Health instruction can improve academic achievement.
- The teaching of age-appropriate, personal and social skills as part of a health education curriculum, can improve significant academic behaviors of students such as increasing motivation and positive attitude toward school, reducing absenteeism, and reducing suspensions.
- Initiatives that taught personal and social skills (responsible decision making, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills) along with providing other strategies improved test scores, grades and high school graduation rates.

Health instruction can reduce behaviors that threaten education attainment.
- Health instruction that includes the teaching of personal & social skills can promote more classroom participation as well as reducing conduct problems.
- Quality health education programs have proven to be effective in reducing health risk behaviors including preventing tobacco use, preventing alcohol use, reducing heavy drinking, preventing dating aggression, violence, decreasing risky sexual behavior, and increasing physical activity which also is linked with achievement.

Health instruction can improve health literacy.
- Health illiteracy is estimated to cost to our nation between $100 and $200 billion a year in increased medical costs.
- Children of all ages have the potential to understand the practices associated with health as well as how to access health information.
- Effective health instruction can improve health literacy.

Standards for quality health instruction exist.
- National Health Education Standards were established in 1995 and updated in 2007.
- The Joint Committee on National Health Standards (2007) recommends that students Pre-K to 2 students should receive 40 hours annually while students in grades 3 to 12 should receive 80 hours in health instruction annually.

Improving the health literacy of the nation begins with developing generic literacy skills of children before they enter kindergarten.
- Children living in poverty acquire language skills more slowly and are at risk for reading difficulties.
- Participation in quality, early childhood education programs, particularly for low income students, promotes generic literacy skills, reduces the achievement gap of students entering kindergarten, reduces the need for special education, reduces grade repetition; it also enhances educational achievement, as well as improving student behavior and motivation.
References


