

What is

Generation Healthy Kids?



Generation Healthy Kids is a research project in schools and local communities aiming to promote health, well-being and learning among young school children.

We develop and test a comprehensive, multi-faceted intervention which aims to ensure strong foundations for supporting healthy and active childhoods. We have a focus on countering social inequality in health, and the intervention seeks to benefit the health and well-being of all children.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN

Generation Healthy Kids involves approximately 2000 children in grades 1 to 3 at 23 schools in Denmark over a period of two years. Twelve of the participating schools are intervention schools, and eleven are control schools.

The participating schools are listed here.

At the twelve intervention schools, activities are implemented focusing on diet, physical activity, sleep, and screen media habits – both at the school and in the surrounding local community. In contrast, no intervention is implemented at the eleven control schools.

At both intervention and control schools, we collect data on children's health and well-being three times during the project period. By comparing the data from the intervention schools with that from the control schools, we investigate whether the intervention has an effect on the children's health, well-being and learning. As of 1 February 2024, 47 employees are working on Generation Healthy Kids, most of whom are researchers.

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

The intervention aims to involve all arenas around the children influencing their health and well-being – families, schools, after-school clubs, leisure time and sports organizations, local NGOs and supermarkets.

Our main focus is to create structural changes to make healthier choices easier for both children and their families. All activities are developed and adjusted to fit the local conditions at each school and in each local area.

Activities implemented at the twelve intervention schools include:

- A free, healthy school lunch for children in the involved grades for two school years
- Extra physical activity in the school curriculum 3 x 40 minutes per week (following the FIT FIRST 10 concept)
- Parent workshops on children's sleep and digital media habits
- Offers of family events and other activities for children and parents.

Intervention areas

SCHOOL MEALS

A central element of Generation Healthy Kids is a school meal program four days per week. The school meals are based on the official climate-friendly dietary guidelines, and children are actively involved in serving, presenting and assembling the meals. We also focus on the education and involvement of teachers and pedagogues.

In the school meal program, we emphasize that eating together as a class strengthens the children's well-being and sense of community. Our motto is: "Children who eat together, stick together!". At the same time, children become familiar with healthy foods and develop food competences and food courage.

The school meals are provided by ØJN Skolemad

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

As part of the physical activity intervention, the twelve intervention schools implement 3 x 40 minutes of extra physical activity per week in the school curriculum. The activities are fun, inclusive, and involve vigorous, high-intense physical activity based on common sports that can also be practiced during leisure time.

The intervention uses the FIT FIRST 10 concept which is developed for Danish primary school in collaboration with Danish sporting associations. We work closely with teachers and pedagogues to promote physical activity for all children during recess and in after-school clubs. Local sports associations are invited to be a part of these efforts.

SLEEP AND DIGITAL MEDIA HABITS

The aim of the sleep and digital media intervention is to promote good sleep practices among school children, foster good screen habits in families and classes, and reduce the gap between parents' and children's perceptions of digital life. We will work on this by interventions aimed at both parents and children.

Parents will be invited for workshops and receive recommendations and inspiration sheets. The children will receive teaching sessions on screen media and sleep in the classroom using child-friendly materials and communication.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In six selected local communities (Kerteminde, Nordfyn, Høje-Taastrup, Glostrup, Rødovre and Frederiksberg) we invite a broad range of local stakeholders to be involved in the project. This includes representatives from the municipality, schools, after-school clubs, the school board, local sports- and leisure time organizations, cultural organizations, social housing organizations, and

local supermarkets. The goal is to create local involvement, ownership and initiative to promote wellbeing and health for the local children and their parents. We also collaborate with supermarkets on developing and testing interventions to promote sales of healthy foods, e.g. fruits, vegetables and wholegrain products.



Partners in Generation Healthy Kids

Generation Healthy Kids is a partnership between:

- Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, Copenhagen University
- Department of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark
- National Institute of Public Health, University of Southern Denmark.
- Center for Clinical Research and Prevention, Bispebjerg-Frederiksberg Hospital
- Department of Prevention, Health Promotion and Society, Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen.

Generation Healthy Kids is conducted from April 2022 to April 2026. The intervention is implemented over two school years, from August 2023 to June 2025.

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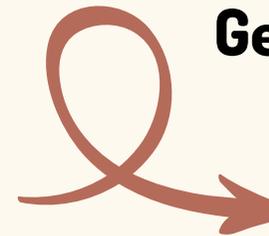
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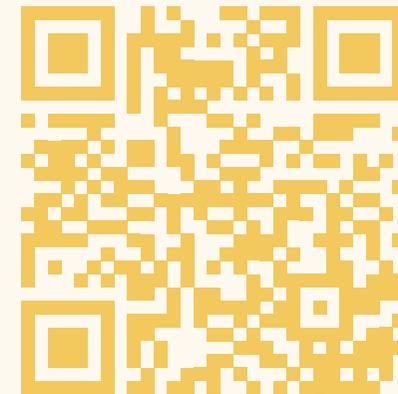
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