

- *"The school staff had a very positive attitude toward the SHI. They liked its comprehensive view of health promotion and its involvement of many different stakeholders."*

How the School Health Index Works

The health and safety habits of students are influenced by the entire school environment. Therefore, the SHI has eight different modules, each corresponding to a component of a coordinated school health program:

Coordinated School Health Program



A team consisting of representatives from different groups within the school—parents, teachers, students, administrators, other staff members, and concerned community members—completes eight self-assessment modules. Responses to the items are scored to help you identify your school's strengths and weaknesses.

The School Health Index includes a Planning for Improvement section to help your school develop an action plan for improving student health. Your school's results from the SHI can help you include health promotion activities in your overall School Improvement Plan, which will ultimately allow you to develop an ongoing process for monitoring progress and reviewing your recommendations for change.

The School Health Index is **your** school's self-assessment tool, and it should not be used to compare schools or evaluate the staff. There is no such thing as a passing grade on the School Health Index. You should use your SHI scores only to help you understand your school's strengths and weaknesses and to develop an action plan for improving your health policies and programs.

The School Health Index is available at no cost and can be completed in as little as 6 hours. Many of the improvements that you'll want to make after completing the SHI can be done with your existing staff and resources. For those priority actions that do require new resources, your School Health Index results can provide information needed to stimulate school board and community support for school health programs and for funding requests. A small investment of time can pay big dividends in improving students' well-being, readiness to learn, and prospects for a healthy life!

To obtain a copy of the School Health Index, choose one of the following options:

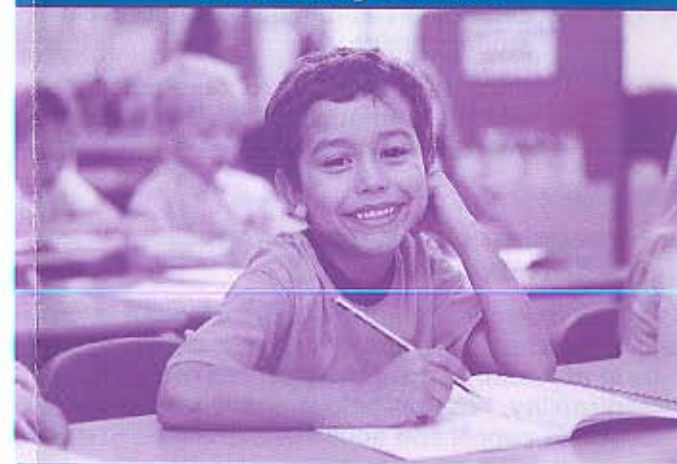
- Participate using the NEW interactive online version: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI/>
- Download the printable version from CDC Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHI/paper.htm>
- Request by e-mail: healthyyouth@cdc.gov
- Request by telephone: 888-231-6405
- Request by fax: 888-282-7681

When ordering, please specify either the elementary school version or the middle/high school version.



School Health Index

A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Helping Students Get Ready to Learn

Promoting healthy and safe behaviors among students is an important part of the fundamental mission of schools: to provide young people with the knowledge and skills to become healthy and productive adults. By promoting health and safety behaviors, schools can increase students' capacity to learn, reduce absences, and improve physical fitness and mental alertness.

To help schools meet this challenge, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed the School Health Index. This self-assessment and planning guide will enable you to:

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your school's health and safety policies and programs.
- Develop an action plan for improving student health.
- Involve teachers, parents, students, and the community in improving school policies and programs.

Focusing on Key Health and Safety Issues

The fourth edition of the School Health Index addresses behaviors that play a critical role in preventing the leading causes of death, disability, hospitalizations and illness among young people and adults in the United States:

- Physical activity and physical education
- Nutrition
- Tobacco use prevention
- Unintentional injury and violence prevention
- Asthma

Future editions also will address other health issues that have a major impact on the current and future health of young people, such as

- Sun safety
- Food safety
- Sexual risk behaviors

Here Are the Facts...

- Regular physical activity helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles and reduce fat, but 33% of young people do not participate in sufficient vigorous or moderate physical activity on a regular basis.
- Research suggests that skipping breakfast can affect children's intellectual performance, and even moderate under-nutrition can have lasting effects on cognitive development.
- The percentage of children and adolescents who are overweight has more than doubled since 1980: 16% are now overweight. Overweight children are more likely to have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high insulin levels. They are also more likely to become overweight adults, who are at increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.
- Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 440,000 deaths each year. About 22% of students in grades 9–12 are current smokers. Approximately 80% of adult tobacco users initiated smoking before 18 years of age.
- 66.2% of all deaths among children and adolescents result from injury-related causes: 33.5% from motor vehicle injuries, 13.5% from all other unintentional injuries, 10.7% from homicides, and 8.5% from suicides.

- Nearly 4 million children and adolescents are injured at school each year. The costs associated with these injuries are large. Annual medical spending on school injuries has been estimated at \$3.2 billion.
- In 2003, 9.5% of school-aged children were reported to currently have asthma; 6.0% of them had an asthma attack within the previous year. Asthma is the third ranking cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15 and is a leading cause of school absences. Yet, asthma can be controlled with proper diagnosis, appropriate asthma care, and management.

What the School Health Index Can Do for Your School

The School Health Index will provide structure and direction to your school's efforts to improve health and safety policies and programs. First released in 2000, the SHI has been used by schools in nearly every state and in Canada. The SHI is designed for use at the local level. However, with appropriate adaptation, it could be used at the district level as well, especially if the district has only a few schools and those schools have similar policies and programs. School administrators and staff members who have used the SHI have said:

- *"The School Health Index was easy to use and enabled us to clearly identify what is working and what needs to be improved."*
- *"It's a real energizer—it makes you think of ideas that are relatively easy to implement."*