



Unlocking the Doors to a Better Tomorrow



Guidebook

Ideas and resources for
healthy communities

Access Guidebook and links online
www.keys4healthykids.org

KEYS 4 HealthyKids GUIDEBOOK

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healthy communities

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KEYS 4 HealthyKids is a coalition of diverse organizations in Kanawha County working together to improve the health of our children and communities. We received a grant in 2009 from Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Active Living By Design at the North Carolina Institute for Public Health.

We began our work in two communities – Charleston’s East End and West Side neighborhoods. We’ve seen amazing things happen as local residents decided it was time to get serious about promoting healthy eating and physical activity. We’re now ready to share what we’re learning with others.

The KEYS 4 HealthyKids Steering Committee has prepared this Guidebook with a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation.

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Current Partners:

American Dairy Council
April’s Kitchen
Central Counties Area Health Ed. Center
CAMC Civic Affairs Council
CAMC Family Resource Center
CAMC Foundation
CAMC Health Ed. & Research Institute
CAMC Health Systems, Inc.
Capitol Market
Charleston Area Alliance
Charleston City Council
Charleston Land Trust and Greenways (NeighborWoods)

Charleston Parks and Recreation
City of Charleston
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
East End Community Association
FamilyCare HealthCenter
Friends of The Kanawha Trestle Trail
Kanawha Coalition for Community Health Improvement
Kanawha County Schools
Kanawha-Charleston Health Dept.
Main Street Programs
Partnership of African American Churches

Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club
Thomas Health Systems, Inc
United Way of Central WV
Valley Health Systems, WIC Program
Wellness Council of WV
WV Development Office
West Side Neighborhood Association
WV Council of Churches
WV Healthy Kids and Family Coalition
WV Office of Healthy Lifestyles
WV Prevention Research Center
WV State University Extension Service
WV University Extension
YMCA of Kanawha Valley

KEYS 4 HealthyKids Guidebook

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The 4 KEYS:

Knowledge

Eating healthy

Youth being active

Safety & empowerment

More information online at
www.keys4healthykids.org/



There's no one-size-fits-all approach to raising healthier kids. Each of our communities has its own strengths, challenges and priorities that have to be considered. Think of this guidebook as a gateway to ideas and online resources. It provides an introduction to the main points about our approach, accompanied by links to websites that can help you delve deeper into the topics and activities that are right for your own community.

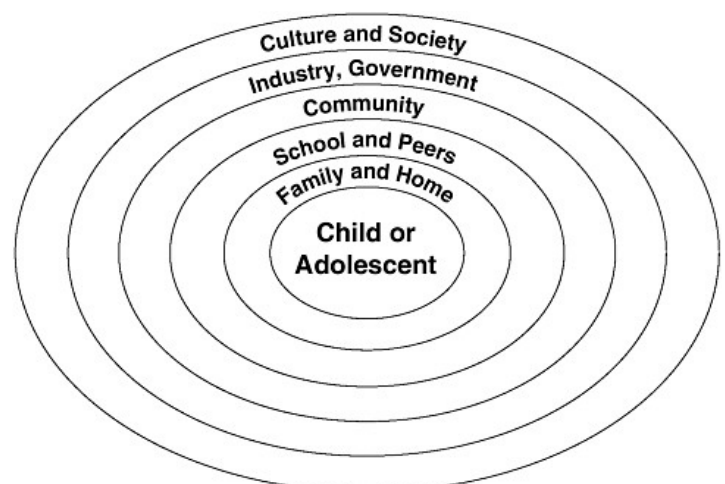
Making the healthy choice the easy choice

For many years, efforts to improve health focused solely on helping people change their behaviors. We've taught people about a balanced diet based on the five food groups. We've shown them how to count the calories they eat and the calories they burn. We've put up billboards about eating at least five fruits and vegetables a day. We've encouraged people to spend more time walking, biking and playing sports and less time glued to televisions and computer screens.

Despite these efforts, the rate of childhood obesity continues to rise in West Virginia and the nation. This is not the "baby fat" that we hope children will outgrow. It's a condition that if ignored can cause serious and long-term health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Helping individuals change their behavior is important, but it's not enough. That's because the choices we make have a lot to do with the environments in which we live, learn, work and play. We're more likely to walk and ride bikes if we have safe sidewalks and bike lanes. We'll buy more fruits and vegetables if there's a store that sells fresh produce nearby. We'll think twice about ordering a triple burger if the calories are listed on the menu.

In order to make a lasting difference, we need to examine the environments and policies that affect our choices, and redesign them *to make the healthy choice the easy choice*. And we need to involve everyone in this effort, including our families, friends, schools, childcare centers, businesses, community organizations and government.



Source: National Academy of Sciences, 2005

The 4 KEYS in action

The 4 KEYS “unlock the doors to a better tomorrow” by linking understanding and action. Used together, the KEYS help community members (1) educate themselves about the serious consequences of unhealthy weights and poor physical fitness; (2) identify effective ways of raising healthy kids by creating healthier environments and choices; and (3) taking actions that are the right fit at the right time for their communities.

★ Knowledge

Knowledge comes in many forms. One way is the advice from experts who study what works best to improve healthy eating and physical activity. Equally important is what we learn from people doing the actual work in communities. This research-plus-experience approach deepens our understanding, as well as the effectiveness of our actions.

A good example is the 5-2-1-0 campaign of the *Let's Go!* initiative, which began in Portland, Maine, and is now being used across the country. This approach translates the “science” of healthy weight into practical guidelines for daily living, as illustrated below. The campaign is based on the belief that if families receive this healthy message in multiple settings, *and if those settings have policies and environments that support healthy choices*, they will be more likely to adopt these habits in their daily lives.

★ Eating healthy

Healthy eating hinges on access and choices. For example, it's easier to eat healthy foods when a community has a full-service grocery store, community vegetable gardens, farmer's markets, healthy school lunches, and after-school programs that serve healthy snacks. Food stamps, free and reduced school lunches, and public transportation also increase access to healthy foods.

★ Youth being active

Youth are more active when the environment encourages physical activity. This includes local “complete streets” policies that ensure safe routes for walkers and bicyclists, as well as safe and accessible parks and playgrounds. It also includes programs that promote physical activity, such as play groups for young children, youth sports programs, walking clubs, and yoga and Zumba classes.

★ Safety and empowerment

Safe communities are engaged communities, where local residents and organizations play an active role. For example, neighborhood associations and youth councils can take on local projects, like developing walking paths or pocket parks. Schools and faith-based facilities can make their facilities available for after-school programs and family fun nights through “joint use” agreements with the organizations sponsoring the activities.

There are a number of ways to stay healthy:



or more servings
of fruits and
vegetables
each day.



hours or
less each day
of recreational
screen time.



hour or more each
day of moderate
to vigorous
physical activity.



sugary drinks!
Restrict soda,
sugar-sweetened
sports & fruit drinks.

5-2-1-0 Every Day for Every Body!

5-2-1-0 images and info courtesy Maine Center for Public Health

Brought to you by



Unlocking the Doors to a Better Tomorrow

FIVE STEPS:

1. Build partnerships.
2. Mobilize the community.
3. Assess the environment.
4. Choose priorities.
5. Take action & track results.

More information online at
www.keys4healthykids.org/fivesteps.htm



At KEYS 4 HealthyKids, we've found that creating healthier communities involves five basic steps. Think of the process as a trail that winds through the woods. Use the five steps as a compass to stay on track. Remember that people and communities don't change overnight, and some changes can take years. But if you stay focused, patient and flexible, you're almost certain to see positive results over time.

☆ Build partnerships.

The foundation for all the work of KEYS 4 HealthyKids is partnerships with people and organizations that have a stake in healthy communities. Remember the concentric circles on page four and how players from all the circles need to be at the table in order to have the greatest impact. Some may have ongoing roles, while others may help out with a particular project or policy change.

A local KEYS team coordinates the overall effort. From our experience, a team of six to eight people representing different aspects of the community works pretty well. The team's job is to lead the way, engage others in the work, track progress and make adjustments as needed. Members need to have the time and commitment to attend regular meetings and help carry out the tasks. Some may participate as part of their jobs, while others may be community volunteers. The KEYS team can be a stand-alone group or a committee of an existing group.

Involving youth from the start is critical. Informal conversations, forums, focus groups and surveys are all ways to gain insights that will help shape your work. A Youth Council is a good way to create a meaningful and ongoing voice for youth in all of your activities.

Building partnerships with decision-makers is also important. Creating lasting change often involves changing the policies of organizations, as well as public laws and regulations. Examples include helping child care center directors and staff develop healthy food policies, and asking local governments to adopt "complete streets" policies for safer routes for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Who in our community:

Is already working to address childhood obesity?

Knows a lot about healthy food and physical activity?

Has good contacts and can mobilize others?

Can influence policy and/or environmental change?

Where in our community do:

Children and families eat food and buy groceries?

Children and families engage in physical activity?

Children spend their time when not in school?

Pre-school age children spend most of their time?

Key Questions for Identifying Potential Partners

☆ Mobilize communities.

In order to gain traction for healthy change, we need to engage, educate and empower local residents to be part of the process, as illustrated in the graphic on the right. The success of our efforts hinges on having multiple ways to share information with community members and welcome their input and participation, including community forums, newsletters, social media and local projects.

☆ Assess the environment.

By “environment” we mean the settings, practices and policies that affect people’s choices about food and physical activity. One of the most effective ways of encouraging healthy behavior is to *make the healthy choice the easy choice*.

An “environmental scan” helps identify the factors in a community that help and that hinder people from making healthy choices. A variety of tools are available, such as:

- Safety audits of walking and biking routes
- Inventories of healthy food choices in supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants
- Mapping of local food and physical activity resources
- Documenting access to and affordability of resources
- Policy audits to identify government laws and regulations and the policies of organizations and businesses that relate to healthy eating and physical activity.

☆ Choose priorities.

Based on community input and the environmental scan, the local KEYS team sets priorities for the coming year or two. Priority is given to activities that are likely to make a lasting difference, respond to local concerns, have local support, and for which resources are available to implement.

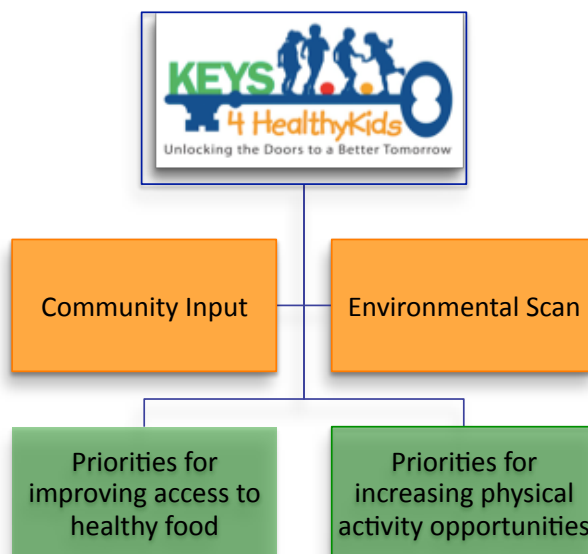
☆ Take action & track results.

The local KEYS team then develops an action plan that outlines long- and short-term goals, who will do what, and when. The team regularly monitors its progress and makes adjustments to the plan as needed. Tips on methods for choosing priorities and creating action plans are available on the KEYS website.

Stages of Community Mobilization



Charting a Course for Healthy Communities



ACTION IDEAS for healthier communities

More information online at
[http://keys4healthykids.org/
action.htm](http://keys4healthykids.org/action.htm)



KEYS 4 HealthyKids is part of a national network of communities pioneering new ways of promoting healthy weight and fitness. We're no longer focused solely on encouraging youth and families to make healthy choices. We're also changing our communities to make *the healthy choice the easy choice*. The following are six actions we've been working on that have shown promising results in Kanawha County.

★ Healthy childcare

More than half of West Virginia's preschool-age children rely on childcare while their parents work, which makes childcare providers key players in preventing childhood obesity. KEYS 4 HealthyKids has piloted a national technical assistance program for childcare programs in Kanawha County. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) helps childcare centers improve their nutrition and physical activity environment, policies and practices through self-assessment and targeted technical assistance. Goals of the program are to improve nutritional quality of food served, amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions, and center nutrition and physical activity policy. Find out more about NAP SACC at <http://www.napsacc.org/>.

★ Physical activity maps & guides

Maps and guides increase public awareness of opportunities for physical activity that already exist in a community, such as safe walking and biking routes, trails, parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. KEYS 4 HealthyKids developed physical activity maps for two Charleston neighborhoods based on a physical activity opportunity assessment and using Google Maps, which is available online at no cost. Mapping can also help identify areas where there is a lack of physical activity options and help mobilize communities to work on developing them.



Physical Activity Map of Charleston's West Side

☆ Community parks

Safe, attractive and usable greenspace is a key feature of a healthy community. KEYS 4 HealthyKids has been working with the City of Charleston, Piedmont Elementary School and others to revitalize Celebration Station. Other projects include turning vacant lots into pocket parks on the East End and West Side of Charleston.

☆ Community gardens and farmer's markets

Community gardens are a great way to improve access to fresh produce, provide opportunities for physical activity, and build relationships among local residents. KEYS 4 HealthyKids has partnered with the Kanawha Community Garden Association (KCGA) on community gardens in Charleston. KCGA, a project of the WVU Extension, supports new and existing garden projects in the greater Kanawha County area. Find out more from the KCGA at <http://kanawha.ext.wvu.edu/kcga> and from the American Community Gardens Association at <http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/tools.php>.

Farmer's markets are another way to encourage people to eat fresh produce and support local growers at the same time. Community gardens can also use farmer's markets as a place to sell their excess produce. More information about developing and operating farmer's markets is available through the West Virginia Farmers Market Association at <http://wvfarmers.org/> and the WVU Extension's Small Farm Center at http://smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/farmers_markets.



From a Photovoice project of the
KEYS 4 HealthyKids Youth Council



Watch this video at <http://www.marketmakeovers.org/mmtv/during/helping-markets-help-themselves/3-buying-programs-its-your-store-take-control>

☆ Corner market Makeovers

Is your community a “food desert”? Are grocery stores hard to get to and junk food too accessible? Market makeovers are designed to improve the quality of food in the stores you do have, like convenience stores and drug stores. By carrying a strategic line of healthy foods that sell well, store owners can increase their business while contributing to the health of community residents. Farmers can create new markets for fresh produce by selling directly to small stores. Community residents can support local businesses and jobs by purchasing healthy food close to home. Find out more about market makeovers at <http://marketmakeovers.org/>.

☆ Advocacy training

Advocacy skills are important tools for changing policies and environments. Pictures can be particularly effective in bringing attention to issues in our lives and communities that we care about. For example, Photovoice empowers people to communicate their hopes and concerns about the health of their communities by taking pictures of what's helping and hindering their access to healthy food and physical activity. The photos are used to educate and mobilize community members and policymakers to take actions that help *make the healthy choice the easy choice*. Find out more at <http://www.photovoice.org/>.



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