



America SCORES' Soccer and Health Program and the National Standards for Health

America SCORES programs use a unique health curriculum developed by SCORES Program Directors in partnership with the organization's Soccer and Health Advisory Board. Housed inside our *Soccer Coach Manual*, the America SCORES Health Curriculum focuses on educating poet-athletes about how to make healthy choices throughout their lives. Activities are designed to be implemented with high frequency and few materials, making them user-friendly for our coaches and participants. We integrate health education into regular soccer practices to demonstrate the strong linkages between physical activity and being a healthy person. Our commitment to positive youth development is reflected in the belief that kids will make good choices if they are invested in a program that gives them the necessary information and support to be successful.

This curriculum addresses all eight of the National Health Education Standards that were developed by a team of health-focused organizations in 1994 and updated in 2007. Outlined below are the activities that stem directly from the America SCORES curriculum as they relate to each of the standards.

According to National Health Standards, a health literate person will:

1. *Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.*
 - Students participate in educational games that highlight the importance of choosing healthy foods, drinking water, getting enough exercise, becoming more active during an commonly sedentary time.
 - Students engage in all program activities in a safe environment, and are taught to recognize the characteristics of safe and unsafe spaces.

2. *Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.*
 - Students participate in games that highlight how peers, professional athletes, advertisements, and family impact the foods they eat on a regular basis.
 - Students discuss how inactivity, especially related to modern technology, influences their decisions about health. Soccer and other active games are presented as a fun, safe alternative to sedentary pursuits, and a culture is built to reinforce active habits.
 - Students participate in activities and discussions about risky behaviors and environmental hazards such as cigarette smoking and how their health is impacted.



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3. *Demonstrate the ability to access valid information and products and services to enhance health.*
 - Students participate in games that differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources of health information, while also learning to use the information they find (analyzing food labels, assessing advertisements, etc.).
 - Through their participation in soccer, students identify the resources they need to be active and healthy and the places they can go to access them.
4. *Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risk.*
 - Students participate in teambuilding games that provide opportunities for collaboration and communication with their peers about health and physical activity.
 - Students engage in games and activities that give them the tools and knowledge to make good choices and resist peer pressure to engage in unhealthy behaviors.
5. *Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.*
 - Students participate in games that reinforce the benefits gained from making healthy choices, both with food, activity, and safety.
 - By participating in America SCORES, students get positive reinforcement for making health-enhancing decisions.
6. *Demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.*
 - The America SCORES health and literacy curricula include lessons in which students actively set goals for themselves – whether for the season or off-season – to make health-enhancing choices. Coaches and peers provide on-going support in maintaining these decisions.
7. *Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and to avoid or reduce health risks.*
 - By participating in America SCORES, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to making healthy choices, including reading food labels to plan pre-practice and game meals; wearing necessary safety equipment and playing in a safe manner; and choosing physical activity over other sedentary pursuits.
8. *Demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.*
 - Students participate in games that encourage information-sharing with peers.
 - Students participate in civic engagement through the America SCORES service-learning curriculum, in which there is a strong community education component through which students share their knowledge and projects about health in all its forms to a larger audience.