Minnesota 4-H Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) Challenge Introductory Lesson

Lesson Time: 30 mins.
Prep Time Needed: 15 minutes
Space Needed: large room with dry smooth surface or outdoor dry surface will work

Overview:
Discuss a variety of activities that can be enjoyed through all ages in life and through all seasons. Youth will dramatize the Activity Pyramid to identify a variety of physical activities as well as recognize types of activities should be done more often in our daily lives. Being physically active throughout your life will promote many health benefits such as a healthy heart, flexible and strong muscles, active brain, and more. Participants can track through activity by joining the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) challenge which encourages tracking activity for a 6 week period.

Activity 1:
We all come from different backgrounds and have different likes and dislikes. We all have different abilities and things we like to do. While sitting in a circle, ask each youth to think of their favorite physical activity that they like to do (challenge them to think outside of sports). Ask for a few volunteers to share their favorite physical activity. Share that it is a good idea to be active in little ways every day, like walking, and in big ways, like running around or going biking. Let's take a look at the Activity Pyramid Poster. Physical activities we should do everyday or as often as possible make up the base of the pyramid.

?Ask: What are some activities you think belong in this category? Examples: play outside, help around the house, pickup toys, take dog for walk.

The bottom middle of the pyramid is for activities that should be done a 3-5 times a week. These are activities that get our hearts pumping fast and should be done for at least 20 minutes at a time. These activities can be done by yourself or in a group. The next section is activities that should be done 2-3 times a week and are to make your muscles stronger and more flexible. Activities in this section help prevent our bodies from getting hurt through keeping us limber and less likely to get hurt. The top of the pyramid are activities that we should limit to no more than 30 minutes each day and only after you have been active that day.

As a group, let's use the activities from the pyramid as a starting point to come up with a list of activities that we can do during our lives to be active. Hint: think spring, summer, fall, and winter. Give out one post-it note to each youth. Have them write down one activity they would like to act out for the group (like charades). If wanted, split the group in two and have the teams play charades (pantomime) their activities. After youth have guessed the activity, place the post-it on the activity pyramid in the correct location.

Life Skills:
- Healthy Lifestyle Choices
- Disease Prevention
- Cooperation
- Teamwork
- Self Esteem

Equipment:
- Copy of Activity Pyramid
- Sticky Note Paper (or scratch paper & tape)
- Pen or pencils (One/participant)
- PALA Individual Sheet (1/partic.)
Activity 2:

? Ask: Have you heard about the President’s Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) Challenge? Explain that it’s a great way for you to be active and have fun this summer. The PALA challenge encourages people to make physical activity a part of their everyday lives and helps you track your physical activity for an opportunity to earn awards. The President’s Challenge is for one million Americans to complete the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA). The PALA recognizes those individuals who log their recommended physical activity for six weeks, five days a week (60 minutes for youth, 30 minutes minimum for adults). National 4-H is answering this call by setting a goal with Michelle Obama to have 100,000 4-H members complete their PALA by September 2011. 4-H is making this goal a top priority.

Pass out the PALA Individual Information Form and review with participants. Share how you would like them to track their activity; online and/or paper copy options. If using the online option, identify the group they should join; there is a “Minnesota 4-H” and “National 4-H” group already established. Remember to set up a county group and number if you want your county to be eligible for the participation incentive awards. Share with them that just like we found out in looking at the Activity Pyramid, there are over 100 physical activities being recognized on the PALA online site.

?Ask: How can we support each other to be physically active each day? Let individuals share their ideas. Talk about ways you are considering incorporating physical activities into your summer 4-H program.

Talk It Over:

Reflect:

- What games or physical activities will you do this week?
- How many minutes of activity do you need a minimum of each day?
- Share what you discovered about yourself from today’s activities.

Process:

- Why is it important to do a variety of activities from the different levels of the Activity Pyramid?

Generalize:

- What advice would you give to someone who is trying to improve their daily movement?
- Why is it important to have lots of physical activities you like to do?

The University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.