

Drinking Water at School Keeps Kids Healthy and Supports Learning

Do you know if your kids can get fresh, clean water at no cost at school? All kids, no matter where they live, should have access to water at no cost in school. Water is a basic human need—something kids can't live without. Children spend many of their waking hours at school. Access to water is part of creating a healthy school environment that helps set children up for a healthy future. More must be done to ensure that all kids have access to water in school.

Here are some of the health benefits of drinking water for children:

- ▶ Water plays an important role in keeping kids healthy. Drinking water helps children's muscles joints and tissues; improves their digestion; and keeps their growing bodies hydrated.¹
- ▶ Drinking water can help children learn better; improve their short-term memory; and improve their fine motor skills and visual attention, which is important to learning activities such as reading.²
- ▶ Children who drink water instead of sugary drinks are less likely to have cavities.³
- ▶ Drinking water instead of sugary drinks can help kids grow up at a healthy weight.⁴

You can help ensure that all kids in your community have access to drinking water at school. Find out what your schools are doing. There are many ways they can increase access to drinking water. Schools can ensure that water fountains are clean and properly maintained; install water fountains, dispensers and hydration stations throughout the school; and allow students to have water bottles in class or to go to the water fountain when they are thirsty. School policies should make it easy for students to stay hydrated throughout the day. Federal school nutrition standards require schools to make water available at mealtimes where they are served at no cost.

All of us want our children to grow up healthy. Let's make sure that all kids can get the water they need to thrive in school and in life.

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4 Zheng M, Allman-Farinelli M, Heitmann BL, Rangan A. Substitution of sugar-sweetened beverages with other beverage alternatives: a review of long-term health outcomes. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2015; 115(5):767-79, doi: [10.1016/j.jand.2015.01.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2015.01.006).