

Take the Fit Kids Challenge

Dear Educator:

Westchester County government is joining forces with APOGEE Pilates & Wellness Centers, a new Pilates-based wellness center, to kick-off the APOGEE Fit Kids Challenge and encourage students and their parents to practice healthy activities at home and in school this spring.

It's an extension of the county's BeFit Westchester program launched in 2004 to combat the growing epidemic of obesity in adults and children. The BeFit concept is not only to get people to eat smarter and get more exercise, but to hold events and programs – like the Fit Kids Challenge – that encourage them to stick to their fitness promise.

To participate in the challenge, all you need to do is to let us know how many copies of the enclosed do-it-yourself activity guide you need, distribute it to your students and collect the activity logs by May 15. Schools with the highest participation rate will be recognized at an event to take place sometime before the end of the school year. In addition, school administrators, teachers, staff and parents from the winning school will be offered a complimentary week membership to APOGEE's new White Plains center to further their fitness goals.

In the APOGEE Fit Kids Challenge brochure, students can award themselves points for such things as engaging in physical activity, limiting their TV and gaming time and eating healthy snacks, which are key to preventing obesity. The program engages parents in the process by asking them to sign off on their accomplishments.

As a former educator and an advocate for eating healthy and staying active, I believe that physical fitness is an important part of the work we do to prepare our children for the future. Wellness initiatives offer tremendous benefits for children's cognitive and social development as well as their health.

It would also be helpful if you would share this communication with your PTA Presidents, so that they can reinforce the importance of this wellness message with their fellow parents.

Now is an excellent time to join our Fit Kids program. Become a Fit Kids school and Health Department professionals will help you develop fun activities for your students and make sustainable changes at your school that promote healthy lifestyles. Join the nearly 100 Fit Kids schools and receive prizes, positive attention and nutritional resources. Click on the link below to see what all the buzz is about: <http://www.westchestergov.com/health/FitKids.htm>

To learn more about The APOGEE Fit Kids Challenge, call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000.

Sincerely,



Andrew J. Spano
County Executive