

## WHY USE THE SCHOOL HEALTH INDEX?

Promoting healthy and safe behaviors among students is an important part of the fundamental mission of schools, which is to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become healthy and productive adults. Improving student health and safety can

- increase students' capacity to learn,
- reduce absenteeism, and
- improve physical fitness and mental alertness.

The School Health Index (SHI) is a self-assessment and planning guide that will enable you to

- identify the strengths and weaknesses of your school's policies and programs for promoting health and safety,
- develop an action plan for improving student health and safety, and
- involve teachers, parents, students, and the community in improving school policies, programs, and services.

Your school's results from using the SHI can help you include health promotion activities in your overall School Improvement Plan. There is growing recognition of the relationship between health and academic performance, and completing the SHI can become one of your school's important *No Child Left Behind* educational reform activities.

Look at what administrators and staff are saying about the SHI:

- *"The School Health Index was easy to use and enabled us to clearly identify what is working and what needs to be improved."*
- *"It's a real energizer-it makes you think of coming up with ideas which are relatively easy to implement."*
- *"The school staff had a positive attitude toward the Index. They liked the comprehensive view of health promotion in the Index, including the use of many different types of stakeholders."*
- *"Many teams became excited as they went through the process...parents became deeply involved and devoted to implementing the recommendations."*

The SHI is a simple, straight forward tool that gives administrators, staff, parents, and students a chance to get involved and work together to create a healthier school. Schools across the country have already made dramatic improvements based on the SHI!

Remember: *A small investment of time can pay big dividends in improving students' well-being, readiness to learn, and prospects for a healthy life!*