



Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

Health District Invites Families to Come PLAY

Panhandle Health District – January 17, 2023

Families are invited to attend an informational meeting to learn more about PLAY, a program offered by Panhandle Health District (PHD) that stands for Parents Leading Active Youth. The free, informational session will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2023 from 5:30-6:30pm at PHD's Hayden location, 8500 N. Atlas Rd.

Although the program is designed for children struggling with their weight, any 6-11 year old child and their parent/guardian and sibling(s) interested in the program is welcome to attend, and participants can register for the program at the meeting. PLAY is a 12-week program consisting of two classes per week, one nutrition class led by a health educator and one physical activity class led by an exercise physiologist.

Through PLAY, parents and guardians can adopt practices that will encourage the entire family to live a healthy lifestyle. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 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.

"It's our goal to lower that percentage," said Tonya Miller, PLAY coordinator at PHD. "Many parents are unsure where to begin. 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. It is highly encouraged for the whole family to participate to foster support in learning and maintaining healthy habits together. Examples of activities that families can plan on participating in include hands-on cooking skills, a grocery store tour, gardening, various physical activities from walking to rock climbing, goal setting, and mindful eating. All with the goal of creating and maintaining achievable, healthy habits.

"Building a healthy lifestyle can be challenging," said Miller. "Our weekly classes work on making healthy habits a fun experience that involves the entire family."

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 Tonya Miller at Panhandle Health District at 208-415-5231.

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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.