



PRESS RELEASE

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Health interventions can boost health and academic achievement among students

New Haven, Conn. –There is a strong relationship between student health and academic achievement, according to researchers at Yale University. The study suggests that school, home, and community environments that promote student health will also lay the groundwork for higher levels of achievement. The study is published online in the January issue of the [*Journal of School Health*](#).

The current study examines the relationship between a variety of health factors and students' standardized test scores. The most important predictors of academic achievement were having no television in the bedroom, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically fit, being food secure, and rarely eating at fast-food restaurants. Other significant factors were not drinking soda or other sweetened drinks and getting enough sleep.

Researchers used physical assessments, fitness testing, surveys, and district test score records to gather data on the health and achievement of 940 students. The students surveyed were 5th and 6th grade students at twelve randomly selected public schools in New Haven, Connecticut, an ethnically diverse, economically disadvantaged, urban area. Data was collected 3-6 months prior to testing and then analyzed after the standardized test scores were released.

Students with more health assets were more likely to be at goal for standardized tests in reading, writing, and mathematics, and students with the most health assets were twice as likely to achieve goal compared with students with the fewest health assets.

The authors assert that creative approaches that integrate curricular and non curricular school-wide efforts to promote healthy behaviors among all students are worth the investment.

“Many urban families sadly face the harsh challenges of persistent poverty,” according to Jeannette Ickovics, lead author and professor of epidemiology and psychology at Yale University, and director of the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement, a program at the Yale School of Public Health. “Health and social disparities, including academic achievement, are increasing. One way to reduce disparities and close the equity gaps in health

and education is to coordinate community and family-based efforts with comprehensive school-based approaches.”

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