

The Life Education Center

The Life Education Center (LEC) program teaches students in kindergarten through high school the benefits of making sound, healthy choices for their bodies and minds.

Two mobile units travel to 61 public and private schools in Kankakee and Iroquois counties -- reaching approximately 14,000 students annually.

The LEC's curriculum aligns with Illinois State Standards. Instructors use hands-on materials, visuals, discussion and role playing to teach students about the human body, the dangers of its abuse and about the different skills needed to deal with peer pressure. TAM, a transparent anatomical mannequin, teaches the younger students about their bodies and provides older students with an inside view of how chemical substances harm the body. LEC mascot, Harold the Giraffe and his friend, Jocko the Monkey, are favorites with the younger students who learn the importance of exercise and eating good foods.

The LEC also provides a forum for older students. A three-part research-based curriculum proven to delay the onset of alcohol use is taught to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students at participating schools and "Class Action" is being used with high school students. Junior and senior high school students, along with their parents, are encouraged to make a pledge to follow and support laws prohibiting underage alcohol use in the Partnership's annual "*Make a Pledge - Make It Stick*" social marketing campaign.

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**Life Education Centers
Pledge for Life Partnership**

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Parents of Third Graders

In the Life Education Center, third graders learn to choose *Wise Highs*, choices for a happy healthy body and mind...*Choices You Can Live With!*

This lesson focuses on the choices we make every day. Students begin to address how alcohol and cigarettes affect their bodies. We also begin to discuss how different we are from one another. We encourage you to talk with your child about these lessons and to add your own family values.

Topics covered include:

- ▲ How the body systems work together as a team to make our bodies work.
- ▲ What happens to food, oxygen and other substances that we put in our bodies.
- ▲ The effect that drugs like alcohol and nicotine have on our bodies.
- ▲ The importance of making independent choices; the consequences that come with those choices; and why it's important to respect the choices of others.
- ▲ How each of us is great in our own way.
- ▲ How our choices affect ourselves and others now and in the future.

Review Questions:

By asking the following questions, your child can share with you what he has learned in the Life Education Center:

- **How was Harold today?** (*Sad, worried. His friends tried to talk him into something by calling him names.*)
- **What suggestion or comments did you give Harold?** (*We were happy and proud that he was able to make the right choice.*)
- **We discussed four major body systems.** (*Circulatory, digestive, nervous and respiratory.*) **Tell me how food and other substances travel through these systems and affect them.** (*Substances go from the digestive/stomach to the circulatory/bloodstream to the nervous/brain. Things like nicotine in cigarettes make our heart beat faster; other things like alcohol cause our nervous system to slow down.*)
- **Tell me about your trip to Conformatron.** (*The class takes an imaginary trip to a planet where everyone is forced to be exactly the same; no one can make independent decisions; there are no choices.*)
- **How is our world different from Conformatron?** (*We are all different, unique, special; we have many choices.*)
- **Ask your child how he escaped from Conformatron and the king.** (*Everyone has to think about how they are different from others. Does he think that humans are different and special?*)
- **Whose choice is it to keep yourself healthy?** (*Friends and family influence us, but ultimately you have to make the right choice for yourself.*)



Follow-up Activities

The following activities can be used to reinforce the lesson taught in the Life Education Center.

- Have each family member identify three people and tell what makes each one different or unique. For example, tall, funny, happy, etc.
- Have each family member tell three things that are the same for all human beings. For example, humans have two feet, one heart, two eyes.
- Ask your child to tell you about eating Splodge (*the only food on Conformatron*) and then discuss all the different foods you have available for breakfast.
- Talk about what it might be like to live on another planet. What would you miss most about the earth? What might be better on another planet? How can we make the earth a better place to live?
- Discuss ways in which other people influence our actions. For example, have your child think about how she would act at the dinner table if your minister was there or her teacher or if she was with friends.
- Talk about what makes some people a good influence and others not so good.

These are just a few ways that we can teach our children how special they are and how important it is for them to take care of their bodies and minds. These discussions will help them to choose **Wise Highs...Choices You Can Live With!**

To visit the LEC or to learn more, call Brenda Wetzel, director of Life Education program at 815 936-4606.