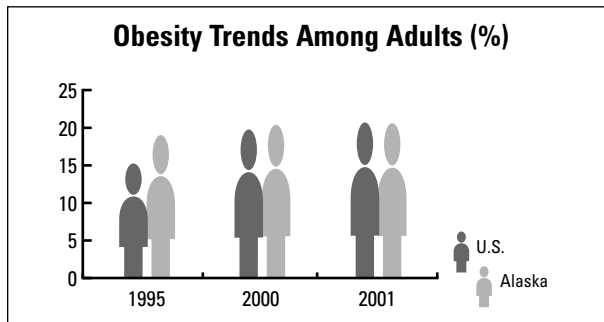


The State of Physical Activity and Nutrition Education in Alaska

According to a 2001 study conducted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 21 percent of Alaska citizens are obese. Not surprisingly, the study found that nearly 69 percent of Alaska adults do not engage in physical activity at the recommended level.

The CDC also reports that nearly half of American youths, ages 12 to 21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis, and participation in all types of physical activity declines as age or grade in school increases.

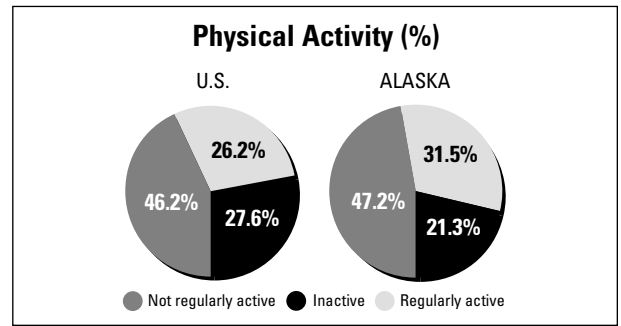
Currently, Alaska has no state standards for physical education and no means for assessment. Physical education is only required at the high school level where one unit is required to graduate. All other school levels mandate physical education and make time decisions at the local district.



AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR FITNESS AND NUTRITION

The American Council for Fitness and Nutrition (ACFN) is a group of food, beverage, and consumer products companies; not-for-profit organizations; and trade associations working together to improve the health of all Americans, particularly youth, by encouraging a healthy balance between fitness and nutrition. This approach can help Americans achieve and maintain overall good health.

The cornerstone of all ACFN initiatives is the idea that lasting solutions to the nation's obesity problem must be based on sound science and behavioral research. Such policies are likely to help parents and their children develop eating and exercise habits that lead to a healthier life.



ACFN action areas.

ACFN is working to build a consensus among industry leaders, public policy makers, and public health officials about effective strategies for improving Americans' health and wellness. ACFN joins with private and public entities to promote programs consistent with this mission.

Specifically, the Council supports:

Physical activity in schools. While most states have mandated physical education requirements on different levels, only one state — Illinois — currently has mandatory daily physical activity for all students from kindergarten through high school. Although exemptions must be made for physical disabilities and the like, ACFN supports daily physical activity for 30 minutes in all schools. The Council supports efforts at the federal and state levels — such as full funding for the U.S. Department of Education's Carol M. White Physical Education Program — to increase physical activity available to schoolchildren.

Nutrition education for children, teachers, and parents. Nutrition information should be covered in school curricula, and resources for parents should be available. Children need to be educated about putting together the components of a balanced diet, and that information needs to be reinforced at home as well as in school.

Applied research on how to achieve appropriate behavior changes. We must find solutions that people can fit into their everyday lifestyles.

Resources to Fight Obesity and Encourage Physical Activity

In Alaska...

- **Walk to School Day** aims to promote physical activity through walking as well as awareness for safety, health and respect for the environment.
- Guided by a statewide coalition of agencies, organizations, and individuals **Take Heart Alaska** is program geared towards increasing heart health and focusing on prevention of obesity and overweight by working to create a healthy community environment for all Alaskans.

Nationwide...

- The **5 A Day Better Health Program** is a national effort building public awareness and granting excellence awards to encourage Americans to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables everyday as an integral part of developing a healthy lifestyle. (www.5aday.com)
- **Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)** is a joint campaign combining classroom, cafeteria, and physical education and aiming to teach elementary students about the importance of incorporating regular exercise into their daily lives and choosing the best foods to meet their nutritional needs. The effort hinges on the coordination of four components: health education, physical education, nutrition services, and parent involvement.
- **Eat Smart. Play Hard.™** is a national public awareness and education campaign based on the dietary guidelines for Americans that is designed to effect eating and physical activity behaviors in order to improve the long-term health of America's youth.

Put Some PEP in Your Step!

Carol M. White Physical Education Program (PEP) Grants range from \$50,000 to \$720,000 and funds can be used to purchase equipment and train teachers.

Approximately \$70 Million in grants were distributed in 2004 to support innovative approaches to health and physical activity that will equip students with the knowledge to be healthy and physically active for a lifetime. All grantees were required to develop programs in conjunction with State standards that addressed preparation or training for staff in one or more of the following program elements:

- Fitness education and assessments to help students understand improve or maintain their physical well-being.
- Instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities designed to enhance the physical, mental and social or emotional development of every student.
- Development of, and instruction in, cognitive concepts about motor skills and physical fitness that support a lifelong healthy lifestyle.
- Opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through participation in physical activity.
- Instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition.
- Opportunities for professional development for teachers of physical education to stay abreast of the latest research, issues, and trends in the field of physical education.

This year, three Alaska organizations received grants totaling \$1,102,707, in comparison to \$765,304 received by four organizations in 2003. Now in its fourth year, the PEP program has served as a key funding source for Alaska schools and community organizations.

Alaska PEP grant recipients include:

- Juneau: City and Borough of Juneau School District
- King Salmon: Lake and Peninsula School District
- Skagway: Skagway Schools