

# Physical activity even more critical as students return to the classroom

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The American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, and the National Football League (NFL), are doubling down on kids physically active

through NFL PLAY 60 as students return to the classroom following remote, distant and hybrid learning due to COVID-19. Now in its 15th year, the NFL PLAY 60 program establishes healthy habits and reduces sedentary behaviors in kids, which is key to immediate and long-term health benefits that can play a role in the classroom experience.

"Now that school is back in session, moving more is even more important following more than a year at home away from [physical education classes](#), [team sports](#) and daily recess," says said Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., MPH, the American Heart Association's chief medical officer for prevention. "Research has shown healthy behaviors are important in the classroom as active kids learn better. When kids are active, they focus more, think more clearly, react to stress more calmly, and perform and behave better in the classroom."

In a recent scientific statement released by the American Heart Association, data continues to show poor cardiorespiratory fitness in youth, which includes cognitive and academic functions. As children return to the classroom, it is important for parents and educators to prioritize physical activity for immediate and long-term health.

Rooted in science, NFL PLAY 60, helps children to develop healthy physical and mental health habits for a better chance of a healthy adulthood. The program encourages kids to get a minimum of 60 minutes of vigorous physical activity each day to meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

"For the last 15 years, NFL PLAY 60 has encouraged youth to get active and lead healthier lifestyles, and that mission is even more crucial this year as we're still navigating through a pandemic with children returning to school," said Anna Isaacson, the NFL's SVP of social responsibility. "The American Heart Association has been an incredible collaborator

since the inception of PLAY 60 and the NFL is looking forward to continuing our work together to help educate youth on the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle."

The American Heart Association and the NFL will continue to provide free resources to support parents and educators in making physical activity fun and engaging. Resources available now:

- Powered by [GoNoodle](#), a landing page of videos and activities to help kids get 60 minutes of movement each day along side fun animated characters.
- [NFL PLAY 60 App](#)- The free NFL PLAY 60 app helps kids get more movement throughout the day. The PLAY 60 app allows users to control personalized avatars onscreen with their own physical movement. The app is available for iOS and Android devices.
- [NFL PLAY 60 Exercise Library](#)- In collaboration with the 32 NFL clubs, the first-ever NFL PLAY 60 library features kid-friendly exercises to help kids to get their recommended 60-minutes of daily physical activity.

The NFL and the American Heart Association have teamed up since 2006 to inspire kids through a fun and engaging way to get physically active. The impact of [physical activity](#) on overall mental and physical wellness are essential to help children grow to reach their full potential. Additional NFL PLAY 60 resources can be found online at [heart.org/nflplay60](http://heart.org/nflplay60).

Provided by American Heart Association

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