



FOOD & FUN AFTERSCHOOL, SECOND EDITION

UNIT 9

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PLAY HARD!

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 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 9

INFORMATION FOR LEADERS

BEHAVIOR GOAL

Children will “play hard” at least three times each week at afterschool.

KEY MESSAGES FOR KIDS

- Doing activities that make you sweat or breathe hard will make you strong and keep your bones and heart healthy.
- Playing hard is fun when it’s something you like to do.
- Do an activity that makes you sweat or breathe hard at least three times per week.

KEY INFORMATION FOR PROGRAM STAFF

At the Y, we’re committed to creating afterschool environments where children are able to participate in physical activity every day. When regular activity is not part of their lifestyle, children are more likely to develop chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis when they grow up. Physical activity tends to decline as children enter adolescence, and inactive children and teens are more likely to grow into sedentary adults.

The goal is to engage all children in regular physical activity, regardless of physical or mental abilities, and for them to have fun while being active. Many schools have reduced physical education and recess times, so children come to afterschool programs ready to move! Children ages 6–17 need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. They should participate in vigorous activity at least three days per week. To help children meet this goal, provide all children with at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. Offer at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity three or more days per week. Also remember proper hydration: offer water before, during, and after all physical activity.

In this unit, children will learn what it means to “play hard.” Vigorous activities are games and sports that are more intense than fast walking. They make you sweat and your heart beat faster. This unit also encourages children to identify vigorous physical activities that are fun for them. Take time to learn about students’ cultures to be sure you offer meaningful and interesting activities for all the kids in your program. Kids will be more likely to take part!

Refer to the “Physical Activity” tip sheet, available on [Exchange](#), for ideas on how to engage children and staff in physical activity at your afterschool program. Also see www.foodandfun.org for additional resources.

ACTIVITY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN



ARTS & CRAFTS

1. Build an Activity Wheel: Create a wheel with different types of physical activities pictured, and use the wheel to select the game or activity to play each day



ACTIVE GAMES

1. Warm Up, Cool Down: Do this whenever the children are active
2. Play Soft, Play Hard: This game helps children understand the difference between moderate and vigorous activity
3. What happens when...? This activity is best for older children who can recognize physical changes in their bodies, such as increased heart rate from taking a pulse



SUGGESTED BOOKS

1. *Jonathan and His Mommy* by Irene Smalls takes children along a fun walk through the neighborhood and can be used for an interactive circle time
2. *Salt in His Shoes* by Delores Jordan tells the inspirational story of Michael Jordan and how perseverance led him to become a successful basketball player

CONNECT WITH PARENTS

KEY MESSAGES FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Go for Five! Eat five or more fruits and vegetables (combined) each day.
- Serve a fruit or vegetable with every meal and snack, even if your child doesn't always eat them.
- Involve your child in healthy eating. Ask your child to help choose which fruits and vegetables you buy for the family and pick which you serve with meals.
- Encourage your child to at least "take a bite" of every fruit and vegetable you serve.

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 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
- **Train for a 5k run!** Find a 5k fun run in your area and start training! Schedule a weekly run with families, and encourage running on other days of the week as well. Make it an annual event for families to participate in!
- **Family field trip.** Have families visit the Y to spend time together swimming, playing sports, volunteering, participating in a class for families, and more!

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:** "Activate Your Family!" Send this handout home in a mailing, insert it into your next newsletter, or have copies available for pickup at your program's sign-out area.
- **Parent communications:**
 - Newsletter article: "Get Moving! Feel Great!" Insert this into your program newsletter.
 - Email message: "Healthy Habits Power Tips: Get Moving!" Email this message to parents and caregivers at the start of this unit.

RESOURCES



WEBSITES

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans describe the types and amounts of physical activity that offer substantial health benefits to children and adults.

www.health.gov/paguidelines/

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

National Association for Sport and Physical Activity (NASPE) offers guidelines on activity for children and youth, and publishes curricula for in-school and out-of-school time.

www.aahperd.org/Naspe/

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 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>

National Association for Sport and Physical Activity (NASPE) offers guidelines on activity for children and publishes curricula for in-school and out-of-school time.
www.aahperd.org/Naspe/

President's Fitness Challenge inspires children (and adults) to get moving each day. Use the guidelines and log charts to create a challenge within your center, or enroll children in the challenge through the website.
www.presidentschallenge.org/home_kids.aspx

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sponsor two programs for 9–13 year olds. VERB is a national, multicultural, social marketing campaign which encourages tweens to be active every day. For information about the VERB campaign, which includes materials for parents, go to:
www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/

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>

MATERIALS

The CANFIT Physical Activity Pyramid is a fun, colorful guide to different types of physical activities kids can enjoy after school. Use it to think of new ways to get kids activity during your program or post it on your site's bulletin board.
<http://canfit.org/pdf/PAPyramid4AS.pdf>