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## **Play Every Day, Healthy Futures push to get 200 schools in physical activity challenge**

*One out of four Alaska public elementary children participates in the free statewide program*

ANCHORAGE — The state's [Play Every Day](#) campaign and its nonprofit partner, the [Alaska Sports Hall of Fame](#), will ramp up student participation in the Healthy Futures Challenge by challenging themselves to get 200 elementary schools – half the public elementary schools in Alaska – to sign up for the spring Challenge this month.

Elementary schools can sign up [online](#) for the spring Challenge between Dec. 9 and Dec 19. Parents can get involved by encouraging school staff to sign their schools up and by joining their kids in taking the challenge to make physical activity a priority. The spring Challenge will run February through April 2015.

“Getting half the elementary schools in Alaska involved in the challenge would be a milestone for us,” said Harlow Robinson, executive director of the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame and Healthy Futures. “Every year, this program has helped more kids get excited about playing outside, crossing finish lines in fun runs, and just feeling good about physical activity. Building that sense of accomplishment and fun is what we’re all about.”

[Healthy Futures](#) runs two challenge periods each school year. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade can join the challenge by tracking their physical activity outside of gym class on log sheets and turning them in for prizes. School and student participation is free, but schools need to sign up starting Dec. 9 at [the Healthy Futures school sign-up page](#).

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) supports Healthy Futures through the Obesity Prevention and Control Program's Play Every Day campaign. Play Every Day encourages kids to get 60 minutes of physical activity every day to help maintain a healthy weight. One out of three Alaska kids is overweight or obese.

The first 200 schools that sign up will receive pencil boxes with Play Every Day and Healthy Futures pencils that kids can use to fill out their activity logs. This spring's prizes for kids include a jump rope, kickball, and a toy that catches and releases a ball, plus a chance to win larger prizes in a drawing at the end of the challenge period. Schools also have a chance to win awards for physical activity equipment.

“Getting more schools signed up for the challenge means getting more kids playing every day and developing healthy habits,” said Ann Potempa, coordinator of Play Every Day. “Kids who get to learn and experience the value of physical activity make our families and communities healthier.”

The number of children doing the challenge continues to grow. In the spring of 2011, before DHSS partnered with Healthy Futures, 36 Alaska schools and 1,342 students participated. This fall, more than 170 schools and 18,000 kids participated – about 1 out of 4 Alaska public elementary school children.

For more information about the challenge, participating schools, and the importance of physical activity, visit [www.playeveryday.alaska.gov](http://www.playeveryday.alaska.gov). For more information about Healthy Futures, go to [www.healthyfuturesak.org](http://www.healthyfuturesak.org).

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