In Michigan, the PE-Nut program (Physical Education and Nutrition Working Together) developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation has been implemented in 400+ low-income schools throughout the state with amazing outcomes not only for students but also for parents.

**Crucial elements of PE-Nut include:**

- Nutrition educators and teachers work together to provide ongoing education and opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.
- Whole-school involvement so children learn and are encouraged by P.E. teachers, classroom teachers, principals, other staff members as well as the project nutrition educator.
- Inclusion of food tasting in conjunction with the nutrition lessons to allow children to experience healthy foods and apply what they learn to eating situations.
- A link to parents using multiple strategies and resources so information learned and foods tasted at school can have an impact on food shopping practices and foods offered to children.
- Cross-teaching where classroom teachers include physical activity and P.E. teachers integrate healthy eating messages into instruction in the gym.
- Use of evidence-based curricula that has been used effectively in low-income schools.
- Evaluation that is streamlined into the program to identify the value of the program and collect important information that drives a cycle of continuous improvement.

**Physical Education with Nutrition Concepts:** The Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum (EPEC) was developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation. It is research-based and fully aligned with the standards of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (PE). EPEC is a standards-based curriculum that teaches the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable children to be active for life. Unlike physical activity programs, EPEC is a true PE curriculum that provides step-by-step instruction enabling all students to be successful. This model program received the 2002 Award for Excellence in Prevention Research and Research Translation in Chronic Disease from the CDC. An added bonus is that K-5 EPEC includes 136 reinforcing activities that include a nutrition theme. See: [www.epec4kids.com](http://www.epec4kids.com).

**PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS**

**Safe Routes to School (SR2S)** is a program with the goal of increasing physical activity in youth by helping schools make the route to school safe for students to walk or ride their bikes. Walk-to-School Day is a one-day event that promotes walking or biking to school (first Wednesday in October). Find out more about SR2S at [www.saferoutesmichigan.org](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org) or Walk to School Day at [www.saferoutesmichigan.org/w2sd.htm](http://www.saferoutesmichigan.org/w2sd.htm). A guide to promote walking to school is located at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm)
ACES (All Children Exercising Simultaneously) occurs world-wide on the first Wednesday in May. At 10 am, students stop what they are doing and participate in physical activity for at least 20 minutes. ACES brings attention to the importance of activity; an idea kit is available at www.michiganfitness.org

**Classroom Component.** The Healthy Classrooms, Healthy Schools Program consists of eight to ten units. There is one set of materials for use in K-2 classrooms and another for grades 3-5. The focus of the program is on transforming the classroom nutrition environment into a place where students and school staff members learn and practice healthy eating and physical activity habits that will lead to a healthier lifestyle. Some topics include alternatives to using food as a reward, healthy classroom parties/celebrations, a healthy snack policy for classrooms, and positive role modeling by teachers. This program was reviewed by dietitians and pilot-tested by K-5 teachers who were involved in decisions about formatting, content and packaging. The result is a program that will help classroom teachers to create more opportunities for their students to make healthy choices regarding nutrition and physical activity. See: www.pe-nut.org.

**Healthy Classroom Tip Sheets** help teachers plan and implement classroom celebrations that have healthy choices and that include physical activity. There are four of these to promote healthy holiday parties for Halloween, Winter Holiday, Valentines Day and a Spring/Summer outdoor Field Day event.

Health Through Literacy **Classroom Book Sets** are a resource for teachers which includes five grade-specific books that reinforce the healthy eating messages taught in the classroom lessons. The book sets include five to six books, age-appropriate for each grade K-5, with nutrition or physical activity themes. Each book also comes with a tip sheet to enhance the health messages within the books. These tip sheets help teachers to discuss the books with their classes, incorporate physical activity into reading the book, provide a food tasting opportunity for students, and integrate health messages with other areas of the curriculum. See: www.pe-nut.org.

**Fit Bits** are five-ten minute activities for K-5 classroom teachers to use to get kids up and moving. Each activity reinforces either a basic nutrition concept (fruits/veggies, healthy snacks, variety/try new foods, and wash hands before eating) or a personal/social skill (respect for others, cooperation, etc). There are 40 activities per grade level. Find out more at www.epec4kids.com. Some activities use food model cards that can also be ordered at this site.

**School-wide Announcements.** Without the principal’s support, your school-based project could fail. Successful initiatives receive considerable support and actively engage school principals in programing. In PE-Nut schools, the principal starts off each day with a healthy recommendation for students as part of morning announcements. Short articles are provided to insert into the school newsletter or post on the school web site to inform parents about PE-Nut and enlist their support in providing healthy food options in the home and encouraging family physical activity.
School-Wide Event. Family events at school are an important way to showcase the healthy school theme and reach and involve parents. Sample events for students and their families are “March is Healthy Reading and Nutrition Month” or a “School Family Health Day Event.” All classrooms teachers will be encouraged to offer healthy options during classroom parties and celebrations. Tip sheets will be provided for all teachers in the school to give them ideas for how to have a healthy Halloween, Winter Holiday and Valentine’s Day and Spring Field/Health Day event.

Reaching Parents. Multiple strategies and resources are used to get parents on board with healthy eating and inform them about what their children are learning from their classroom and PE teacher.

Health Through Literacy Take-Home Book Bags for K-2 or 3-5 contain books for families to read together, recipes for healthy snacks, and tips sheets with ideas for healthy eating and family physical activity. Each student takes the bag home for a week to enjoy with their family. See: www.pe-nut.org.

Kid-Approved Healthy Snacks is a great way to reach parents of students participating in school-based health initiatives with recipes and information about healthy eating. See: www.pe-nut.org.

Newsletters for students to take home provide information to parents about objectives being taught in PE as well as ideas for being active together. A nutrition message aimed at low-income parents helps dispel myths and correct common misunderstandings about food and nutrition. Parents also learn about the personal/social skills being taught in the PE classrooms and receive hints on how to reinforce those messages at home. The newsletters come in tear pads of 30 newsletters and there are four per year. The newsletters are grade specific for (K-5); there are four different ones for distribution throughout the school year. See: www.pe-nut.org.

A Healthy Snack List can be used by teachers or shared with parents to provide guidance for snacks that children bring to school for themselves or to share with classmates during classroom celebrations. See: www.pe-nut.org.

The MI Model for Health offers modules for each grade level to teach basic nutrition concepts to children. This curriculum is a comprehensive and sequential K-12 health education curriculum that aims to give school-aged children the knowledge and skills needed to practice and maintain healthy behaviors and lifestyles. See: www.emc.cmich.edu.