

# WHAT WORKS in ACTIVE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

It is important for children to develop healthy habits and we know that while these habits begin at an early age, they are reinforced during childhood. Children model behaviors of the people around them, such as teachers, parents, and other adults. When these individuals model healthy behaviors by making appropriate food choices and being physically active, children follow suit. This lifestyle allows for healthy growth of the children physically and mentally, as well as development of improved scholastic achievements.



## Focus Areas for Children's Health:

- ◇ Increase physical activity
- ◇ Decrease TV and other "screen" time
- ◇ Increase fruit & vegetable consumption
- ◇ Decrease sweetened beverage consumption
- ◇ Decrease food portion size (portion control)

## Where to Start:

- \* Integrate physical activity and nutrition instruction into program activities and activity plans
- \* Provide education for kids, families and teachers on the concepts and importance of healthy eating and physical activity.
- \* Implement a program wellness policy that incorporates strategies
- \* Use existing resources
  - National Afterschool Association Healthy Eating Physical Activity Standards
  - Active Out-of-School Time
- \* Utilize monthly newsletter and other forms of family engagement to strengthen buy-in and support
- \* Make connections with the community and other wellness initiatives to strengthen buy-in from families and other adults impacting their lives

*The following page lists several proven or best-practice strategies for improving physical activity and nutrition in out-of-school time programs. While not comprehensive, the strategies can serve as a guide to encourage the best possible environment for the health and well being of the children you care about.*

## Physical Activity Strategies

### Physical Activity

1. Provide a total of at least 90 minutes of physical activity per day (total amount pro-rated for part-day programs) in a full-day program for all program participants. That total should include:
  - ◇ Structured physical activity (teacher-led) provided to all children for at least 45 minutes
  - ◇ Active (free) play time provided to all children for at least 45 minutes
2. Ensure adequate space is available for both indoor and outdoor physical activity
3. Ensure children are not sedentary for more than 30 minutes except for homework/academic enrichment
4. Break up all sedentary periods with at least 10 minutes of activity
5. During active (free) play time, encourage staff to join children and make positive statements about the activity
6. Ensure regular safety checks on play equipment
7. Encourage staff and children to wear clothing and footwear that are appropriate for being physically active

### Indoor Activity

1. Provide a wide variety of portable play equipment (balls, hula-hoops, tumbling mats, rolling carts)
2. Provide indoor play space for activities for inclement weather

### Outdoor Activity

1. Ensure outdoor play occurs a minimum of once per day (weather permitting)
2. Provide outdoor play areas that have a shaded space and open, grassy areas that are large enough for group games and different activities

### Adaptations for Special Needs

1. Provide a wide variety of equipment, both fixed (such as slides, monkey bars, etc.) and portable, that is appropriate for gross motor activity that is available and accommodates the needs of all children
2. Provide children with special needs alternative opportunities for active play

### TV & Screen Time

1. Ensure television is not used during afterschool programs except for educational periods or academic enrichment
2. Limit computer access unless absolutely necessary for homework or academic enrichment
3. Limit or restrict portable video gaming devices within the program

## Nutrition Strategies

### Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

1. Serve more fruits & vegetables with meals & snacks. (1 fruit and 2 vegetables in any provided dinners)
2. Ensure canned fruit is offered in its own juice (no syrups)
3. Incorporate a "Fruit and Vegetable of the Week" component to introduce new foods
4. Encourage children to taste or try healthy foods

### Healthy Beverage Consumption

1. Provide milk (*non-fat or low-fat, unsweetened or non-flavored*), or water
2. Ensure potable water is readily available

### Portion Control

1. Work with your school meal provider to follow Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) or USDA guidelines for nutrition and serving sizes
2. Ensure snacks/meals are served family style (children serve themselves with limited help)

### High Energy Dense Foods

1. Limit or remove fried or pre-fried potatoes (French fries, tater tots, hash browns) in snacks/meals
2. Limit high-calorie, low-nutrition foods (cookies, cakes, chips, candy, frozen treats, and other sweets) and serve rarely
3. Provide parents/caregivers with guidelines for healthy food and beverage options for celebrations
4. No foods with trans-fat are served

## General Physical Activity & Nutrition Strategies

### Nutrition and Physical Activity Education

1. Ensure nutrition and physical activity education and training is offered to:
  - ◇ Staff: 2 times per year or more, including highlighting new resources/toolkits
  - ◇ Children: 1 time or more per week
  - ◇ Parents/Caregivers: 2 times per year or more (workshops, activities, take-home materials)

### Other Nutrition and Physical Activity Strategies

1. Ensure active play time and food are not used as a punishment or reward
2. Establish written guidance limiting foods and beverages allowed from home
3. Establish a written wellness policy including adequate levels of physical activity, adequate fruit and vegetable intake, no sugar-sweetened beverages, and little to no screen time; try to align with school district's school wellness policy
4. Promote physical activity and nutrition by having posters, pictures, or books displayed within all program rooms

### Role-Modeling

1. Encourage staff to sit at the table with children and consume the same food and drinks
2. Staff encourage, but do not force, children to eat
3. Encourage staff to participate in physical activity with children.

