



## Drinking Water Availability in Schools

# How Can You Help?

Drinking water is important for student health.<sup>1</sup> Providing students with access to drinking water gives them a healthy alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages during the school day.<sup>2</sup> Schools are required to provide students with access to drinking water during breakfast and lunch periods.<sup>3</sup> It is also important for students to have access to drinking water in other parts of the school campus, such as gymnasiums, hallways, and outside play areas.<sup>4,5</sup>

Knowing the answers to the following questions can help you support access to drinking water in your child's school. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child's teacher.

### What's Happening at School?

1. Does the district or school have policies about allowing students to have a water bottle with them during the school day?
2. Does the school have multiple water fountains or dispensers that are clean and properly maintained?
3. Does the school allow students to get a drink of water during class time, if needed?
4. Does the school promote water, including providing cups at water access points, promoting water through signage in the cafeteria or hallways, and integrating water as a topic in health or science classes?
5. Does the school have procedures to regularly clean water fountains?
6. Does the school regularly test tap water for lead? Are the results of the tests made available to parents, students, and staff?





## Ideas for Parents

You can be involved in your child's school by **attending** meetings, workshops, or training events offered by the school; **communicating** with school staff and other parents; **volunteering** for school events or in your child's classroom; **reinforcing** healthy messages and practices your child learns at school; **helping** make decisions about health in the school; and **being part** of community activities supported by the school. Here are some specific ideas for how you can support your child's school in providing access to drinking water.

- Work with other parents, students, and a mix of school staff (e.g., physical education teachers, classroom teachers, school nurses, administrators) to develop a campaign to encourage drinking water during the school day.<sup>6</sup>
- Help raise funds to upgrade or install new water dispensers or water fountains at the school.<sup>6</sup>
- E-mail or discuss with other parents the importance of allowing students to carry a water bottle with them during the school day.
- Join the school or district committee (e.g., wellness committee) that sets the policies for health and wellness, and work to include language about water access<sup>5,7</sup> and testing for lead.<sup>6</sup>
- Coordinate efforts to support drinking water with school fundraisers. For example, schools could sell spill proof water bottles as part of a fundraiser.



Check out additional resources for parents related to the school nutrition environment and services, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/P4HS.htm>.

## REFERENCES

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