



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Panhandle Health District Invites You to Come PLAY

Kootenai County, ID – Panhandle Health District is inviting families to an informational meeting for their new PLAY (Parents Leading Active Youth) program on Thursday, January 23, 2020 from 6:00-7:00pm at their Hayden location, 8500 N. Atlas Rd.

Access to nutritious food and being physically active begins at home. Through PLAY, parents can adopt practices that will encourage the entire family to live a healthy lifestyle. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), data from 2015-16 show that nearly 1 in 5 school age children and young people (6 to 19 years) in the United States have obesity. In Idaho, over 11 percent of school-aged children have obesity. Panhandle Health District (PHD) wants to lower that percentage through their new PLAY program.

Anyone interested in the program is welcome to attend, and participants can register for the program at the meeting. The first PLAY classes are expected to launch in February. PLAY is a 12-week program consisting of two classes per week, one nutrition class led by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) and one physical activity class led by a physical activity educator. PHD has partnered with community organizations to ensure the PLAY classes are medically supervised by professionals in our community.

“Many parents are unsure where to begin,” said Kim Young, RDN at PHD. “They realize there is a problem, but they aren’t sure what steps to take first. We want to help parents and guardians by empowering them to be the healthy role models for positive physical and mental well-being.”

PLAY is designed for children ages 6 – 11, with a BMI of 85% or higher. Additionally, it is a *requirement* that at least one parent or caregiver attends classes with their child(ren). It is highly encouraged for the whole family to participate to foster support in learning and maintaining healthy habits together. (Only one child needs to meet the BMI requirement) Examples of activities that families can plan on participating in include

hands-on cooking skills, a grocery store tour, nutrition education, learning how to be physically active every day, goal setting, and mindful eating. All with the goal of creating and maintaining achievable, healthy habits.

“We are really hoping to make this a fun and enjoyable process,” said Young. “The more fun the kids are having, the more likely they are to continue doing it. This is an opportunity for the entire family to be actively engaged and take charge of their health.”

Similar programs have launched around the nation, including southern Idaho. That program yielded positive results among participants. Participants reported replacing more fast foods with fruits and vegetables, reducing screen time, and increasing participation in physical activities. Also, 60 percent of participants had a decrease in body mass index (BMI).

Obesity can lead to many health problems, including Type 2 diabetes, stroke, cancer, mental illness, and heart disease. According to the CDC, children with obesity are more likely to have obesity as adults that can lead to lifelong physical and mental health problems. Early intervention can help avoid these complications and parents play an important role in setting the example.

PLAY Program Details

- When: 12 Weeks, meet twice per week, one hour each
- Who: 6-11-year-old children and their parents/guardians
- What: An encouraging program focused on nutrition, physical activity, and positive behavior change for the entire family.
- Cost: \$300 (discounted rates and vouchers available to those who qualify financially).
- Learn more: www.northidahoplay.org

For more information about PLAY, contact Tarah Boerner, RDN, LD, at Panhandle Health District at 208-415-5175.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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