

## Winning The Race Against Childhood Obesity

(NAPSA)—Overweight children who shed extra pounds could avoid a number of health issues while also boosting their self-esteem.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more children are obese today than in the past, with more than 12 percent of kids ages 2 to 5, 17 percent of those 6 to 11 and nearly 18 percent of youth now reportedly obese.

Many of these youngsters are more likely to have risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease—such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes—than are other children, and they are more likely to become obese adults.

Fortunately, a unique program could help curb these disturbing trends. Called the ING Run For Something Better, it's meant to help kids learn that physical activity can be fun, by providing



### A unique program helps fight childhood obesity—before it starts.

itself to personal goal setting and personal-best accomplishments. Furthermore, running can be a low-cost activity that requires very little equipment. All that is needed is adequate running shoes, comfortable clothes, a safe place to run and water.

#### Making A Difference

This year, the program is providing 50 \$2,000 grants to schools looking to establish a school-based running program or expand an existing one. Through standards-based activity plans created by the National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE), the program will offer children a healthy start to life and foster their desire to be physically active before obesity ever begins.

More than 50,000 children have logged more than 1.7 million miles as part of the initiative, and entire communities have gotten involved either by fundraising to support the program's races or by visiting [www.orangelaces.com](http://www.orangelaces.com) and donating to the "Orange Laces Campaign." Donors who give \$10 or more receive a pair of orange laces—a symbol of their support for youth fitness and running programs in schools. The Web site also features information for schools interested in learning more about grant money for running programs.

#### Active Fun

If you'd like to encourage your youngster to be more physically active, the following tips might help:

- **Make It Fun**—Outdoor games, sports and similar activities can get hearts racing as children burn calories.
- **Make It Easy**—Be sure kids have plenty of time and opportunities to be active. Take them to the park and designate specific times for outdoor play.
- **Provide Encouragement**—Children don't need to be competitive to enjoy running. Let your youngsters know you're proud of them for being active, whether they come in first place or last.
- **Lead By Example**—Children learn by watching their parents. Chances are, the more active you are, the more active your kids will be.

You can learn more by visiting [www.orangelaces.com](http://www.orangelaces.com).

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free school-based running fitness programs that are capped off with thrilling race day events in some cities across the U.S.

Experts say running is a great physical activity for promoting good health and self-confidence. It can help build strong bones and muscles, it contributes to fitness and lends