



FOOD & FUN AFTERSCHOOL, SECOND EDITION

UNIT 8

REDUCE TV VIEWING

TUNE OUT THE TV!

A NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CURRICULUM
DESIGNED TO HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP HEALTHY
HABITS DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

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ABOUT FOOD & FUN AFTERSCHOOL, SECOND EDITION

The Y is not only one of the nation's largest providers of childcare and afterschool programs—but we are also determined to be the healthiest. As part of our commitment to young people, the Y has adopted a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards for early childhood and afterschool programs nationwide. The standards will build a healthier future for our nation's children by providing healthy environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity and by supporting families to do the same at home.

The **Food & Fun Afterschool** curriculum is an ideal way to achieve the HEPA standards through activities and lessons designed to be easy to incorporate into your regular afterschool program schedules. Food & Fun includes 11 teaching units that encourage healthy behaviors through active play, literacy, math skills development, creative learning, and hands-on snack time activities. With more than 70 activities to choose from, the lessons make it simple to promote healthy eating and physical activity in your program every day! Food & Fun also gives you tools for engaging families in their children's health.

THE Y'S HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Implement an educational program for parents and child care providers with physical activity and nutritional information relevant to the health of their children.
- Ensure that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day (for full-day programs), including a mixture of moderate and vigorous physical activities that promote bone and muscle strengthening.
- Play will take place daily outdoors whenever possible.
- No access to television or movies.
- Limit digital device time to less than one hour per day. Digital device use is limited to homework or programs that actively engage children in activity.
- Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal.
- Serve all meals family style.
- No fried foods.
- Offer water at the table during every meal and have water accessible at all times.
- Serve beverages that do not have added sugars.
- Serve healthier beverages, including water, lowfat (1%) or nonfat milk, or 100% fruit juice (no more than one 6- to 8-oz serving per day).

The HEPA standards are based in part on years of research supported by collaborations with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Healthy Out of School Time Coalition (HOST) and the National Institute for Out of School Time (NIOST). Through these collaborations, as well as the experience of Ys across the nation, the Y has learned the most effective ways to create healthy environments in out-of-school time settings.

Additionally, the Institute of Medicine's Early Childhood Obesity Prevention policies, the National Afterschool Association's "Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out of School Time Programs" and the Let's Move Child Care Standards played a significant role in the HEPA standards.

Teaching about healthy behavior is most effective when your program environment is consistent with the HEPA standards, which are supported through the Food & Fun curriculum. The Food & Fun materials were created by the Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity in collaboration with YMCA of the USA. In addition to afterschool programs, these materials are appropriate for use in a wide variety of out-of-school time programs, like summer camps, sports programs, extended day programs, and before school programs.

For more information on the HEPA standards, visit [Exchange](#). All Food & Fun materials, including parent engagement tools, tip sheets on implementing the HEPA standards, snack recipes, and can be downloaded on [Exchange](#). For more resources from the Harvard School of Public Health, visit www.foodandfun.org or www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/prc/projects/food-fun/.

UNIT 8

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

BEHAVIOR GOAL

Children will watch less TV and reduce other screen time.

KEY MESSAGES FOR KIDS

- Moving your body keeps you fit!
- Do something active instead of watching TV, playing videogames, or spending time on the computer.

KEY INFORMATION FOR PROGRAM STAFF

Television viewing is the most common sedentary activity of children in the United States. Every day 8- to 18-year-olds spend about 4 hours watching TV and DVDs, over an hour on the computer, and almost an hour playing video games. Excessive TV viewing can lead to less physical activity, overeating, and a higher risk for becoming overweight. This is because children are not active when they watch TV, they tend to snack more, and they see lots of advertising for high calorie, high sugar foods like candy, soda, and fast foods.

The activities in this unit help children recognize how much TV they watch, and more important, help you to encourage children to replace TV and other screen time (like video games and computers) with other activities that they like. Take the time to brainstorm with kids in your program to identify a wide variety of screen-free activities they enjoy. It is important to share the key messages and tips with families so parents and caregivers can limit TV time at home (see the parent handouts and parent communications sections of the Food & Fun curriculum on [Exchange](#)). Support these messages in your afterschool program by eliminating broadcast and cable TV or movies and by limiting computer time to less than 1 hour each day. If you do show TV in your afterschool program, replace this with physically active games or other non-screen-time activities like board games, cards, or arts and crafts. The key to successfully reducing TV and other screen time is to replace that time with activities that children like.

Tip: While physical activity is a great way to spend non-TV time, reducing screen time also provides a wonderful opportunity to promote literacy through reading, crossword puzzles, and other word games. Consider making a connection with your local library to support

literacy efforts. Also try participating in TV Turnoff week, a national event that takes place each April.

Refer to the “Take Control of Screen Time” tip sheet, available on [Exchange](#), for ideas on how to eliminate TV and suggestions for non-screen-time activities at your afterschool program. Also see www.foodandfun.org for additional resources.

ACTIVITY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN



ARTS & CRAFTS

1. Power Up Your Body Poster: Create posters that encourage activities other than watching TV



ACTIVE GAMES

1. Warm Up, Cool Down: Do this whenever the children are active
2. Power Up Charades: Play charades using activity cards
3. Walk Around Town: Takes children on scavenger hunt type walks to discover their neighborhood (works best with younger children)



OTHER GROUP GAMES OR ACTIVITIES (CAN BE USED IN CIRCLE TIME OR SMALL GROUPS)

1. Tune Out Challenge: All children assess their TV viewing habits (older children complete worksheets)



SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV* by Stan and Jan Berenstain (best for younger children). This story follows brother, sister, and papa bear through a challenging week of no TV, and highlights all of the fun they had when the TV was off.
2. *The Best Way to Play* by Bill Cosby (for older children) explores what happens when Little Bill and his friends finally get the video game that goes along with their favorite TV show; in the end the young boys realize that it is more fun to act out the show than to play with the video.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS

KEY MESSAGES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Limit children’s overall screen time (TV, videogames, internet surfing, etc.) to less than 2 hours per day.
- Do not allow television sets in children’s bedrooms.
- Help children find other things to do besides watching TV, such as playing games, doing crafts or being active.
- Be a good role model and limit your own TV viewing and computer time at home.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

It is important to engage parents and caregivers on a regular basis in a variety of ways. Here are some ways that you can engage parents at afterschool:

- Have a conversation with parents and caregivers at pickup
- Create a bulletin board with the key messages from each Food & Fun unit
- Involve parents and caregivers in daily physical activities and snack time
- Hold regularly scheduled events each month
- **Brainstorm TV-free activities.** Put up a poster board or tack a large piece of paper onto the wall by the sign-out book. Ask parents and kids to write down their favorite TV-free activity on the board. Keep the poster up for a week and encourage families to write something down every day. At the end of the week record all of the favorite activities and distribute to parents and caregivers.
- **Encourage Commercial Mania.** Encourage parents to do the Commercial Mania activity from Food & Fun at home with their kids. Print out copies of the instructions and hand out to parents and caregivers at pickup. Follow up with families to see what they discovered, and ask how they liked the activity!

Refer to the parent handouts and parent communications, available in English and Spanish on [Exchange](#), to reinforce the messages in this unit of Food & Fun:

- **Parent handout:** “Take Control of TV (and Other Screen Time).” Send this home in a mailing, insert it into your next newsletter, or have copies available for pickup.
- **Parent communications:**
 - Newsletter article: “Tune Out TV for Better Health” for insertion into your newsletter.
 - Email message: “Healthy Habits Power Tips: Tune Out the TV.” Email this message to parents at the start of this unit.

RESOURCES



WEBSITES

The Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity works with community partners to design, implement and evaluate programs that improve nutrition and physical activity, and reduce overweight and chronic disease risk among children and youth. The Harvard School of Public Health Prevention Research Center offers additional materials and resources on nutrition and physical activity on its website.

www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/

Let's Move is First Lady Michelle Obama's initiative to provide parents with the support they need to make healthy family choices, provide healthier school foods, help kids to be more physically active, and make healthy, affordable food available in every part of the U.S.

www.letsmove.gov/index.html

Alliance for a Healthier Generation is a joint venture between the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation with a mission to reduce the nationwide prevalence of childhood obesity by 2015 and to empower kids nationwide to make healthy lifestyle choices.

www.healthiergeneration.org

Action for Healthy Kids is a nonprofit and volunteer network fighting childhood obesity and undernourishment by working with schools to help kids learn to eat right, be active every day and be ready to learn. Their website includes tools and fact sheets about childhood obesity, nutrition and physical activity.

www.actionforhealthykids.org/

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a website dedicated to information about fruits and vegetables. It includes recipes, budgeting tips, and guides to healthy meals.

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/

The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media created KidsHealth to provide families with doctor-approved information that they can understand and use. Includes sites for parents, children, and teenagers and provides a variety of health information, including nutrition and fitness topics. Also available in Spanish.

<http://kidshealth.org>

CommonSense Media provides parent education and advice about children's media consumption. Their junk food advertising page has great tips for limiting exposure to harmful marketing for kids of all ages.

www.commonsensemedia.org/Junk-Food-Ads-Tips

Spanish translations of materials are available here:

www.commonsensemedia.org/sites/default/files/CSM_Tip_SP_JunkFood.pdf

The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (National Institutes of Health) offers a national childhood obesity prevention program, Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition (We Can!), which provides families and communities with helpful resources.

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/

Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active! is an interactive education program designed to help teach kids about the complex media world around them. Media-Smart Youth motivates youth to think about nutrition and physical activity, and helps them become aware of the connections between media and their health.

www.nichd.nih.gov/msy/

The Media Awareness Network and the Media Literacy Clearinghouse aim to help empower kids to understand how media and advertising target them.

www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/index.cfm

www.frankwbaker.com/advertising2.htm

The American Academy of Pediatrics published a position paper which recommends no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day.

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;107/2/423.pdf>

WEBSITES FOR KIDS

The BAM! (Body and Mind) program, of the CDC, provides tweens with tips on nutrition and physical activity. Children can explore the over 30 physical activities, including the necessary gear and how to play. They can also find great ideas for healthy snacks and meals.

www.bam.gov

KidsHealth also has websites especially for kids, in English and Spanish.

<http://kidshealth.org>

The Media Awareness Network aims to help empower kids to understand how media and advertising target them. They have seven interactive games for kids in grades K–8.

www.media-awareness.ca/english/games/index.cfm