

Drinking Water at School Keeps Kids Healthy and Supports Learning

Water is a basic human need that none of us can live without. For children, having clean drinking water available to them at school is critical. All children, no matter where they live or what grade they're in, deserve to go to a school that provides clean drinking water at no cost. 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. We must do more to ensure that all kids have access to water in school.

Here's why access to water at school is so essential for kids:

- ▶ 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

It's hard to ignore the benefits of water access at school for kids. As a leader in our community, we need your help in making sure that all kids can get water at school. There's a lot that schools can do to provide access to 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.

We're asking you to work with other community leaders to make sure that all kids can get the water they need to thrive in school and in life.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Water & Nutrition. Updated October 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/nutrition/index.html>. Accessed October 31, 2018.

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2 Masento NA, Golightly M, Field DT, Butler LT, van Reekum CM. Effects of hydration status on cognitive performance and mood. *Br J Nutr*. 2014; 111(10):1841-52, doi: [10.1017/S0007114513004455](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007114513004455).

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3 Armfield JM, Spencer AJ, Roberts-Thomson KF, Plastow K. Water fluoridation and the association of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and dental care in Australian children. *Am J Public Health*. 2013; 103(3):494-500, doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2012.300889](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300889).

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).