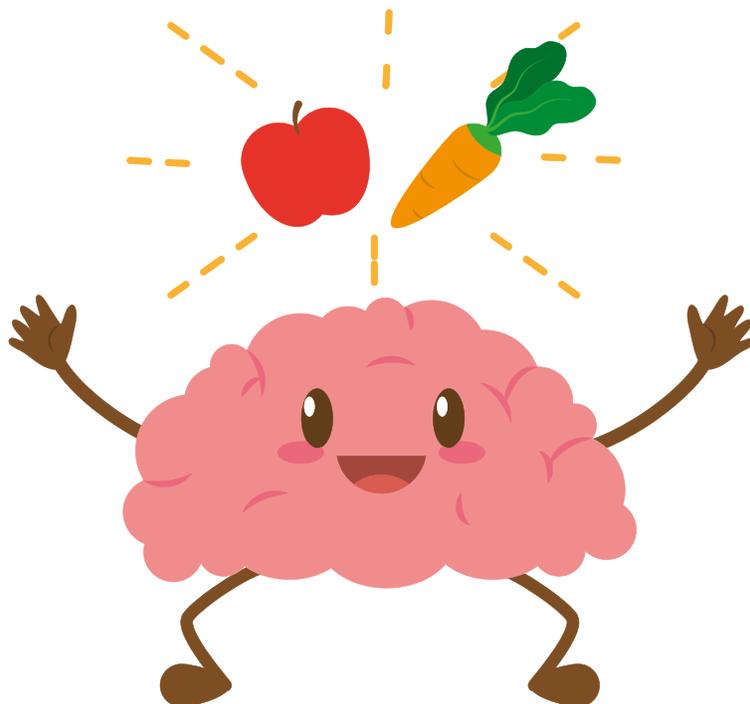




ESSEX COUNTY OFFICE OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
MANAGEMENT

HEALTHY MONDAY'S TOOL KIT: SEPTEMBER 2025



900 Bloomfield Avenue
Verona, NJ 07044



Welcome Back to

School!





Healthy Monday Campaign – 2025–2026 School Year

Welcome to a brand new school year! The start of the year is the perfect time to refresh routines, set healthy habits, and prepare your mind and body for success. Whether you're stepping into the classroom for the first time or returning as a seasoned student, this is your opportunity to start strong and stay strong.

Over the next four weeks, we'll explore practical ways to:

- Build healthy daily habits
- Fuel your brain and body for learning
- Stay active and focused
- Manage stress and maintain strong connections

Our weekly lessons are designed for both K–5 students and 6–12 students, with fun, age-appropriate activities that make healthy living a natural part of your school day. From energizing morning routines to strategies for keeping your mind sharp, these lessons will help you feel your best in the classroom and beyond.

Let's make this school year the healthiest, happiest, and most successful one yet. Every Monday is a new chance to set the tone for the week — let's use it to start strong, stay motivated, and build habits that will last all year long.

Here's to a great 2025–2026 school year — let's get moving, stay sharp, and be our best!

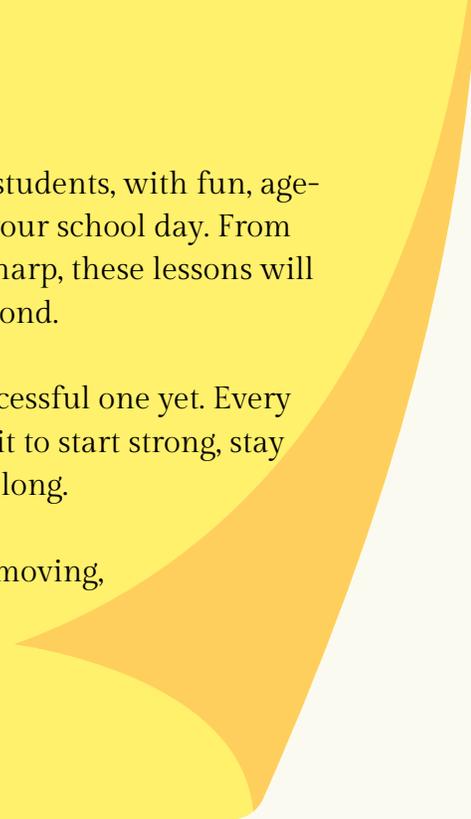


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WHAT IS THE HEALTHY MONDAY CAMPAIGN?



Even though we are encouraged to stay healthy every day. The healthy Monday campaign is Healthy Monday, a public health initiative that encourages individuals and organizations to commit to healthy behaviors every Monday to help prevent chronic diseases.

From the Essex County, Healthy Monday will focus on children and their parent and providing them with a toolkit every Monday that will focus on a different topics per month that are pertinent to children.

Welcome to the Essex County Healthy Monday Campaign for the month of September with Getting Back Into the Routine of School being the main topic.

LESSON 01:

Getting back into the school routine starts with healthy habits, and one of the most important is creating a consistent schedule for both night and morning. Whether you're just starting school or moving into higher grades, a regular routine sets the tone for a focused, organized, and positive day. A good night's sleep helps students of all ages stay alert, remember what they've learned, and feel ready to take on challenges. It also makes mornings less stressful and helps you start the day with energy.

Begin by setting a consistent bedtime and wake-up time, even on weekends. Aim for 8–10 hours of sleep each night, and if you've been staying up late over the summer, shift your bedtime earlier little by little until you're back on schedule. Turn off phones, TVs, and tablets at least one hour before bed to give your mind time to wind down. Doing something calming before sleep – like reading, stretching, or listening to quiet music – can make it easier to fall asleep. Prepare for the next day by laying out your clothes and packing your bag at night.

In the morning, focus on starting strong. Take care of personal hygiene, and eat a healthy breakfast, even if it's something quick like fruit, toast, or a granola bar. Include a short grounding activity, such as stretching, taking a few deep breaths, or listening to a favorite song, to help you feel centered before the day begins. By keeping a healthy morning and nighttime routine, you'll boost your focus, reduce stress, and set yourself up for success in school and beyond.

Wake Up Excited for School!

Good sleep at night means a great school day!

Restful Sleep Tips

- Turn off screens 1 hour before bed
- Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day
- Do something calm before bed, like reading a book

Why Bedtime Matters

- Helps your body know when it's time to sleep and wake up
- Makes falling asleep easier and waking up easier
- Keeps you in a good mood all day

Sleep Hygiene

- Use your bed just for sleeping
- Keep your room dark (use a nightlight if needed)
- Do the same bedtime steps every night



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RESET YOUR ROUTINE

How to transition from late summer nights and sleeping in late to early school mornings

Why Does a Routine Matter?

Healthy morning/night time habits make for a more focused and organized day!



Night Time: Get Rest!

- Get 8–10 hours of sleep
- Slowly shift your bedtime earlier if you've been staying up late
- Put screens away 1 hour before bed
- Lay out clothes and pack your bag



Morning Time: Get Fuel!

- Take care of hygiene
- Eat breakfast, even if it's quick (granola bar, fruit, toast)
- Ground yourself: stretch, take a deep breath, listen to music



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LESSON 02:

Mondays are the perfect time to reset, refresh, and start your week with healthy habits that keep your body and mind at their best. The way you begin your morning can shape your energy, focus, and mood for the rest of the day—so let's build a routine that fuels success.

Start with a good night's sleep. Aim for 8–10 hours so you can wake up feeling happy, energized, and ready to take on the day. Sleep gives your body time to rest and your brain a chance to recharge, making it easier to think clearly and make good decisions.

Next, fuel your body with breakfast. Skipping the first meal of the day can leave you tired and distracted, but eating a healthy breakfast gives you steady energy for school, sports, and anything else on your schedule. Even if you're in a rush, choose quick options like yogurt, fruit, or a granola bar. When you have more time, go for a balanced plate with fruits or vegetables, whole grains, and protein like eggs or nut butter.

Keep your body moving to wake up your muscles and get your blood flowing. Try doing three simple stretches, a quick dance, or even some jumping jacks to boost your energy. Movement first thing in the morning can improve your focus and help you feel alert all day long.

Don't forget to stay hydrated. Water keeps your body working well and your brain sharp. Aim for at least 6–8 cups each day, and drink more if you're playing sports or spending time outside in the heat.

Finally, take a moment for positivity. Saying something kind to yourself—like “I'm ready for a great day” or “I'm smart and capable”—can lift your mood and set a confident tone for whatever's ahead.

By building a morning routine that includes enough rest, a balanced breakfast, movement, hydration, and self-kindness, you give yourself the best chance to feel refreshed, focused, and prepared—not just for Monday, but for every day of the week. Healthy choices in the morning create a ripple effect, helping you stay energized, motivated, and ready to shine.

RISE & SHINE



Start your day with healthy morning habits!

BUILDING THE PERFECT MORNING ROUTINE:

Why it matters: A consistent morning routine helps you start off your day feeling refreshed, focused and prepared

Step 1: Get Good Sleep

Sleep 8-10 hours so you wake up happy and full of energy

Step 2: Eat Breakfast

Eat something yummy and healthy, like eggs, yogurt, or a banana

Step 3: Move Your Body

Do 3 stretches, a quick dance, or jumping jacks to wake up

Step 4: Say Something Nice

Tell yourself: "I'm ready for a great day!" or "I'm smart and kind."

Step 5: Get Ready to Go

Take a deep breath, grab your stuff, and you're off to school!

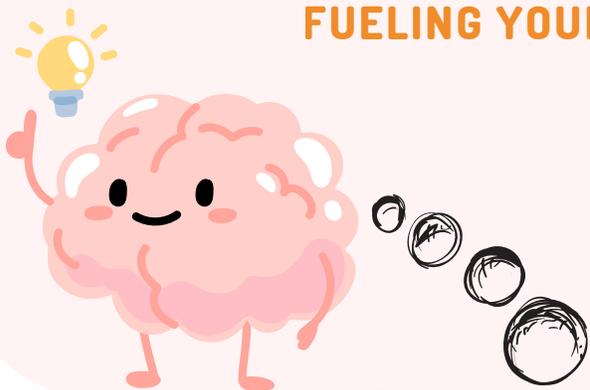


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BRAIN FOOD 101

FUELING YOUR BRAIN AND BODY FOR SUCCESS



WHY DOES FOOD MATTER?

Eating consistent and balanced meals gives you energy to function throughout the day

Don't Skip Breakfast (Even If You're Rushing)

- Quick meals like yogurt, fruit, or granola bars

Stay Hydrated 
Aim for at least 6–8 cups of water a day (more if you're in sports or it's hot out)

Eat a **BALANCED** Meal -

Look for a mix of:

-  Fruits/veggies
-  Whole grains
-  Protein
-  Water



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LESSON 03:

Success in school starts with healthy habits—for both your mind and body. Set yourself up for strong study sessions by doing homework at the same time each day, starting with the most challenging tasks while your brain is fresh. Work in focused bursts of 20–30 minutes, then take short breaks to recharge. Choose a quiet, well-lit study space that’s organized and free from distractions, keeping all your supplies in one spot so you’re ready to go.

Just as important, keep moving! Exercise boosts blood flow to your brain, helping you think faster, remember more, and stay focused in class. Whether it’s joining a sport, walking or biking to school, stretching, or trying active hobbies like dancing, skateboarding, or hiking, aim to move every day. Even quick movement—like a song’s worth of dancing or a few jumping jacks—can help you feel more alert and ready to learn.

Balance is key. Limit screen time during homework and after school by setting timers, and trade scrolling for activities that get your body going—like playing outside, shooting hoops, or taking a walk with friends. When you finish studying, give your brain a chance to rest with fun, active breaks that keep your energy up. By combining smart study strategies with regular movement, you’ll stay sharp, energized, and ready to be your best in and out of the classroom. Small, consistent choices today can lead to big successes tomorrow—so start building those habits now!



Be a Study Superstar!

Smart study habits for school success!



Homework & Study Plan

- Do your homework at the same time every day
- Take short breaks every 20-30 minutes
- Do the hardest homework first while your brain is still fresh



Balance Screen Time

- Put screens away during study time
- Limit screen time by setting a timer on your devices
- Move your body or play outside after screen time

Smart Study Space

- Find a quiet spot away from noise and toys
- Keep all your school supplies in one place
- Use a comfy chair and good lighting
- Make sure your space is well organized and clean



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GET MOVING, STAY SHARP

WHY MOVING MATTERS FOR YOUR BRAIN



- Exercise increases blood flow to your brain, giving it more oxygen and nutrients.
- Active students often have better memory, faster thinking and improved concentration in class.

WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE EVERY DAY

- Join a sport: basketball, soccer, track, swimming
- Quick breaks: stretch, do jumping jacks, or dance to one song between study sessions
- Walk or bike to school or around your neighborhood
- Active hobbies: dance challenges, skateboarding, yoga, or hiking



CUT DOWN SCREEN TIME AFTER SCHOOL

- Too much sitting slows your brain and body
- Try setting a timer; for every 30 minutes of screen time, do 5–10 minutes of movement
- Swap scrolling for activities that keep you moving—like walking with friends, playing sports, or helping others



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LESSON 04:

Being your best all year means finding the right balance between school, play, and rest so that both your body and mind stay strong and happy. It's important to make time for the things you enjoy—whether that's playing a favorite game, trying something new, or simply being outdoors in the fresh air. Daily movement keeps you energized and boosts your mood, so aim for at least 30 minutes of active play each day. Mix it up with different games each week, invite friends to join you, and remember to keep a positive attitude. A smile, a laugh, and a little fun can go a long way in keeping your days bright.

When it comes to schoolwork, focus on working steadily rather than rushing. Break big assignments into smaller, more manageable steps, and give yourself short breaks to stay fresh. If you get stuck, don't be afraid to ask for help—teachers, friends, and family are there to support you. Staying organized with your time and tasks will help prevent that “last-minute” stress and leave more space in your day for fun and relaxation.

For older students, balancing responsibilities also means knowing how to manage stress and stay connected with others. Checking in with yourself helps you recognize when you might be feeling overwhelmed—signs like constant tiredness, trouble concentrating, irritability, or avoiding activities you usually enjoy can be clues. By using tools like planners to track homework and deadlines, scheduling time for short breaks, and practicing calming techniques such as deep breathing, you can keep stress in check. Don't forget that having a support system matters—whether it's a trusted adult, a teacher, a counselor, a coach, or a friend who listens without judgment. Asking for help isn't a weakness; it's a sign of strength and self-awareness.

By combining healthy playtime, focused study habits, and strategies for managing stress, you'll not only do better in school but also feel more confident and capable in everyday life. Building these habits now will set you up for success all year long—and for years to come.

Be Your Best All Year Round!

Healthy Habits for a Strong Body & Mind

To be your best all year, it's important to find the right balance between school, play, and rest. Here are some tips to keep your body and mind strong and happy!

Schoolwork: Focus, Don't Rush!

- Break homework into small steps.
- Take breaks to stay fresh.
- Ask for help if needed!



Playtime: Move Your Body and Have Fun!



- Play outside for 30 minutes.
- Try new games each week.
- Get your body moving!

Stay Positive and Have Fun!

- Make time for what you love.
- Keep a happy attitude.
- Smile and enjoy the day!



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Check In, Don't Check Out

Managing Stress & Staying Connected

Why Checking In Matters

- Everyone feels stressed sometimes — especially when adjusting to new school routines
- Checking in with yourself and others helps prevent burnout and keeps you feeling supported



Recognize the Signs of Stress or Burnout

- Feeling tired all the time
- Trouble focusing or remembering things
- Irritability or mood swings
- Avoiding friends or activities you usually enjoy

Strategies for Managing Academic Pressure

- Plan ahead: Use a calendar or planner to track homework and deadlines
- Take breaks: Short walks, stretching, or listening to music can recharge your mind
- Breathe deeply: Try inhaling for 4 counts, holding for 4, and exhaling for 4 to calm your body



Find Your Support System

- Trusted adults: Teachers, school counselors, coaches, or family members can help
- Peer support: Talk to friends who listen without judgment
- Remember — asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness



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