

You Are What You Eat

"*You are what you eat*" is a motto that we see quite often this time of year as we dive into our New Year's resolutions. It is a particularly helpful reminder when faced with less than healthy choices at mealtime. Healthier standards for more nutritious food is a topic that is trending today, especially regarding our youth. In fact, it was just this past summer when the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 implemented their last phase of nutrition standards nicknamed "Smart Snacks in School" across the nation.

As a result, we have seen our local schools make positive changes for a healthier lifestyle for students while on school grounds. Our local PTAs have either started Health & Wellness committees or added more wellness events to their calendars to include Fresh Fruit Fridays or Wellness Wednesdays, as well as Morning Milers, Healthy Champions, farm to school taste tests, and incorporating school gardens into their curriculum. In addition, some of our schools have changed their primary fundraising to fitness related events such as 5K runs and added after school fitness or running clubs. Many of our teachers have implemented the NERT (Non-Edible Rewards and Treats) system in their classrooms, which is simply rewarding students with privileges instead of candy.

While our state has allowed some leniency to this new standard in regards to fundraising, nevertheless we are seeing a dedication of improving the overall health of our students, which is the ultimate goal. To extend these healthy habits outside of school, we can teach our children to read nutrition labels and to think about the fuel they are putting into their growing bodies. Going on a family hike at one of our local parks and encouraging outdoor activities that exercise the body and the mind are some simple ways to increase our fitness levels. Together we can continue this positive momentum of improving the health and wellness of our children.

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