

Connecting with Parents and Families through Planet Health

The goals of *Planet Health*, encouraging children to “make space for fitness and nutrition”, were developed for adolescents, but they can be extended to parents and families as well. Because the family is the basic social unit, and it is largely through family influences that children gain their attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs regarding health, it makes sense to involve the family in *Planet Health*.

Parents and adult caregivers play an important role in influencing and modeling health behaviors. Children need the support of their parents in order to make positive health behavior changes in their lives. By just observing the adults in their lives participating in and talking about physical activity, children come to value and enjoy physical activity, and therefore become more active. Parents also make decisions about what foods are available in the home. By involving parents in nutrition education, we want to give children a chance to teach their parents what they learn from *Planet Health* in school. There is evidence that this might be an effective way to improve family nutrition. Through incorporating parents in *Planet Health* we aim to improve the wellness of the whole family.

There are opportunities already built into the *Planet Health* curriculum to bring parents and other adults and family members into discussion and activities with students around the goals of “making space for fitness and nutrition”. In the following grid, we have pointed out the types of activities that the curriculum suggests, along with a description of each, and page references for the full text of each activity. As we know, you teachers have a tendency to make your own extensions of lessons as the needs of your students dictate, so perhaps this will furnish you with ideas for making your own extensions and connections.

It is our intention that you should print out these pages and tuck them into your *Planet Health* book. We hope that they will be helpful to you in your use of the curriculum.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Existing parent/family connections in the *Planet Health* curriculum:

PLANET HEALTH

Lesson #	SUBJECT	LESSON NAME	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PAGE #
31	Introduction	Student Self-Assessment	Teacher-Parent correspondence	Info letter to parents, asks them to reinforce <i>PH</i> messages at home.	129
36	Language Arts	Writing a Fable: Important Messages About Activity	Teacher Resources: Specific Background Material	Example of playing catch with a friend or parent to increase student activity.	177 also 194, 288
36	Language Arts	Writing a Fable: Important Messages About Activity	Reading Comprehension	Text advises students to talk with parents if they notice any signs of too much exercise.	181
37	Language Arts	Go for the Goal	Extension Activity	Students interview a member of their family to find out whether they have any goals for themselves.	187
38	Language Arts	Lifetime Physical Activities: Research One, Describe One, Try One!	Extension Activity 1	Publish a <i>Planet Health</i> newsletter and send copies home to parents.	192
39	Language Arts	Choosing Healthy Foods	Extension Activity 2 nd question	Besides TV, what other parts of your life influence your food choices? (Ex: family, friends, etc.)	199
46	Math	Circle Graphs: Where Did the Day Go?	Extension Activity	Students interview an adult in their families to determine how he or she spends the day, and then students construct graphs and write reports on findings.	287
50	Science	Smart Snacks	Extension Activity 2	Students bring in nutritious snacks from home to sample.	340
52	Science	Foods for Energy	Extension Activity 3	Students list everyone in their homes and their weekly physical activities and explain the differences in their activity patterns.	368

				differences in their activity patterns.	
56	Social Studies	Food Through the Ages	Extension Activity 2	Interview a grandparent, etc. to determine how the eating habits of children living 50 years ago are different from yours.	409, 420
58	Social Studies	Global Foods	Procedure 2	Teacher asks students, “What vegetables does your family eat most often?”	431
			Extension Activity 1	Have students prepare a traditional dish to be brought to school and shared.	432
59	Social Studies	Around the World With Five a Day	Extension Activity	Have students bring in food dishes that include the fruits or vegetables they researched.	444
62	Social Studies	Impact of Technology	Extension Activity 5	Interview a grandparent, etc. and compare how they spent their free time as a child 50 years ago to how you do today.	465, 475
Appendix D	Charting TV Viewing Time	Power Down	Activity 3	Ask older relatives or friends what they did as children to entertain themselves to get ideas for non-TV activities.	498
			Activity 6	Give parents copies of the TV viewing charts and have them keep track of their viewing time.	498