



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Fit Kids 2020” outlines strategies to reduce childhood obesity

The Kane County Health Department is pleased to announce the release of “Fit Kids 2020 Plan,” a 51-page document that outlines the strategies required to reverse childhood obesity in Kane County over the next decade. This document is the result of the work of more than 80 community members who worked over a period of six months, contributing more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time in nine sector-specific workgroups to develop the plan.

In Kane County, one in five kids is overweight, and in some communities that number is an alarming one in three. As these kids get older, they are more likely to develop chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, suffer bone and joint problems, and suffer other serious health problems. Kane County residents have decided not to accept this future for our children.

“We are recommending that all agencies and groups throughout Kane County adopt the relevant strategies outlined in this plan and adjust them to fit their needs so that we can work together to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity,” said Health Executive Director Paul Kuehnert.

The ways that we can Make Kane County For Kids can be boiled down to 18 key points

Local Government can

- Preserve green space and land for farming
- Develop community plans to promote walking and biking
- Build infrastructure, such as sidewalks and streets, that make easier to walk and bike
- Set aside space for community gardens

Employers can:

- Offer programs and health benefits to promote physical activity and better eating
- Adopt healthy food policies for food served at meetings
- Provide Opportunities to be physically active during the work day

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Schools can:

- Achieve Gold Award Distinction for Healthier U.S. School Challenge
- Promote walking and biking
- Build more physical activity into each student's day

Faith-based organizations can:

- Offer healthy foods at all community events
- Plant or sponsor a garden
- Take steps to make healthy food available to those in need
- Create a health and wellness committee

Families can:

- Plant a garden
- Walk your child to school
- Play outside with your children and grandchildren
- Take action in your community to promote health

“Fit Kids 2020” was developed by parents, physicians, engineers, educators, planners, public health professionals, transportation experts, faith leaders, local policy makers and many, many more. They all dedicated their time to contribute to this important initiative because they see the value in multiple sectors working together to make substantial change. “Fit Kids 2020” provides the framework to make the systems, environmental and policy changes needed to accomplish the goal by 2020.

The volunteers collaborated in nine sector-specific workgroups: Built and Natural Environment, Economic Strength, Faith Community, Family, Culture and Community, Food Policy, Healthcare and Medicine, Mobility, Recreation and Lifestyle, and Schools and Recreation. Each workgroup developed strategies that: provide parents with information on healthy physical activity and eating habits; support a culture of wellness and in our workplaces, schools and other institutions; assure that fresh fruits and vegetables are affordable and accessible to all; and develop public policies that foster and support physical activity.

“Fit Kids 2020” is made possible by the Making Kane County Fit For Kids Funders Consortium: The Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley, United Way of Elgin, the Kane Forest Preserve District, the Kane County Office of Regional Education and Kane County.

The “Fit Kids 2020” plan is available for download on the Making Kane County Fit For Kids Web site at www.makingkanefitforkids.org.