

# University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Making a Difference for California

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## NUTRITION NEWS

UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
cal  fresh Nutrition Education

### SETTING STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING



Elementary school teachers play an important role in the development of students. You are often the sole source of a student's learning experience. What students learn in their formative years shapes how they are in the future. This is a challenging job! Wouldn't it be great if your whole class was always attentive and ready to learn? There are things you can do to set students up for success. Making time in your lesson plans for physical activity is one thing.

#### Kids who get moving may also get better grades.

A research review suggests students who get extra physical activity may pay more attention in school and do better in subjects like reading and math. The study team analyzed data from 26 previously published studies with a total of more than 10,000 children between 4 and 13 years old. All of the prior studies measured the impact of a variety of physical activity programs on academic performance. The authors also looked at whether the effect of exercise differed across academic

subjects. Although the benefit of physical activity was strongest for mathematics, it was only slightly smaller for other subjects like language and reading, meaning that physical activity benefits learning in all academic subjects.

At a time when many schools struggle to set aside time for gym classes amid a push to raise test scores by devoting more time to academics, the findings offer fresh evidence that physical activity is



one way to help boost kids' grades. When kids take time out of the school day for physical activity, whether in dedicated gym classes or by incorporating movement into classroom lessons, students

may have an easier time focusing on their classwork and do better in school, said study coauthor Ivan Cavero Redondo of Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha in Cuenca, Spain.

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## SETTING STUDENTS UP FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING (CONTINUED)

Overall, physical activity appears to have the biggest impact on keeping kids on task and focused on their work, the study found. Students who participated in various experimental exercise programs also did better at math, reading and language lessons than their peers who didn't participate in these programs. Exercise had a bigger impact on school performance when it was incorporated into the school day than when it was added as an extracurricular activity, researchers report in *Pediatrics*.



SOURCE: [bit.ly/2kavwvg](http://bit.ly/2kavwvg) Pediatrics, online November 24, 2017

## START EVERY DAY WITH BREAKFAST

**A**nother way to help students do their best is to encourage them to start the school day with breakfast. If your school has a breakfast program, remind students to participate. Take the time to explain why it is important to eat a balanced breakfast. Try the breakfast activity on page 3 to reinforce this concept.

### Research confirms that breakfast eaters:

- Have higher test scores, work faster, make fewer errors and are more creative.
- Are less likely to be sent to the principal or visit the school nurse.
- Are more cooperative and get along with classmates.
- Are healthier and have improved attendance.
- Are more able to concentrate on learning.

And remember, students need breakfast every day, not just during standardized test weeks. Breakfast every day:

**INCREASES** attentiveness and achievement

**IMPROVES** children's ability to learn

**REDUCES** behavioral problems

**IMPROVES** children's diets

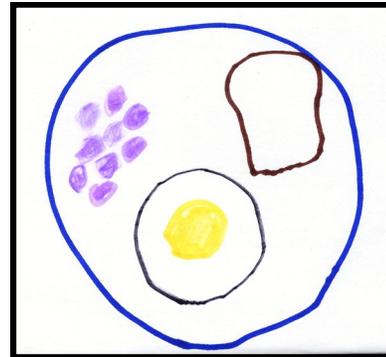
**HELPS** reduce obesity



## NUTRITION ACTIVITY

## WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

- Have students brainstorm why “breakfast” is called breakfast.  
*This meal is meant to break the fast you’ve kept over the 12 hours or so since your last meal or snack.*
- Explain that a balanced, body-building breakfast should contain food from at least 3 of the 5 food groups.
- Write 4 menus on the board (include two that are balanced and two that are not). Ask students to count how many different food groups each breakfast menu contains. Which are balanced? What could be added to those that are not?
- Give each child a paper plate to draw and color a balanced breakfast.
- Discuss and display.



## PHYSICAL FITNESS ACTIVITY

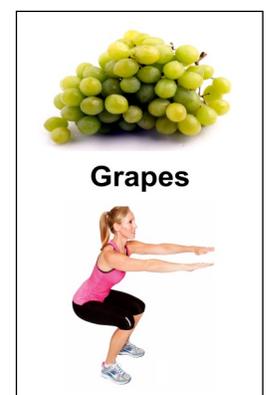
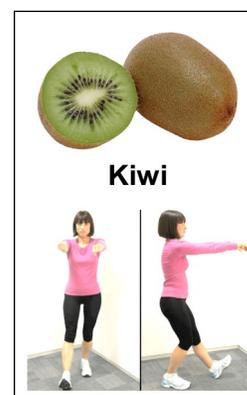
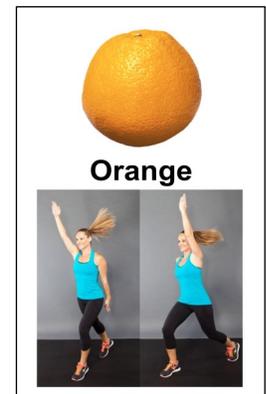
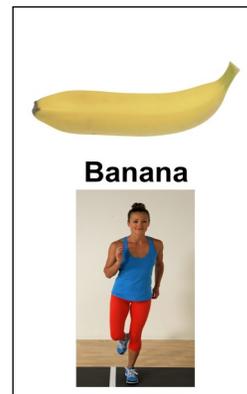
## FRUIT SALAD

*This activity is perfect for a classroom physical activity break.*

1. Choose 4 fruits (Banana, Orange, Kiwi, Grapes, etc.) and designate a locomotor movement to be used for each fruit (jumping/scissors in place, hopping on one foot 3 times then switch, squatting with arms in front, arm raise/heel dig). Post movement cards, if possible, and show kids how to do each move before starting.
2. All students start out marching in place. When the teacher calls out a fruit, everyone does the specified movement. When the teacher calls out the next fruit, the group changes to that specified movement.
3. When the teacher calls “Fruit Salad,” all the children do their favorite fruit movement. The teacher then says “March”, so everyone goes back to marching to wait for the next cue or stop.

Options:

- Ask a student to call out the name of a fruit.
- Change the movements for each fruit.
- Allow students to assign movements to each fruit.



**University of California  
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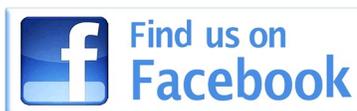
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[http://twitter.com/  
LetsEatHealthy](http://twitter.com/LetsEatHealthy)

**Happy Healthy Me...Moving, Munching & Reading  
Around MyPlate for 4 to 6 Years Olds**

Combines stories and literacy with nutrition education.

**Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork...Promoting  
School Wellness**

A nutrition education curriculum that makes the connection between local food systems, garden-based learning, school food service, and the establishment of healthy habits. (K-2nd Grade)

**My Amazing Body - 1st Grade**

**Good for Me and You - 2nd Grade**

**It's My Choice...Eat Right! Be Active! - 3rd Grade**

These curricula promote healthy eating and physical activity. Children will gain skills to practice appropriate healthy behaviors.

**Nutrition to Grow On**

A garden-enhanced nutrition education curriculum. Objectives: 1) Teach the importance of making healthful food choices; and 2) improve children's preference for fruits and vegetables by giving them an opportunity to work with the land and grow their own produce. (4th-6th Grade)

**Eatfit**

A computer-based highly interactive nutrition and fitness program for middle and high school adolescents.

**Jump Start**

These cross-curricular lessons encourage high school students to eat healthy, keep moving and take action in their community.

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County Director

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