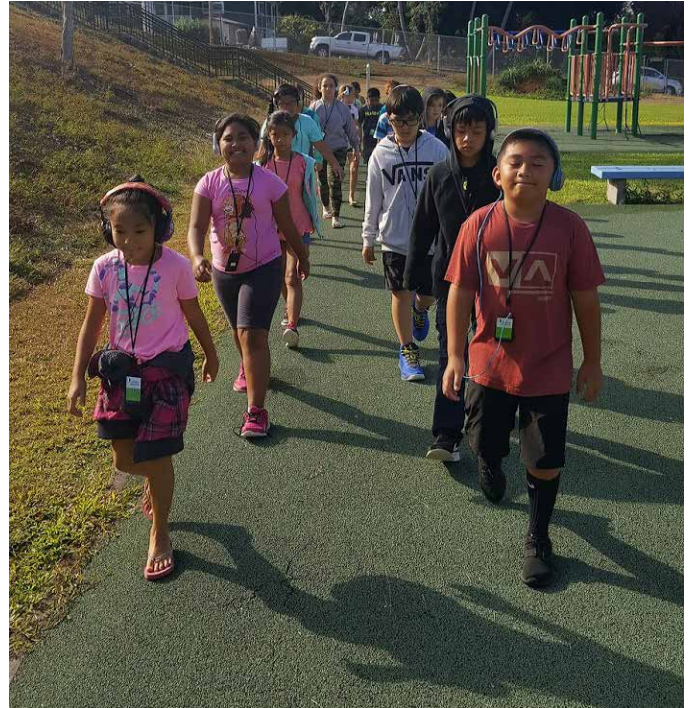


Starting a Walking Club!

A Walking Club is an easy and inexpensive opportunity for students and staff to increase their current level of physical activity. Walking and tracking miles and/or minutes helps foster an appreciation for physical activity and develops healthy habits at an early age.

Why Walk?

- ✓ It increases oxygen to the brain, making it easier to learn and retain information
- ✓ It gives you more energy
- ✓ It improves your mood
- ✓ It helps kinesthetic learners and students with ADHD thrive
- ✓ It's economical and easy



Getting Started

STEP 1: *The Logistics*

Where: Determine where you want to walk with your students and try the route yourself. If there is a track available, that's great. If not, keep in mind that walking around a larger area will be much more interesting than walking circles in the same small area.

Schedule: Set designated times for when you will walk and stick to it! Aim to **walk at least 2–3 times each week.**

Back-Up Plan: If the weather is bad, you can always walk indoors. Plan an indoor route through your facility that follows as wide a perimeter as possible. Stairs make the route more interesting.

Pro Tip!

Instead of having the students walk around the playground 20 times, try to design a longer route—walking the perimeter of the school, parking lot, and playground two or three times will be much more enjoyable for all.

Step 2: *Meet*

There is a lot of important information that needs to be shared during your first meeting.

1. Introduce the club, its purpose, when you will meet, where you will walk, and any other expectations.
 - a. Safety
 - i. Stay with the group
 - ii. Stop at all street crossings and wait for adult to cross with you
 - iii. Wear appropriate shoes
 - iv. Do not touch any animals
2. Review the benefits of walking:
 - a. Gets your heart rate up
 - b. Helps bring fresh oxygen to your brain – making you smarter!
 - c. Improves your mood
 - d. Enables you to enjoy the outdoors
3. Come up with a fun name for your club to establish community.

Step 3: *Set goals & track your progress*

Setting goals will keep club members excited and motivated.

1. Pick a destination that your club wants to “travel” to and mark it on a map (the beach? Chicago? Disney World?)
2. Determine the distance needed to get there. If there are 10 members in your club and you all walk one mile during each club meeting, you’re 10 miles closer to your goal each time.
3. Track your progress after each meeting, and celebrate once you “arrive”!

Step 4: *Establish a routine and stick to it*

Once you have your first meeting and your club is underway, a normal meeting might go like this:

1. Begin by sharing a tip on leading a healthier lifestyle (i.e., why soft drinks are bad for you, why getting enough sleep is important, healthy calories vs. empty calories, etc.)
2. Remind the group of your goals, grab any materials you need (water, pedometer, cell phone, etc.) and get ready to walk.
3. Take a walk!
4. Gather as a group and discuss the walk and anything that was learned (if listening to Walking Classroom podcasts).
5. Track your progress – how close are you to your goals?
6. Celebrate and remind students of the next time you will be meeting.

Step 5: *Make it fun!*

Some suggestions below (but the possibilities are endless!)

1. Invite parents, other staff, or members of the community (high school athletes, coaches, etc.) to join in on a walk.
2. Have a themed walk once a month – like mismatched socks or an 80’s theme!
3. Have students play “Follow the Leader” while walking. The leader can hop, walk like an Egyptian, rubber-band legs, etc.

Now you’re ready to walk and enjoy some active time with your students!

Happy Trails!