



Step Into Action! School Based Program



What is *pahl*?

pahl (Physical Activity and Healthy Living) is an initiative created to promote healthy active living to individuals with an intellectual disability (ID). Like every Canadian, people with an ID need to take `action` to become healthier and more physically fit.

The primary goal of ***pahl*** is to enhance the ability of athletes to train and compete, and empower people with an ID to invest in their overall health and wellbeing.

To achieve this goal, ***pahl*** offers a variety programs and resources catering to the Physical Activity and Healthy Living needs of all our stakeholders (i.e., athletes, students, coaches, teachers, parents, volunteers, and care-givers).). One program that ***pahl*** is excited to offer is **Step Into Action!**

What is Step Into Action?

Step Into Action is a program designed to increase the physical activity levels of students by taking a `Step` challenge. The `Step` component of the program includes any type of activity that can be measured by a pedometer, such as: walking, jogging, running, participating in sports and dancing.

On the **Step Into Action** website (step.specialolympicsontario.com):

- **Students** can track their steps, track their nutrition and visually see their progress over time!
- **Teachers** can download nutrition and physical activity resources, and also, track the progress of all participating students!

The **Step Into Action** program supplies pedometers and resources for teachers to download online. These resources are designed to educate the participants about goal setting, nutrition and physical fitness; with the ultimate goal of helping them along the path of living an active and healthy lifestyle.

Finally, **Step Into Action** aims to develop the participants skills in the areas of: goal setting, goal achievement, responsibility, accountability, and computer literacy.



Step Into Action in Schools

In October of 2005 the Education Minister announced a new mandate called DPA (Daily Physical Activity). This new program ensures students in the elementary program receive 20 minutes of continuous moderate to vigorous exercise per day to promote learning and health. Although DPA is an elementary mandate, secondary teachers have had great success with their students after implementing the Step Into Action program in their classrooms last year.

The Step Into Action program is designed to meet the needs of both elementary and secondary students regardless of whether or not they are using it for DPA. The program offers a general framework that is often a starting block for educators to modify to create a framework that is functional for them. Each session involves a proper stretching period, warm up, mini health lesson and stepping activity.

Typically, walking is the stepping activity of choice enabling students of all ability levels to participate as a group. The ministry mandates that DPA is 20 minutes of continuous exercise so teachers can add the non-activity components (i.e., warm-up, health lesson) where they see fit. Generally this is done by adding to the time allotted for DPA – an extra 10 minutes should suffice or including it in the students physical education period.

Pedometers are provided so students can track their steps per session and monitor their improvement. Teachers may choose to allow their students to wear their pedometers all day or simply during the allotted time for the program. This initiative is meant to supplement the DPA program but can also be integrated into the Physical Education period. Encouraging students to track their progress during any physical activity will help them be more aware of their bodies and bodily changes as well as encourage participation and increase commitment. Given the ease at which the Step Into Action program can be modified, it can be done one on one with a student and peer or in a large group. Teachers should feel free to take the foundational pieces of each session (stretch, warm up, health tip, activity) and integrate the activities in the most useful way to benefit you and your students.



Role of Educators, Parents or Volunteers

A. Program Leaders

For the purpose of this program, the person who creates a Step Program for his or her students is called a **Program Leader**. A **Program Leader** can be a teacher, parent or volunteer. This individual is responsible for:

1. Creating a Step Challenge for his or her students,
2. Contact Special Olympics Ontario ensuring your program receives pedometers and resources
3. Ensuring his or her students keep track of their steps online,
4. Encouraging and motivating his or her students to achieve their personalized physical activity and nutrition goals.

B. How to Register and Create a Step Program

Start by visiting the Step Into Action website step.specialolympicsontario.com. Once on the home page, follow the steps below:

1. To register and create a Step Program for your students, click on the Blue button— Create A Program,
 - Once the program is created, a link to that specific program is given to you (the Program Leader),
 - The link can then be sent to each of your students,
 - The students can then simply click on that link and register themselves on their own or with the assistance from another teacher, parent or volunteer,
2. To download available Step Into Action Resources, click on the Red button— Resources.



Role of Students

A. Students / Step Participants

A **Step Participant** can be a primary or secondary school student with an ID. These students are responsible to `step into action` and record their steps and nutrition on a daily basis.

B. How to Register

1. A student can be registered in two ways:
 - i. Send your students the link given to you after creating the Step Program, OR
 - ii. Have the student click on the Green Button— [Track Your Steps](#)
 - i. If the athlete uses this way to register, they will have to choose the program created by his or her Program Leader
2. Once registered, the student can track their steps every day and view their progress!

C. Step Recommendations

In order for the participants to receive maximum benefits from this program, it is suggested the participant is `stepping` for 30 minutes per day, increasing the duration or intensity on a weekly basis. This time allotment is only a recommendation as each participant's needs, abilities and progress will vary from participant to participant.



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