

## Importance of Physical Activity

Regular physical activity participation leads to health benefits. Choosing to be physically active on a regular basis (i.e., daily) is a defense against a number of diseases such as heart disease, some types of cancer, diabetes, and depression. It is reasonable to assume that children and youth who develop habits of regular physical activity now will be more likely to participate in physical activity as they age. Now is the time!



## How to Measure Physical Activity

Physical activity participation can be measured by using a pedometer, a device that calculates the number of steps a child takes during a specified time period (pictured to the left).

## Step Counts of Children & Youth

Research has been conducted to determine the number of step counts children and adolescents take during a day. The Mesa Public School district has allowed researchers from ASU to use pedometers to measure their students' average daily step count patterns (results shown below).

### Roosevelt School District

No research studies have examined students' step count patterns in the Roosevelt School District in South Phoenix. Conducting this kind of research would provide valuable information to school administrators and teachers about the physical activity participation rates among their students.

Grade	Males	Females
4 <sup>th</sup>	12,788	10,389
5 <sup>th</sup>	13,521	11,311
6 <sup>th</sup>	14,174	11,427
7 <sup>th</sup>	11,560	9,880
8 <sup>th</sup>	10,962	10,105

### Where do children and youth get step counts?

Daily step counts (DSC) are steps accumulated throughout the course of a 24-hour period (this includes steps obtained before, during, and after school from the time the child wakes up in the morning until he or she goes to bed at night; many students play organized sports or athletics; this is where these types of activities would be measured).

School step counts (SSC) are steps accumulated while at school (this includes recess time, going to lunch, taking a class walking break, traveling to and from class, participating in PE class, etc.)

Physical education step counts (PESC) are steps accumulated during PE class.

Obtaining information about where students accumulate step counts can aid administrators, classroom teachers, and physical education teachers in preparing and delivering meaningful content regarding physical activity.