



Changing Lives, Saving Lives



A Step-by-Step Guide to
Developing Exemplary Practices in
Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and
Food Security in Afterschool Programs



**Healthy
Behaviors**
INITIATIVE

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....5

Introduction to the Guide.....9

Developing Exemplary Practices..... 10

Using this Guide 11

Changing Lives and Saving Lives! 12



Practice #1: Approach Program Development in Nutrition and Physical Activity with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality..... 13

I. Create a Powerful, Compelling Vision 15

II. Set Clear, Achievable Goals 19

III. Develop Action Plans to Achieve your Goals 20

IV. Invest in the Development of your Staff 23

V. Make Physical Activity and Nutrition Part of your Core Program Activities and Approaches 27

VI. Establish Relationships with Schools, Community Members and Parents 30

VII. Measure and Manage Outcomes..... 32

Indicators for Practice #1 33



Practice #2: Integrate Nutrition and Physical Activity Approaches with Youth Development Principles 35

I. Create a Physically and Emotionally Safe Environment 36

II. Build and Maintain Supportive Relationships 40

III. Focus on Hands-On, Experiential Learning 43

IV. Make it Possible for Every Child to Participate 45

V. Provide Ways for Every Student to be a Leader and Make a Difference 48

Indicators for Practice #2 50



Practice #3: Offer Exciting, Engaging and Meaningful Learning Experiences 53

I. Get Students Excited and Engaged 55

II. Make Sure Activities are Meaningful 58

III. Reinforce and Expand on Classroom Learning 61

IV. Link Activities with Outcomes..... 63

Indicators for Practice #3 68

Table of Contents continued



Practice #4: Commit to Community, Family and School Engagement .. 71

- I. Give Students a Variety of Off-Site Learning Experiences72
- II. Make Community Service a Priority.....77
- III. Connect with Parents and Family Members80
- IV. Collaborate with Local Agencies, Nonprofits, Businesses and the Media82
- V. Be Proactive in your Community85
- VI. Develop Close Relationships with Schools87
- Indicators for Practice #490



Practice #5: Strengthen Food Security 93

- I. Create an Environment that Supports Healthy Eating Habits95
- II. Provide Students with More Fruits and Vegetables97
- III. Encourage Students to Take Advantage of School Breakfast, Lunch and Summer Meal Programs 100
- IV. Keep Families Informed and Engaged 102
- V. To Change Lives and Save Lives, Make Food Security a Priority! 106
- Indicators for Practice #5 107



Practice #6: Secure Adequate and Sustainable Funding 109

- I. Determine How Much Revenue You've Already Generated..... 111
- II. Focus on Cost Savings..... 112
- III. Summarize your Findings in an Executive Summary 117
- IV. Find a Champion and Develop a Guiding Team 118
- V. Build a Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Funding Base 120
- Indicators for Practice #6 123

Background Notes 125

Implementation Notes 129

Endnotes 130

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Introduction to the Guide

Among the millions of children and young people in our communities, poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles cause serious health problems, lower self-esteem, lead to social and psychological problems and contribute to poor academic performance.² If this pattern continues into adulthood, as it typically does, it will lead to an unprecedented rate of premature death and disability, diminished workplace productivity and serious financial repercussions for families, insurers, healthcare providers and our society.

Without intervention, one in every three children born in 2000 is likely to develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime, and for children of color the likelihood increases to one in two.³ Perhaps most importantly, there is evidence that this is the first generation that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents if the obesity epidemic continues.⁴

It's up to all of us to find ways to help reverse this trend — and we can! Children and young people who acquire the knowledge and motivation they need to make wise decisions about their eating habits and physical activity are much more likely to develop healthy lifestyles and maintain them over the course of their lifetimes. We also know that children in poor health have a more difficult time learning and are often absent from school. Good nutrition and increased physical activity not only have a positive impact on children's health, but research shows that they have a positive effect on academic achievement.⁵ As you work to close the achievement gap, it makes sense to address these health factors as an important part of your work!

Afterschool programs are well-positioned to become part of the urgently needed, comprehensive solution to the potentially devastating problems caused by poor nutrition and sedentary life styles.

Combined state, federal and local funding for afterschool programs now makes it possible for close to a million students in California to spend an additional 15 hours each week engaged in life-enhancing and potentially life-changing experiences. Because public funding gives priority to school sites where at least 50 percent of the student population qualifies for free and reduced price meals, these programs offer a viable means for influencing the food choices and physical activity of huge numbers of low-income children and young people and their families. Afterschool programs are in a unique position to help them acquire the knowledge and resources necessary to develop and maintain healthy lifestyles, including better nutrition and more physical activity.



The remarkable changes the programs have made have improved the health of many.

This guide will help you do this. Based on extensive research and field experience, it's designed to help you systematically, and in an intentional way, strengthen the nutrition, physical activity and food security of students and their families. It does this by introducing you to proven, exemplary practices and providing you with the tools you'll need to develop action plans and assess your progress as you move toward the achievement of your goals. We've seen the difference that these practices have made in the

ten afterschool programs that we have been working with in our healthy behaviors learning community. Each of these programs has created Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers that have implemented the practices at an exemplary level. The remarkable changes the programs have made have improved the health of afterschool participants, their families, the staff and their communities. This guide shares many of these changes.

DEVELOPING EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Helping students develop healthy lifestyle habits and make smart choices is critical — and it isn't easy. There's a huge difference between teaching them about the importance of nutrition and physical activity and getting them to change their attitudes and behaviors, especially when the influences of friends, the media, the environments in which they live and their family experiences and preferences are strong. It's not enough to add an activity or two and hope for the best. While that might make a difference in the lives of a few children, much more can and must be done.

Our experience and our work with the Healthy Behaviors Learning Center afterschool programs (Healthy Behaviors programs) has demonstrated that six practices are critical to achieving the goal of helping children and young people acquire the knowledge and motivation they need to make wise decisions and healthy choices. We're confident that integrating the following practices into your program will make the difference in the outcomes you achieve:

- 1) Approach program development in nutrition and physical activity with vision, purpose and intentionality.
- 2) Integrate nutrition and physical activity approaches with youth development principles.
- 3) Provide exciting and meaningful learning experiences that integrate nutrition and physical activity into core activities and approaches, and keep children and young people engaged, excited and motivated.
- 4) Work closely with community members, families and schools to become full partners in strengthening students' health and well-being.
- 5) Create outreach and education systems that increase awareness about ways to strengthen food security for the low-income families of participating students.
- 6) Secure adequate funding to support your program's quality and sustainability.

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is written for afterschool program directors, members of leadership teams, site directors and partners with afterschool programs. If you work as a team, it will provide you with the tools you'll need to integrate these practices into your program and at your sites — in a way that will help you achieve the results you want, and that children, their families and your community deserve. Each chapter defines and explains a particular practice and offers a variety of concrete examples of how the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with have developed and strengthened their approaches, overcome obstacles and achieved their goals.

This guide will also help you strengthen your program and address CDE's newly revised Quality Self-Assessment Tool indicators, especially those in the new Nutrition and Physical Activity Section!⁶

At the conclusion of each chapter, indicators are provided to assist you in establishing baselines, creating action plans and tracking your progress as you move forward. The indicators and a sample action plan are available separately at www.afterschoolsolutions.org. We strongly recommend that you read through this guide in its entirety first and then follow this sequence:

- 1) Be sure that you and your leadership team, staff, partners and stakeholders understand what each practice is, why it's so important and how you can develop and implement it in your program.
- 2) Establish baselines in each of the practice areas by assessing where your program and sites are at this point in time relative to each practice.
- 3) Work with your team to identify one or two high priority areas to concentrate on for the next six months or so.
- 4) Create action plans to move your program and sites toward the achievement of the goals you set in these areas.
- 5) Measure and manage your progress by revisiting the indicators for the practice(s) you've selected at three- and six-month intervals.

For example, if you decide that staff development is your first priority, you may want to focus on ensuring that you and your staff consistently model the food preferences and physical activity levels you want students to emulate. As you'll learn from the experiences of the highly successful Healthy Behaviors programs, this may mean changing the foods that are available at staff meetings, ensuring that staff members bring water and healthy snacks to programs instead of sodas and fast food, and insisting that staff members are fully engaged in the physical activities they're leading or facilitating. If you decide that strengthening partnerships with schools is at the top of your list, you'll want to follow the examples of programs that have done this very effectively as you develop a plan to more fully integrate your program with what's happening during the school day. What you choose is up to you — the important thing is to get started as soon as you can!



CHANGING LIVES AND SAVING LIVES!

By keeping children and young people safe during the hours they're most at risk, providing them with opportunities to strengthen their academic and social skills and introducing them to new ideas and experiences, your program is already making a difference in their lives. Now it's time to move to the next level!

Overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions. The *Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity* tells us that "Our nation's young people are, in large measure, inactive, unfit, and increasingly overweight."⁷ The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that overweight is one of the most common medical conditions in six to 11 year olds — and getting worse.⁸

Your program can go beyond changing lives to saving lives by helping youngsters acquire healthy eating habits and become physically active, improving the food security of their families and changing the environments in your communities. Children can't wait — and neither can we!

For assistance in overcoming challenges or to see what the Exemplary Practices look like in person, contact one of the Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers near you. For a list of the Learning Centers, see Implementation Notes in this guide or go to www.afterschoolsolutions.org for up-to-date contact information.



Practice #1

Approach program development with VISION, PURPOSE AND INTENTIONALITY



“Our vision has always been of children being fit, healthy and ready to learn. It wasn’t enough to hope this would happen. We’ve had to work hard to become more intentional in everything we do. It has made a huge difference!”

– Normandie Nigh, Executive Director,
A World Fit For Kids!

Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Create a powerful compelling vision
- 2 Set clear, achievable goals
- 3 Develop action plans to achieve your goals
- 4 Invest in staff development
- 5 Make physical activity and nutrition part of your core program activities and approaches
- 6 Establish relationships with schools, community members and parents
- 7 Measure and manage outcomes



PRACTICE #1:

Approach Program Development in Nutrition and Physical Activity with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality

The chances are very good that students in your program face a set of personal challenges and environmental conditions that negatively influence their eating patterns and limit their ability to be physically active. Understanding what these are will help you become more intentional in how you approach your work. Although poor eating habits cut across all socioeconomic groups, low-income families are often the most impacted. It's all too common, and understandable, for families with limited financial resources to:

- » Sacrifice the *quality* of food for *quantity* — foods that are higher in fat, calories and sweeteners are often lower in cost and have a longer shelf-life than healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables;
- » Consume large quantities of food when it's available to compensate for times when it's not — and then the body responds to periods of hunger by storing fat when it gets food, which in turn contributes to the likelihood of becoming overweight⁹;
- » Have easy access to the concentration of fast food chains in their neighborhoods and their low-cost, “extra-value” meals laden with fat and sweeteners; and
- » Shop at nearby corner markets where prices are higher and healthy choices are more limited than in supermarkets, which are often located too far away for them to easily access.

These challenges are compounded by the fact that while children living in more affluent families have access to sports leagues, and dance, martial arts, swimming and tennis lessons, these activities are likely to be unaffordable or simply unavailable to low-income families. Even bicycle riding and walking can be out of reach in high poverty neighborhoods because of the dangers that exist in local parks and on the streets. Too often, the alternative for these children is sitting in front of the television or hanging out with their friends eating high calorie, unhealthy food and drinking sodas.

Until recently, schools played an important role in equalizing at least some of these disparities through physical education and health/nutrition classes — and some still do. With the advent

of *No Child Left Behind* requirements and the focus on high stakes testing, however, schools often see these as unaffordable luxuries. Even recess has been shortened or eliminated in some schools to allow more time for students to focus on core academic subjects — especially in low-performing schools, which are disproportionately located in low income communities. Despite the fact that studies show that increased physical activity and improved nutrition lead to better student academic performance,¹⁰



it may well be left up to you to fill the void created during school hours with opportunities for students during the after school hours.

Fortunately, as the director of an afterschool program, member of a leadership team or site director, you have the opportunity to make things happen. No matter what it says in your job description, your real work is about creating a powerful vision and keeping your program or site focused on bringing it into reality. It's about setting and achieving meaningful goals, inspiring people to do their best work and holding everyone, including yourself, accountable for what happens.

Doing this well requires purpose and intentionality. It asks you to look beyond what you're doing to the impact you're capable of having. It's about harnessing your energy and your resources and working closely with your colleagues, staff members and partners to:

- » Create a powerful, compelling vision of what could be;
- » Set clear, achievable goals;
- » Develop concrete action plans to achieve your goals;
- » Invest in the development of your staff;
- » Make physical activity and nutrition part of your core program activities and approaches;
- » Establish an ongoing dialogue with schools, community members and families that brings everyone together in a common purpose; and
- » Track your progress and measure, manage and publicize the results.

I. CREATE A POWERFUL, COMPELLING VISION

Powerful visions, like great programs, don't come into being by accident. They're brought into being by intention. They almost always begin with one or two people who are inspired by some great purpose that offers a way to go beyond what they're doing to creating the future they imagine. As a leader, you're in a unique position to initiate this process in your program or at your site.

Step 1: Start with a vision, not just a vision statement. Having a powerful vision is about making a difference, not just doing a job. Unlike a vision statement, it's created over time, not overnight. It tells you where you're going, and why. It captivates your emotions and ignites your passion. It motivates you to do your best by reminding you of what you really stand for, what you're trying to do and why it matters.

The programs we've worked with in the Healthy Behaviors Initiative have strong, capable leaders who have a deep sense of purpose that transcends their everyday work. They have a great appreciation for how far their programs have come and a clear vision of where they're going. They know that childhood obesity ranks as the #1 health concern for children and young people in the United States¹¹, and that that one out of every two of the students they're working with is



likely to acquire type 2 diabetes in their lifetime unless something is changed¹² — and that they can help keep this from happening.

You have the opportunity not just to change lives, but to save lives!

They know that poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles cause serious health problems and make it harder for children to be successful in school, and that the young people they see every day are part of the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.¹³ They aren't willing to stand back and let the future unfold — they're determined to create a better future!

The children in your program who acquire healthy eating habits and are physically active are much more likely to be well, stay well and do well in school. You and your staff can go a long way toward making this happen. You have the opportunity not just to change lives, but to save lives! Focus on the future, and stay grounded in reality. Capture the essence of what you want to have happen. Keep your vision simple and compelling, and distill it down to a sentence like this:

Kids are fit, healthy and ready to learn—A World Fit For Kids!

Step 2: Ask your team what they would do if nothing were impossible. All worthwhile visions are inherently personal. People buy into leaders before they buy into visions. Emotions come before ideas, feelings before words and motives before actions. A powerful vision comes from the heart, not the head. Carve out a few hours of uninterrupted time with your leadership team to engage in a process of discovery. Don't set an agenda, don't turn this experience into a meeting and don't write anything down. Keep the dialogue personal, not program-centered. Explore what really matters to each of you, what contributions you want to make and what legacy you want to leave. Ask open-ended questions like these:

- » What would the future be like for children in our program if they developed healthy eating habits that would last a lifetime?
- » What would it be like if kids were healthier and able to do better in school?
- » What would happen if overweight youngsters were able to reach their ideal weight?
- » What would the future hold for young people who love being physically active now and as they grow older?

When you ask these kinds of questions, you'll learn a lot about yourself and about the people who work with you. You'll begin to see things unfold, patterns emerge and feelings coalesce. This will lay the groundwork for linking personal visions with an emerging program vision, and it will have the added bonus of drawing people into the process and empowering them to co-create the future with you. *Woodcraft Rangers* went through this process and agreed upon this vision: *Students are making smart choices about eating better and becoming more physically fit.*

Step 3: Show up and stand up for what you believe in. Stand up for what you believe in and set an example. Make changes in your own life style to match your vision. Your staff will take note of your commitment. If your staff is already personally committed to good eating habits and physically active lifestyles, great! If not, it's important to help them make connections between their own health and the well-being of the students with whom they're working. Youngsters in your program are keenly aware of your staff members' habits, and they'll follow what they do much more than what they say.

A staff wellness plan can go a long way towards helping your team achieve their own personal goals and ensuring that they model the kinds of behaviors that you want students to emulate. *A World Fit For Kids!* passionately believes in the importance of kids becoming healthier and more physically fit. They make sure that job applicants are aware of their commitment to healthy staff and kids, including their no junk food policies and zero tolerance for unhealthy fundraisers. They make a serious investment in their leadership team. Each member receives a \$25 a month stipend to offset the cost of joining a health club or physical activity facility of their choice, and each person has the opportunity to work with a fitness trainer to develop a personal nutrition and physical fitness plan. Actions speak louder than words — they've brought their vision to life in everything they do!

The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* is passionate about changing the lives of students and their families, and they've also made their vision a reality. In a recent survey, 46 percent of parents reported that their shopping preferences had changed since their children began attending the program, and 36 percent stated that they were preparing healthier meals with the recipes their children brought home from their cooking classes.

Standing up for what you believe in isn't always easy. It can require tough, and sometimes unpopular, decisions. Talking about the importance of drinking water rather than sodas, the fact that soft drink consumption among children and young people has more than doubled in the last 20 years, or that this contributes to childhood obesity in a huge way is one thing.¹⁴ It's quite another to ban sodas and junk food at staff meetings and during program hours, as *Mt. Diablo CARES* did. Although there was initial resistance, their staff now practices what they preach, and it's had a huge impact on children in their program.

Deeply caring about creating a better future for the youngsters in your program is contagious. The more passionate you are about changing children's eating habits and improving their physical fitness, the more likely it is that others will begin to feel the same way. Show up and stand up for what you believe. It matters!

Deeply caring about creating a better future for the youngsters in your program is contagious.



Step 4: Share your vision and shape the future. Programs don't make things happen, people make things happen. No matter how committed you are or how hard you work, you can't bring your vision into reality without a lot of help. Going from a personal vision, or a leadership team vision, to a widely shared vision isn't easy. You can simplify the process by doing three things:

- 1) **Give people what they want.** Your staff wants to believe that what they're doing is worthwhile, and they want to be part of something that gives meaning and purpose to their lives. Knowing that they're contributing to children becoming healthier goes a long way toward meeting this need.
- 2) **Be clear about where you're going.** If you're confused or uncertain or you have a hard time talking about what you believe in or why it's important, people will lose interest, doubt your sincerity or become cynical. When you're really clear about your vision, and freely express your excitement, enthusiasm and dedication to making it real, others will begin to feel this way too. Keep in mind that everything you say and do is an expression of where you and your program are going. Help the people around you fall in love with the destination!
- 3) **Keep your message simple and captivating.** Powerful visions rarely exceed a few words and yet speak volumes. The more complex your vision is, the less emotional impact it will have — and the more likely it is that it will be set aside or forgotten.

CalSERVES' vision is encapsulated in three words: *Passion, Power, Potential!* The program is a place where students discover their passions, realize their potential and express their power. Like all powerful visions, it focuses on what's changing for youngsters, not on what the staff is doing or the activities they're offering. It continually reminds people of why their work is so important and brings them together in a common purpose.

Step 5: Focus on what's changing. As you begin to shift your attention from what your program is doing to the impact it is capable of having, it will become easier for you and your staff to talk about your vision. Focus on what will change for children and young people, their families and your community. Make your message clear enough to be easily understood, wide enough to draw everyone in and inspiring enough to motivate people to join you in creating the future together!



Mt. Diablo CARES' leadership team talks about *changing children's lives* all the time. The phrase is something everyone can relate to. It's broad enough to include everyone, no matter what positions they hold. It's inspiring enough to ignite and sustain passion in individuals and in the organization as a whole. And, it's open-ended enough to allow people to understand what it means through the filter of their own experiences and emotions.

Connect your vision with changes that you see happening. Sharing one brief example of a child who never liked to exercise and now can hardly wait for her dance class to begin will make your vision come alive. A few sentences about a youngster who gave up soft drinks for water and convinced his overweight mother to do the same thing is a powerful story that will make your vision something everyone can understand and embrace.

II. SET CLEAR, ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Bringing your vision into reality begins with setting goals that are meaningful and achievable. Just the act of setting goals will make a huge difference in how intentional you'll become and how quickly you and your program move ahead. Be sure your goals are specific enough to be easily understood and important enough to channel everyone's energy in the same direction.

Step 1: Limit yourself to setting one or two goals for the year. You can't achieve a goal you haven't set, and if you set too many goals, it will be counter-productive and crazy-making. Without a goal, you're stuck where you are. With too many goals, your staff will get discouraged and give up, or they'll be overwhelmed and burned out. Having one or two goals makes sense. It's manageable. And, it makes it possible for you and your team to stay focused. Among the programs we've worked with, this approach has led to very positive results.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* set a goal of all children becoming more physically fit. In less than four months, students were much more physically active than they had previously been. And a remarkable eighty-one percent of the students who failed a portion of the state-mandated physical fitness test passed after a year of attending the program.
- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* set a goal of increasing the amount of healthy food available to students and their families. Over the next two years, they brought in and distributed almost 137 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables through their partnership with a local food bank.

These examples are representative of meaningful and achievable goals — and of what you can do if you put your mind and your resources to achieving them. Follow their lead, and the sky's the limit to what you can accomplish!

Step 2: Involve your staff in the goal-setting process. You can come up with goals on your own, but you can't achieve them on your own. Don't set goals in isolation from the people who will have to carry them out. Unless your staff really buys into the goals your program sets and understands what it will take to achieve them in the context of their own work, there's likely to be trouble ahead. You can avoid this by engaging your staff from the beginning. While you're considering which goals to focus on, ask them a series of questions:

- » What goals are the most important to you?
- » Are there goals we haven't thought of?



- » Why might one goal be better than another?
- » What changes, if any, will you have to make in what you're already doing to accomplish a particular goal?
- » Are there things that could make it difficult for you to achieve a particular goal?
- » What additional kind of support or assistance are you likely to need?
- » Will it really matter if we achieve this goal?

You can come up with goals on your own, but you can't achieve them on your own.

Step 3: Keep your goals alive. Once you've gone through this process and arrived at one or two goals that everyone supports, write them down and be sure everyone has a copy. Keep your goals out in front by regularly asking your colleagues and your staff to describe how what they're doing is contributing to reaching them, or what they'll have to do differently if they're having a hard time. Refer to your goals in staff meetings, during training and coaching sessions and anywhere else you can.

Recognize everyone's accomplishments, no matter how small they may be. It will help you get past the obstacles that will come your way. It will keep you focused on what you can do in the present to create the future you imagine. And it will help you know how to harness the resources you have to get the results you want.

III. DEVELOP ACTION PLANS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Creating an action plan to get you where you want to go isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. You'll need a roadmap — and without it you can get lost or off track very easily. Instead of moving closer to your goal, you may end up being further away. Coming up with the best plan depends on getting as much advance information as you can, identifying possible barriers that may get in your way, knowing how much it will cost, keeping your strategies simple, getting advice from others and staying on top of things as you move toward your destination.

Step 1: Do your homework. Even if you haven't been to a specific destination, some awareness of what lies ahead makes it easier for you to anticipate what might happen and navigate from one point to the next more successfully. The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* set a goal of improving the food security (ensuring that families have enough to eat) of the families of students enrolled in its program. Before coming up with an action plan, they explored several of the challenges families face, including limited financial resources and the absence of supermarkets in their neighborhoods. They found out what resources were available in their communities, and which were underutilized. Ultimately, they focused on two specific strategies, both of which had a significant impact on their ability to achieve their goal.

- 1) They worked with parents to be sure their children were enrolled in their school's free and reduced price breakfast and lunch programs,¹⁵ and
- 2) They made information about food stamps (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP), WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) and other programs readily available to family members when they came to pick up their children at the end of the day and during family nights and other special events.¹⁶

Step 2: Identify possible barriers that may get in your way. Knowing in advance what obstacles you might encounter should influence your decision making. For example, the programs we've worked with have made it a priority to build authentic partnerships with schools. Developing relationships with health personnel and food service managers and serving on school wellness committees have led to many successful action plans and the achievement of critical goals. But not every effort has proven successful.

- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* has been able to overcome insurance issues that could have been barriers to operating its skate parks on school sites. Other programs have not.
- » *Club Y.E.S.* includes rock climbing as one of its program components. Other programs' efforts to do the same thing have been thwarted by district risk-management regulations.
- » Canoeing was once available to students in *Fresno FRESH*. Now, because of safety concerns expressed by the county office of education, the sport is limited to special events.
- » Several Healthy Behaviors programs have struggled with the quality of snacks provided by districts with varying degrees of success. Finding site level food service champions has been one way to overcome district resistance to change.

To the extent possible, find out what obstacles may be present before you finalize your action plan. It will save you a lot of time, energy and frustration.

Step 3: Calculate the costs. Keep in mind that there are costs involved in any course of action you take. Before you decide on a particular plan, ask yourself how much funding you're willing and able to commit. Assess whether the return on your investment is likely to meet your expectations and move you closer to achieving your goal. Calculate the dollar cost and the opportunity cost — how much you'll have to spend, and what you won't be able to do if you make this kind of commitment.

The *Club Y.E.S.* leadership team set a goal of improving the physical fitness of their students by measurably increasing their daily exercise. They allocated a portion of their budget to purchasing pedometers for each student to help them track their activity — both in and out of the program. They created a plan that included grade-level challenges and celebrations every Friday. The return on a relatively small investment has paid real dividends in students' physical fitness.



The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* applied to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program in order to secure federal reimbursement for snacks. That \$257,000 annual reimbursement has freed up funds to strengthen other parts of their program.

Other programs have spent thousands of dollars, or more, only to find out later that what they had purchased wasn't being used by their staff, that students weren't really interested, or that their activities weren't leading to the outcomes they had anticipated. Don't let this happen. Your program has finite resources. Use them judiciously. Think before you act!

Step 4: Keep your strategies simple and achievable. Keeping your action plan simple will help you and your staff work smarter, not harder. It will significantly increase the likelihood that things will be done right, and the results you want will be achieved. It's better for your staff to focus their attention on doing one or two things and doing them well, than it is for them to try to do too many things and feel overwhelmed — especially if you're asking people to do something they haven't done before or to approach their work in a different way.

It makes a lot of sense to provide a specific curriculum that staff can use. If it's aligned with state standards in physical education or nutrition and physical activity, which it should be, much of what you want students to learn will be addressed. Following the curriculum will make things a lot easier than asking them to try to come up with creative ideas on their own. For example, CATCH: Coordinated Approach to Child Health Series offers a nutrition education and physical activity curriculum, and EatFit (UC Cooperative Extension) offers a nutrition education curriculum.¹⁷

Giving more experienced or specialized staff members the latitude to draw on their own creativity increases their enthusiasm about what they're doing. It makes a lot of sense to do this, as long as they stay focused on linking the activities they offer to the goals you've established and the activities support standards-based outcomes.

Step 5: Include community partners in your plans. If your goal is for students to become more physically fit, it can be very beneficial to partner with community organizations and businesses. Tennis, golf, karate, dance and yoga are among the many less traditional activities that the programs we've worked with include in their daily schedules. Instructors for these classes are typically hired through outside organizations, giving children and young people exciting opportunities that would be prohibitively expensive for their families.

- » ***Fitness 4 Life*** has worked with the YMCA to offer swimming lessons. It employs a former cycling champion to teach children to ride bicycles purchased from a local business. And it offers cross-country running — all in preparation for the program’s goal of having more than 1,000 students participate in semi-annual triathlons.
- » ***Woodcraft Rangers*** negotiates with local bike shops to get parts for students to build and ride their own tricked-out bicycles as part of its extremely popular Low-Riders Club.
- » ***After-School All-Stars, LA*** hired a fencing instructor from the community, negotiated a good deal on equipment and uniforms and became one of the first programs to include this exciting sport in their offerings to middle school students.

There are 11 *Regional Networks for a Healthy California*. They offer a variety of free resources including training, instructional materials and collaboratives that bring other community organizations (and resources) to the table.¹⁸

If your goal is for students to eat more fruits and vegetables, consider starting a community garden as ***Mt. Diablo CARES*** has, or in-ground gardens as ***Woodcraft Rangers*** has, or container gardens as ***San Francisco ExCEL*** has. Partnering with Home Depot, Target and other businesses can significantly reduce the costs of materials, supplies and equipment. Working with 4-H, Master Gardeners and others can bring expertise and enthusiasm to your project.¹⁹ When you break ground for a new garden, be sure to invite parents, partners, students and your staff to participate in the event — it will encourage them to become more involved as the garden grows.

If your goal is for students to eat more fruits and vegetables, consider starting a garden.

Step 6: Stay on top of things. Spend at least a little time in each staff meeting to ask your colleagues what they’ve done to contribute to reaching the goal or goals you’ve set and what more they’ll have to do. Have them talk about what’s working and what might be changed. Point out things that you’ve noticed that are making a difference in children and young people’s lives, such as their preferences in foods or their enthusiasm about the physical activities they’re engaged in. Help your team stay focused on carrying out the action plans you’ve developed. It will shorten the time it takes you to achieve your goals and help keep everyone focused and excited about their work.

IV. INVEST IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR STAFF

Developing a staff that understands relationships between nutrition and physical activity, and health and well-being, and is able to translate this knowledge into daily program activities, is essential — and it’s not easy. Sometimes just getting staff members to model positive behavior, like opting for water over sodas or rewarding students with things other than candy, cookies or gift certificates for fast food can be challenging.



Staff development pays incredible dividends, from making it possible to achieve your most important goals to measurably improving the retention of your employees. Base the decisions you make about staff development on a simple premise: *If you want to get more out of people, put more into them.*

Step 1: Focus on your staff's personal and professional growth. Staff development isn't a noun. It's a verb. It's not an event or a series of events. It's a process that includes ongoing training, coaching and mentoring. Done well, it incorporates a variety of approaches that help people become more competent and confident individuals and team players. The more you invest in staff development, the more likely it is that you will achieve your goals and bring your vision into reality — and the more probable it will become that your rate of staff retention will soar!



All of the Healthy Behaviors programs approach staff development systematically, with intention and purpose. They make significant financial investments in the process and in their people, and the return on their investments shows up in the quality of their programs and the outcomes for children, families and their communities. You can do the same thing and have similar results!

Step 2: Provide high quality training. Formal training increases awareness, expands knowledge and strengthens skills. Done effectively, it imparts information and draws on the experience of participants. It offers new ideas and makes them relevant in the context of the work your staff is already doing or will be doing. It provides appropriate

resources and materials. And, it contributes to the professional growth of your team. On average, the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with provide at least 100 hours of staff development over the course of the year — in addition to on-site coaching and mentoring. They require their staff to attend trainings and pay them for their time.

- » *San Francisco ExCEL* uses a combination of outside trainers, leadership team members and site directors to deliver training and targets their workshops to meet the different interests and needs of new and more experienced staff.
- » *Club Y.E.S.* focuses on providing hands-on training to program leaders who are working directly with children and emphasizes content and approaches that can be immediately applied in their work environments.
- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* and *Fresno FRESH* work with health divisions within their respective county offices of education to provide training.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* trains its team by reviewing the Exemplary Practices in its weekly staff meetings and developing action plans. The program then regularly tracks progress at the site level.

Most programs send teams to national, statewide and regional conferences, workshops and trainings to expose larger numbers of their staff to new ideas and approaches and give them an opportunity to bring more information back to their colleagues. And, many deliver the trainings they use in their programs at these conferences.

All of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with recognize that formal training is essential, and that it has limitations. It's likely that you've already discovered that even the best training may not produce the result you want — the ability of your staff to effectively translate the knowledge they've acquired into their everyday work.

There are four things you can do to increase the odds that the training you offer will have the desired impact:

- 1) Take time to spell out in advance why a workshop is important and what you expect your staff to learn and later apply. Very few people who attend trainings really know why they're there or what's expected of them other than that it's a requirement of their job. Make a commitment to be the exception to the rule.
- 2) Be sure that what's presented is emotionally as well as intellectually compelling. Your staff won't really buy into new information unless they see the personal benefit of doing so. This means they have to connect what they learn with their own lifestyles, past experiences and belief systems.
- 3) Help your staff find ways to make changes in their own lives. Listening to a presentation about the importance of eating nine servings (4.5 cups) of fruits and vegetables a day may not resonate with a college student who is barely making ends meet financially and is used to picking up a value meal at a fast food restaurant on her way to work. Consider bringing in fruits and vegetables and other healthy snacks when your staff arrives in the afternoon to reinforce what they've learned.
- 4) Provide follow-up coaching, mentoring and personalized, on-site support. Even if your staff is initially excited and seems committed to trying something new, it's likely that at least some of them will have a hard time moving from ideas to actions. If they don't get the help they need, little if anything that they've learned will be applied when they're working with students.

Step 3: Use the best materials available. Choosing the right resources is essential.

Students are much more likely to meet health education and physical education standards for their grade levels if they're exposed to and involved in learning and practicing the skills that are expected of them. Using standards-based curricula contributes to this in important ways.

- » The California After School Resource Center (CASRC) and the California Healthy Kids Resource Center (CHKRC) provide peer-reviewed, research-based nutrition and physical activity resources that emphasize skill development. Materials are available on loan, and online training is available free of charge.²⁰





- » The recently published *California Food Guide: Fulfilling the Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is an excellent, readable resource on children's and adults' nutrition and health, and can help you make wise choices about the materials you select.²¹
- » The Dairy Council of California provides free training and advice on making its resources usable.
- » **Mt. Diablo CARES**, after putting together a resource list to make it easier for sites to decide what materials are most appropriate for their own environments, now uses the recommended nutrition and physical activity curricula and supplemental materials list (by grade level) developed by the California Healthy Kids Resource Center and the *Network for a Healthy California*.²²

When resources are used in the ways they're intended, they have a very positive impact and can make programming much easier for staff. But, don't forget that it's the people using the resources and not the resources themselves that make the difference.

Step 4: Make coaching central to your staff development process. It's easy to think that if the right materials are in place, you'll get the results you want. This simply isn't true. Having access to high quality training and materials is essential — and it doesn't guarantee that your staff will know how to use what they learn appropriately or effectively. You may have already spent a lot of money on workshops that didn't produce the results you desired or materials that aren't used well or used at all.

There's a simple explanation. Most people have a hard time applying what they learn without at least some help. The better you know the people you're working with, the easier it will be to tailor your support to their individual needs. The more you support your staff, the faster they'll improve. Make coaching and mentoring a central component of your staff development system. It's an investment that will pay huge dividends!

- » Like many programs, *After-School All-Stars, LA* has a team of mentors who are responsible for working closely with site directors to help them develop their leadership and management skills, trouble shoot particularly challenging problems and move toward achieving their goals.
- » **A World Fit For Kids!** builds coaching and mentoring into every level of its staff development. Members of their leadership team provide extensive coaching for their site staff, who in turn become mentors for program leaders and for high school mentors who in turn mentor younger students.
- » **San Francisco ExCEL** and **Woodcraft Rangers** use both specialists and generalists to provide on-site support to their staff in the areas of nutrition education and physical activity. The combination works.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* promotes healthy lifestyle choices for YMCA employees through wellness lectures, employee newsletters with healthy recipes and incentive programs for employees to increase their physical activity and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. All YMCA employees receive a free membership to their local YMCA health facility.

No matter what approach you take, keep in mind that being there for your staff doesn't mean merely talking with them occasionally or getting together with them in meetings. There's no way you can accurately assess situations, uncover problems and offer solutions without observing people in their actual job settings. To really identify what's working, what's not and what can be done to build on their strengths and shore up areas in need of improvement, you have to see what's going on — not just one time, but over time.

Meet people where they are and be their guide-by-the-side. Knowledge and skills aren't the only things that matter — caring and confidence count in a big way! Walk shoulder to shoulder with your staff, not head and shoulders above them. Uncover their concerns. Listen intently when they're having trouble and respond to issues with patience and empathy.

Build their confidence. Let them know you believe in them. Show them and tell them that they're valued and valuable. Inspire them to work together and independently to achieve your program's goals. Acknowledge and celebrate the progress they're making. Although people may intuitively feel like they're doing better, they won't necessarily know this is happening unless you tell them. Take time to motivate them to keep doing better!

V. MAKE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION PART OF YOUR CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND APPROACHES

Nutrition and physical activity can be integrated into your program in many different ways. No matter what kinds of activities or approaches you include, remember that the operative word is *integrated*. It's not enough to spend an hour or two lecturing to students about the importance of eating right or giving them time for free play. Encouraging students to acquire habits that will lead to healthy lifestyles now and when they become adults takes time, intention and repetition. It requires providing information and providing opportunities to apply that knowledge. It requires linking activities to outcomes, or changes in students' lives, including their eating patterns, physical activity levels and health in general. It takes thinking strategically, working collaboratively and acting purposefully.

Step 1: Think big! Integrating nutrition into your program means more than adding enrichment components such as gardening or cooking. It means embedding healthy nutrition principles and practices into everything you do — from the kinds of snacks you provide, to the parties your staff hosts as student incentives, to the food you serve at special events and family nights and the water you have available to all students no matter what they're doing.

Knowledge and skills aren't the only things that matter — caring and confidence count in a big way!



Integrating physical activity into your program also means more than requiring a certain number of minutes for children and young people to engage in moderate to vigorous exercise, although that's very important. It's also about having younger students do a variety of smaller things such as actively walk, skip, hop and jump from class to class rather than standing in a straight line and moving forward at a slow pace. And, it means finding ways for all students to become more interested in being more physically active, not only during your program hours, but when they go home.

- » **Club Y.E.S.** and the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** take a holistic approach to physical activity by helping students understand that being active comes in a variety of forms. Both programs, and several others, provide their staff members and students with pedometers so they can track how much they walk, even if it's just doing ordinary things. It has made a real difference in motivating them to exercise more.
- » **A World Fit For Kids!** gives students journals and asks them to track what they eat. This has raised their level of awareness and led to changes in the quantity and quality of the foods they choose. The program also helps students understand the importance of combining fun, functional and formal physical activities into their daily routines so that they learn that being active doesn't necessarily mean playing a sport or going to a gym — taking the stairs instead of the elevator, walking to school and even walking the dog all “count” and contribute to their fitness level and overall well-being.
- » **Fresno FRESH** gives its students journals and asks them to keep a log of their physical activity during the program and outside of it. Sharing this information with their staff and peers motivates them to do more.



Think creatively about what nutrition and physical activity are really all about. Don't limit yourself to specific kinds of things — expand your definitions and broaden your horizons. It will contribute in powerful ways to achieving your goals.

Step 2: Reinforce what students are learning during the school day.

The more consistent the messages students receive, the greater the likelihood that they will be heard and adopted. One of the most effective ways to do this is to be sure that the activities

you offer and the approaches you use are aligned with what's taking place during the school day — in ways that are fun, exciting and engaging.

- » **After-School All-Stars, LA** discovered that when middle school students created their own healthy recipes in cooking classes they made better choices about what they ate. It also reinforced what they were learning in nutrition education classes during the school day and strengthened their math skills.

- » When *Woodcraft Rangers'* intramural basketball teams were eating French fries and drinking sodas before their games, the program introduced healthy alternatives and coached kids on the relationship between nutrition and athletic performance. Taking nutrition education beyond the classroom made it relevant to students — and made a real difference in their performance!
- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* works closely with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, school districts and individual schools to align monthly health themes across all venues. This has significantly strengthened students' knowledge and influenced their habits.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* has hired one of their elementary school's part-time credentialed physical education teachers to work two hours after school. The goal is to create a seamless physical education/physical activity/nutrition opportunity for students, parents and school and afterschool staff. And it's working!

Be intentional about helping students master skills.

Step 3: Be intentional about helping students master skills. Children and young people are much more likely to meet health education and physical education standards for their grade levels if your staff knows what these standards are and what skills the students they're working with should be focusing on. Introduce your staff to these standards, some of which are identified below, and support them in helping students build their skills — not solely their knowledge — in these areas.

Seven of the eight newly adopted Health Education Content Standards²³ focus on skills (such as the ability to access valid information, make decisions, set goals and practice health-enhancing behaviors). Only one focuses on content (Standard 1, Essential Health Concepts). Within the eight overarching Health Education Content Standards, the standards are broken out by six areas such as Nutrition and Physical Activity (NPA) and by grade level. The standards build on knowledge and skills acquired in earlier grades, so that students increase their knowledge and skills as they grow older — instead of being repeatedly subjected to basic information and experiences that are neither interesting nor challenging the third or fourth time.

- » If you're already providing opportunities for students to read and analyze food labels to determine nutrient and sugar content, you're addressing Standard 3, Accessing Valid Information.
- » If your students are analyzing advertising and marketing techniques used for food and beverages, you're addressing Standard 4, Analyzing Health Influences.
- » If your students are setting personal goals about eating healthier or exercising more, you are addressing Standard 6, Goal Setting.



VI. ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PARENTS

The larger environment in which your program operates matters more than you might think. The more people work together to achieve a common purpose, the more likely it is that the results you want will be achieved. It may be an over-worked phrase, but it's true: It takes a whole village to raise a child. And it certainly takes schools, families and community members to support healthier behaviors in children and young people.

Step 1: Take time to develop relationships. Just as establishing strong, positive working relationships

with principals and teachers supports student academic achievement, developing relationships with Healthy Start, family resource centers, health/nutrition education and physical education teachers, cafeteria staff, school nurses and others who may be at your sites supports children's health and well-being. Joining school wellness committees in developing and implementing their plans can make a real difference. You and your staff are well-positioned to influence the direction in which they proceed and the policies they adopt.

- » *A World Fit For Kids!* joined the Los Angeles Unified School District Coordinated School Health Task Force and ensured that afterschool was included throughout the overall wellness plan. *Fresno FRESH* and *San Francisco ExCEL* have also been very successful at doing this. And you can be, too!
- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* connected with their food service manager through attendance at SHAPE (Shaping Health as Partners in Education) meetings. The food service manager offered to let CARES staff use the school kitchens if she could train them on kitchen clean-up. She now provides that training twice a year. Food Service also provides the food for *Harvest of the Month* taste tests and reviews recipes the program is using.²⁴

Step 2: Work with local agencies and organizations. *Regional Networks for a Healthy California* (and other agencies funded by the *Network*), local public health departments, voluntary health agencies such as the American Cancer Society, parent-teacher organizations, and healthcare providers and insurers are examples of community members with expertise and an interest in student health. Many of these potential partners may already come together as part of school health committees or wellness policy committees at your sites.

When you work with people from these sectors, you'll be able to help develop policies that consistently promote healthy eating and physical activity. You'll have opportunities to join them in creating a positive environment in which children and young people can thrive. And, you'll be positioned to help establish policies that strengthen and reinforce healthy food choices, such as

replacing soda and candy in vending machines with water and nutritious snacks. There's power in numbers, and you'll want to be part of the equation!

Step 3: Engage your community. The more engaged your community is with your program, the more positive the impact will be on youngsters and their families. Creating a wide range of community connections increases resources, provides opportunities to secure financial investments and in-kind contributions, and offers students meaningful ways to become more knowledgeable about healthy alternatives that exist in their neighborhoods.

- » For the last several years, *After-School All-Stars, LA* has partnered with El Pollo Loco to provide healthy meals at its staff trainings and special events.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* has joined forces with Clear Channel in its widespread campaign to increase awareness about physical fitness and the childhood obesity issue.
- » A local pediatrician in the Santa Clara County hospital system prescribes the *YMCA of Silicon Valley* program to overweight children and adolescent patients!

Step 4: Partner with parents and family members. Developing positive relationships with parents and guardians, grandparents and other family members is vital to helping reinforce what students are learning in your program when they go home. Staying in close contact builds trust and opens people to being influenced in positive directions, especially when staff and family members share similar cultural backgrounds and speak the same languages. Providing information to family members, including the importance of good eating habits and physical activity and the availability of school nutrition programs, food stamps, food banks and other resources they may need, can change their lives — and the lives of their children.

Bring families together in special events.

- » *Woodcraft Rangers, CalSERVES* and *Fresno FRESH* regularly offer nutrition education classes for parents and family members and provide them with information about how to improve their food security by accessing resources from food banks, WIC and other programs that are available to low-income families.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* trained the parent coordinator at one of its schools, and she now provides family nutrition education in Spanish to parents throughout the year.

Bring families together in special events. The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* holds family potlucks featuring healthy meals, fun physical activities and piñatas filled with sugar-free candy, stickers and erasers. *CalSERVES* includes family nights and open houses and hosts a huge César Chávez event that brings over 70 healthcare providers together with more than 2,500 parents and children for a day of fun and healthy activities — including dental screenings, healthcare referrals and access to a whole host of community services, including a free farmers' market.

Parents are also valuable resources to your program. Several of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with invite students' parents to serve as guest chefs in their cooking classes. Others bring in family members with outstanding backgrounds in sports, such as soccer, tennis,



basketball and baseball. Remember that it takes a whole community to raise a child — and that parents and other family members should be a vital part of your afterschool community!

VII. MEASURE AND MANAGE OUTCOMES

Successful programs are intentional in what they do. They go beyond offering activities to linking activities with outcomes, and measuring and managing their progress toward achieving their goals. They use a variety of formal and informal physical fitness and nutrition assessments as part of an ongoing process of helping their staff understand and appreciate how what they're doing is making a difference in children and young people's lives. And, they help students recognize their achievements and internalize a sense of their accomplishments.



Specific approaches that will assist you in doing this are provided in Practice 3. Several of the Healthy Behaviors programs use surveys developed by the *Network for a Healthy California* that assess attitudes, knowledge and behaviors of students with regard to choosing fruits and vegetables. One of the goals of the **Mt. Diablo CARES** program is to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables by their students. In order to achieve that goal, they use gardening, nutrition education and cooking experiences plus a partnership with the local food bank that brings in tons of fresh fruits and vegetables to the program. They have dramatically increased the availability of fruits and vegetables at their sites, and as a result every student more than doubled the number of servings they ate each day.

Others use FITNESSGRAM® to measure improvements in physical fitness. The vision for **A World Fit For Kids!** is *Preparing Young People for Fit and Fulfilling Lives*, and their program is designed to achieve specific outcomes including physical fitness. For example, the percentage of 5th grade students at one of their Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers that met the five FITNESSGRAM® standards they measured increased from 40 to 70 percent! Clearly, what they're doing is making a difference.

At the end of this chapter, and in subsequent chapters, you'll find indicators that will help you track your progress as you begin to focus on developing exemplary practices in your program and at your sites. Designed with input from our Healthy Behaviors programs (based on their work and experience), these indicators will make it easier for you to assess where you are at any point in time. They will help you develop action plans that will accelerate your progress toward achieving your goals. And, they will help you and your staff stay focused on achieving the results you want.

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #1:**Approach Program Development in Nutrition and Physical Activity with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality**

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program's leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

1. We haven't addressed this yet, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Program/Site Vision and Goals						
1	We have a powerful vision of students and their families adopting healthy lifestyles and maintaining them over the course of their lifetimes.					
2	Our vision brings people with different interests, perspectives and experiences together in a common purpose.					
3	Our staff understands our vision and how to move toward achieving it in their everyday work with students.					
4	Our goals in the area of nutrition are clear, easily understood and achievable.					
5	Our goals in the area of physical activity are clear, easily understood and achievable.					
Staff Development						
6	We provide research-based training in nutrition and physical activity to our staff.					
7	We provide ongoing coaching and mentoring to ensure the effective translation of training into daily practices and approaches.					
Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
8	The positive attitudes and behavior of our staff are evident in their healthy eating habits and regular physical activity.					

continued next page



INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #1: Approach Program Development in Nutrition and Physical Activity with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills continued						
9	Our staff uses research-based resources, materials and curricula that build students' skills.					
10	Our staff uses approaches that are interesting and engaging to students.					
11	Our staff is clear about the connections between nutrition and health, and physical, mental and emotional well-being, and academic achievement.					
12	Our staff is knowledgeable about research-based trends in the fields of nutrition and physical activity.					
13	Our staff regularly offers suggestions and provides feedback to strengthen the activities we provide in nutrition education and physical activity.					
14	Our staff is working on improving their own nutrition and physical activity.					
School, Family and Community Relationships						
15	We have established positive working relationships with the school district(s) and schools.					
16	A variety of community partners share our vision and help us develop and strengthen the quality of our program and the nutrition and physical activities students are engaged in.					
17	We recognize and value parents and guardians as partners in our program.					
18	We work closely with parents and guardians to provide them with information about the importance of healthy food choices and physical activity.					
19	We educate parents and guardians about available resources and ways to access them.					
Evaluation and Assessments						
20	We have a system in place that makes it possible for us to track our progress toward the achievement of our goals.					
21	We engage students in tracking their progress toward the achievement of their goals in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.					
22	We identify, celebrate and publicize our successes.					

Key:

1. We haven't addressed this yet, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.



Practice #2

Integrate Nutrition and Physical Activity with YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



“Helping kids change their eating habits and become more physically fit doesn’t happen because we offer more activities. It happens because we’ve learned how to embed these activities in youth development principles and practices.”

– Ana Campos, CEO
After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles

Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Create a physically and emotionally safe environment
- 2 Build and maintain supportive relationships
- 3 Focus on hands-on, experiential learning
- 4 Create opportunities for every child to participate
- 5 Provide ways for every student to be a leader and make a difference



PRACTICE #2:

Integrate Nutrition and Physical Activity Approaches with Youth Development Principles

In our experience, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of high quality afterschool programs and sites is their commitment to the principles and practices of youth development. Their directors, leadership teams, site directors and staff know that this means creating and maintaining an environment in which all students feel valued as unique individuals with unlimited potential. They understand that the relationships they build are as important as the activities they offer, and that the experiences students have and the knowledge and skills they acquire can make a lasting difference in their lives. It's up to you to be as uncompromising as they are.

- » Create an environment in which children and young people feel physically *and* emotionally secure regardless of their current eating patterns, weight, food preferences or physical fitness.
- » Ensure that students feel supported by and connected with staff members and their peers, and open to having genuine discussions about concerns, anxieties and barriers that may exist in their lives and make it harder for them to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- » Provide opportunities for youngsters to engage in hands-on, experiential learning that allows them to master and internalize new concepts, share new ideas and develop life-long skills.
- » Make it possible for every student to fully participate in all activities to the best of his or her ability and to be acknowledged for individual and group accomplishments.
- » Provide ways for every child and young person to be a leader, to be of service and to make a difference in his or her community.

I. CREATE A PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Many afterschool programs think of safety in terms of the precautions they take to ensure students' physical well-being, such as minimizing dangers in the environment, providing adequate adult supervision and being well prepared to deal with emergencies. All of these things are critical. Children must feel safe from physical harm and confident that adults will protect them and assist them if they're feeling threatened, whether it's by their peers or other adults.

This is a huge part of the safety equation, but not all of it. For students to achieve their potential, they must feel emotionally as well as physically safe.²⁵ They have to feel valued and accepted by others and



know that they can fully participate in program activities without being afraid they'll be teased or bullied. They have to believe that they'll be treated fairly, that rules will be consistently and equitably enforced and that when they make mistakes or don't do as well as they could, it's not the end of the world.

Together, physical and emotional safety provide the foundation upon which youth development principles can be integrated with practices that promote healthy behaviors. No matter how well-designed the activities are that you offer, your program won't achieve the results you want without building this foundation first.²⁶

**Set high standards
and clear expectations
for your staff.**

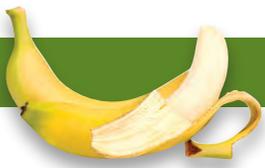
Step 1: Focus on physical safety first. Paying attention to the physical safety of students should be your highest priority. It begins with having a structured system for signing kids in and out of your program. In addition to providing you with attendance records, the system also allows you to know that youngsters who should be coming to your program immediately after the school bell rings are actually there and not somewhere else, and that they're being picked up when your program ends by parents or other adults designated by them on student registration forms. And, as inconvenient as it may be, it may require working with the schools to lock the gates during program hours to prevent strangers from coming in or students from leaving on their own.

Keeping children physically safe also means being certain that your staff modifies rules and regulations and playing areas to allow students of varying abilities to participate without fear of being hurt. It's about having them select the right equipment to accommodate children's sizes and confidence and skill levels, and ensuring that the equipment is in good condition. And, even if it's not a popular decision, it requires eliminating dangerous games like dodge ball, which promotes the use of children as targets, or Red Rover, which increases the risk of injuries.

Creating a physically safe environment includes these things, and more. It asks you and your staff to be knowledgeable about food safety — including sanitation, preparation, equipment handling, expiration dates on labels, the dangers and symptoms of food poisoning and food allergies. And, it requires training all of your staff in first-aid and at least some in CPR.

Step 2: Set clear expectations and hold everyone accountable. Most accidents occur when children aren't well-supervised. Be sure your staff understands the importance of being within eyesight and earshot of all of the students they're responsible for, no matter what their ages. It's not enough to offer a workshop on this and hope for the best. All too often staff members are too far away from children to prevent things from happening or to respond to them immediately if they do.

Set high standards and clear expectations for your staff, and be sure they're met. Spend more time on preventing accidents than teaching your staff how to write incident reports. The Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with have a zero-tolerance policy for staff behaviors that put students at risk, and yours should, too!



- » Follow *San Francisco ExCEL's* lead — don't allow your staff to talk to friends on their cell phones or send text messages during program hours.
- » Make full engagement with students a requirement, as *Club Y.E.S.* has. Don't let your staff sit on the sidelines chatting with each other while their students are playing soccer or basketball or circuit training or anything else. Insist that they be active participants.

One seriously injured child is one too many. And one serious lawsuit can put your program out of business, cost you and everyone else their jobs and deprive all of the children in your program of the opportunities they desperately need. Don't take a chance on this happening. Set firm policies. Be sure your staff understands why they're important. And hold everyone accountable for following them.

One seriously injured child is one too many.

Step 3: Be alert to students' medical conditions. Keeping students physically safe also depends on your staff's awareness of their medical histories. In the last few years, we've seen a growing number of children and young people with food allergies. Identifying these youngsters and having systems in place to prevent them from being exposed to foods they're allergic to are critical elements of prevention. So is ensuring that you have a written protocol and your staff knows what to do if a child has an allergic reaction to the snacks your program provides or food they get from their friends. Allergic reactions can be life-threatening. Knowing what to do and acting quickly can be life-saving!

Similarly, many programs have witnessed a significant rise in the number of students with asthma and type 2 diabetes. It's essential for your staff to know about these conditions if they exist in the children and young people they're working with. Be certain that every staff member knows how to identify these conditions, and any others that may exist. School nurses are excellent resources in these areas and should be brought in to provide training to staff. Give staff time to access the physical activity web pages related to including children with asthma at the California After School Resource Center (CASRC) web site and build in opportunities to discuss them.²⁷

Be sure they have a copy of the medical profiles of the students they're working with and that parents' contact information is readily available. Keep the information up to date! It's not unusual for parents or primary caregivers to change jobs or for phones to be disconnected. Follow the example of *Club Y.E.S.* and work with your county office of education or other partners to train your staff on how to prevent and deal with asthma attacks and to recognize the symptoms of diabetes. Keep these things in mind:

- » Having all students engage in vigorous physical activity helps each of them become more physically fit. Students with asthma need respect and responsiveness from staff to assist them in managing their asthma during physical activity. Failure to accommodate their needs is reckless.

- » Using candy as an incentive for kids to do well runs counter to helping them develop healthy behaviors. Making it available to children with diabetes is irresponsible.

Step 4: Make emotional safety a top priority. Children feel emotionally secure when they feel valued, accepted and respected. Be proactive in creating an environment that builds trust and promotes supportive relationships. Create opportunities for students to learn about each other and to explore and appreciate diversity, with the goal of ensuring that every child feels comfortable with and appreciated for who he or she is.

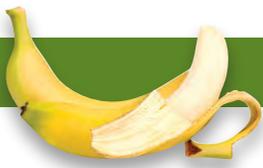
Involve youngsters in developing agreements, or rules for behavior that promote cooperation, positive social relationships, good sportsmanship and personal responsibility. Like adults, children and young people are more likely to buy into what they help create. Build a sense of community within your program — one where students learn to work together in meaningful ways and feel free to express their feelings and concerns. The Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with have seen significant improvement in attitudes and behavior by using this approach.

- » *CalSERVES* devotes 20 minutes at either the beginning or closing of each day for circle time, providing a safe place for elementary school students to express their feelings, ask for advice from their peers and talk about what's going on in their lives.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* debriefs with students at the end of each day to help reinforce what they've learned and give them time to reflect and share.
- » Follow *Woodcraft Rangers'* example by being inclusive and sensitive to your students' cultures — it will help students feel important and respected. Make nutrition education relevant by including foods from youngsters' cultures. Plant a variety of chilies in your gardens. Teach children how to use chopsticks and taste a variety of foods prepared using ingredients they may be less familiar with.

Ensure that your staff consistently treats children and young people as individuals by meeting them where they are and helping them do the very best they can. Make sure no one is left out, regardless of their gender, weight, physical size, appearance, fitness level or abilities. And, insist that your staff encourage students to learn to work and play collaboratively and compete in constructive ways.

- » *Fresno FRESH* has found a creative way to do this. Rather than letting children call on their friends or choose individuals who are especially good at what they'll be doing, the program uses the rock-paper-scissors game to assign students to teams.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* uses a variety of grouping games that not only assign students to teams but serve as fun ways for participants to warm up before doing moderate to vigorous physical activities or sports.





Step 5: Take a tough stand against unacceptable behavior. If children and young people don't feel emotionally secure, they won't be able to take full advantage of what your program offers. If they're afraid of what other students might say or do to them, they'll withdraw from activities or eventually drop out of your program. If they're made fun of because they aren't as athletic as their peers, they'll find ways not to participate. Don't let things like this happen. Follow the lead of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with.

- » *CalSERVES* instituted a program-wide zero tolerance policy for harmful or harassing remarks, ridicule and bullying, and it dramatically reduced these kinds of behaviors. Students who violate this policy are removed from the program and put on the bottom of the waiting list.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* saw its student retention rate increase significantly at a middle school when it piloted an anti-bullying program and has now adopted this across all of its sites.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* devotes more than a week of training for their high school mentors to learn how to deal appropriately with any conflicts or disrespectful behavior of their elementary or middle school students. It pays huge dividends.



II. BUILD AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The presence of caring, supportive relationships between children and adults is one of the most critical factors in youth development. According to the Search Institute, childhood resiliency ranks as one of the leading indicators in predicting whether children and young people will become healthy, productive adults regardless of their economic circumstances or other risk factors.²⁸ Supportive relationships directly contribute to this.

Step 1: Be sure your staff understands what being supportive really means.

A basic tenet of afterschool programs is that kids come for the activities and stay for the people. Students in the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with consistently report that one of the most important reasons they remain in the program is the quality of their relationships with adults and their peers. No matter what your program offers in the way of nutrition and physical activity, make relationship-building the center of your staff development process and an expected program practice. Be sure that your staff understands that in an environment that's truly supportive:

- » Every student feels known and accepted and is treated with respect;
- » Communication is open, authentic and compassionate;
- » Everyone shares a positive sense of belonging;
- » Diversity is celebrated, and everyone's contributions are valued; and
- » Children and young people feel comfortable approaching staff members for advice.²⁹

When students feel supported by and connected with staff members, it provides a foundation for their success. When they're able to speak openly about their concerns and anxieties, or discuss barriers or obstacles that may exist in their lives and make it harder for them to adopt healthy lifestyles, it matters.

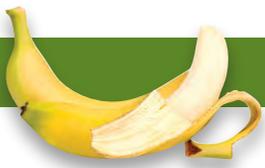
Step 2: Increase your staff's understanding of the children they work with. There are a lot of things that can negatively impact the health and well-being of the children and young people in your program. Family and peer problems, stressful life events, a low sense of self-esteem, depression and emotional distress are very real. Your staff can't solve these problems, but they can make a difference in how well kids are able to deal with them.

In many communities, and yours may be one of them, children are afraid to go home because of gang violence in their neighborhoods or what's happening in their home environments. They may have witnessed violence first-hand, have a father who is in prison or a grandmother who is raising them because their mother is in a rehab center. They may live with a single parent who has to work two jobs in order to put food on the table and pay the rent. They may share living space with several other people in a one-bedroom apartment. They may want to go to the park to play, but know it isn't safe. All of these things contribute to children's physical and emotional insecurity, and for many this has become a way of life.

You and your staff can't remove the challenges children live with, but you can provide them with a safe haven, a positive experience and the support they need to learn to cope with the problems they face. Spend time with your staff discussing the family and community circumstances students are having to deal with, and share ideas and approaches that can make things better for them. It can make all the difference in a child's life!

Step 3: Develop and institutionalize a culture of caring. Genuine caring is the basis for supportive relationships, and a culture of caring is the hallmark of a truly outstanding program. *Woodcraft Rangers* is a stellar example of the importance of this. Because their staff cares so much about what happens to the kids in their program, their antennae are always out. They're alert to what's going on and ready to respond instantly in the face of any kind of threat. When a drive-by shooting occurred at a bus stop across from Carver Middle School just after school ended, they were the first to react. They called 911 within seconds, carried injured students and strangers inside the campus and administered first aid. They kept more than 250 kids safe and calm until the ambulances and police arrived. They knew what to do — and they performed heroically. All of the kids trusted them, and all but the one or two who were injured returned to the program the next day — and those two came back as soon as they had recovered.





Step 4: Help your staff understand connections between health and behavior. Spend at least as much time helping your staff understand why children may be having problems as you do teaching them how to manage their behavior! Be sure that your staff realizes that children who live in poor families often don't have enough to eat and this may mean that they sacrifice the quality of food for quantity. Until they find out from children themselves, which they will, let your staff know that dinner in many of these children's homes is likely to come from a fast food chain or what their parents have been able to buy at a corner market, or whatever may be in the cupboard on any given day. Point out that many of the kids they're working with go to school without breakfast, and that the afternoon snack they get in your program may be the last meal some of them will eat until the next day.

Your staff has a unique opportunity, and a responsibility, to make a difference in students' lives by being there for them in supportive, caring ways.

Ask your staff how they feel when they haven't had enough to eat! It will help them understand that it may be incredibly hard for the children they're working with to concentrate, and they may have a difficult time learning or behaving appropriately through no fault of their own.

Your staff has a unique opportunity, and a responsibility, to make a difference in students' lives by being there for them in supportive, caring ways. Be sure they aren't only aware of the challenges their students confront every day, but that they also recognize how these challenges impact their health and well-being and their attitudes and behavior.

Step 5: Model the attitudes and behavior you want from your staff. For many students, sometimes just having someone to listen to them is enough. Sometimes just being a little more patient can give a child a chance to calm himself down. Sometimes simply asking the right question can create a lasting relationship with a young teenager. And sometimes, you or one of your staff members can change a child's life forever.

The chances that this will happen dramatically increase if you become intentional in the way you approach your work. Model the behavior you want. If you want your staff to be sure that students feel known, accepted and valued, set the example in how you relate to them. Let your staff know who you are, and not just what you do. Be genuine, honest, sincere and positive. Learn more about the people you work with, not just as employees but as human beings. Recognize what makes each person unique — what motivates them, what holds them back, what makes them happy and what discourages them. Acknowledge your staff when they're doing well, and help them when they need your assistance. They'll follow your lead, and it will make a real difference in how they relate to students in your program.

Pay attention to your staff's attitudes, behavior and interpersonal relationships when they're together and when they're with students. You'll observe the same kinds of things young people see every day. Kids pick up on things very quickly, and they intuitively know a lot more than

we may think. If a staff member walks around with a soft drink in her hand, it undermines everyone's efforts to encourage healthier habits in children. If a group leader rewards his students for good behavior with chips and lollipops, it makes it more difficult to promote healthy eating habits as a core value. Acknowledge, support and reward positive attitudes and behavior, and address counter-productive behavior right away.

III. FOCUS ON HANDS-ON, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Many students in afterschool programs like yours live in families that don't have the financial means to offer their children the kinds of experiences that those in more affluent families take for granted. Their mothers aren't soccer moms, and their fathers aren't Little League dads. They aren't enrolled in karate classes, and they're not taking tennis lessons. They don't eat at fancy restaurants or shop at upscale supermarkets.



Providing new experiences expands children's horizons, opens up new possibilities and taps into their hidden interests and talents. Your program may produce the next generation's golf star, executive chef, basketball champion or master gardener! And even if it doesn't, you'll have gone a long way toward leveling the playing field.

Offering a wide variety of opportunities for children and young people to participate in hands-on, experiential learning allows them to build, master and internalize new concepts and skills. Giving them a chance to share ideas and experiences with their peers, solve problems together and learn the value of collaboration strengthens their ability to successfully navigate through a wide variety of situations and circumstances — a key factor in building their self-confidence and encouraging them to take risks that help them grow and develop. Don't miss these opportunities!

Step 1: Create ways for children to learn together. Most of the qualities that we all would like to see children develop occur in social settings and through interpersonal relationships. Cooperative learning makes it possible for students to work together to set goals, create plans, design projects, make decisions and solve problems. It provides them with a whole host of ways to be creative, to test their ideas in a group setting and to develop skills that are transferable from one area to another in their lives. Students benefit most when they're involved in projects or activities that last long enough for them to:

- » Develop a sense of belonging,
- » Feel a shared sense of ownership over what they're creating, and
- » Have an awareness of what it means to be personally and jointly responsible for what happens.



Among the Healthy Behaviors programs, four to eight week sessions seem to be the appropriate amount of time for this to take place, depending on the grade levels of students. Cooperative learning that occurs over time gives young people a chance to discover that they can accomplish more by combining their efforts — and that they can reach their goals only if the other students they're working with also reach their goals. For example, children frequently share responsibilities in gardening classes and depend on each other to till the soil, plant the seeds, water the fruits and vegetables as they grow, pull the weeds and harvest the crops.

This is a highly effective way for them to engage with a diverse group of their peers — students with different backgrounds, viewpoints and ideas. And, such collaboration contributes to strengthening their academic performance and helping them develop the interpersonal skills they'll need to be successful in a multicultural world. These aren't only valuable experiences — they're important lessons in life.

Step 2: Focus on empowering students. Much as we might like to think otherwise, we can't force children to be responsible, teach them to be self-confident or insist that they love being physically active or make better choices in the foods they eat when they're not in our programs. These are qualities they have to acquire, decisions they have to make and lifestyles they have to adopt. What we can do, however, is create the environments and provide the kinds of support that will help encourage and motivate them to move in a positive direction.

Empowerment is about providing support and guidance and relinquishing control appropriately and gradually. Students can't assume responsibility if they don't know how to, and most young people won't be eager to actively participate in projects or activities unless they feel comfortable taking at least some risks. It's up to you to help your staff learn how to become coaches, mentors and guides-by-the-side. The pay-off for children and young people will be huge!

Creating situations in which students are increasingly empowered to take on greater responsibility for their learning, their attitudes and their actions is a gift that you and your staff can give to the students in your program. It can make a real difference in their lives.



» *Mt. Diablo CARES'* and *CalSERVES'* gardening classes introduce elementary school students to the basic elements of nutrition — and much more. Within a range of seasonally appropriate fruits and vegetables, children decide what they want to grow. They do most of the work cultivating the soil and planting the seeds. They share responsibility for watering and weeding. They talk about their experiences with their friends and learn from garden educators who are there to support them. And, most of them end up loving fruits and vegetables they've never tried before.

- » *After-School All-Stars, LA's* middle school cooking class begins with teaching safe food preparation and incorporates formal nutrition education once a week. On the other days, students work together to research healthy recipes, come up with their own ingredients and instructions for making things they like and preparing healthy snacks, from fruit smoothies to ceviche. By the end of the session, they've taken on most of the responsibility for the class.
- » *Fitness 4 Life's* dance class teaches students the fundamentals of a variety of dances from hip-hop to salsa and lets them choose the music on their own. They encourage each other and spend time on the weekends practicing with their friends. And, they have opportunities to create their own dances and perform them in culminating, program-wide events.

IV. MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR EVERY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE

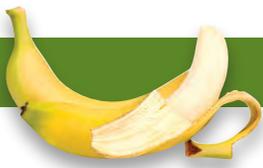
Meaningful youth participation is a critical avenue through which students acquire new knowledge, develop their skills and increase their self-confidence. Many afterschool programs think in terms of providing leadership opportunities for a few children and young people by creating student councils or peer mentorship or mediation teams.

High quality programs go well beyond this. They define participation as a practice that gives every student lots of opportunities to participate in setting goals, developing plans, solving problems and making decisions — not just in particular projects, but in every area of their program's daily activities. Follow their example and make high quality participation for every student a program goal.³⁰

The real value of participation is that it creates a sense of personal efficacy.

Step 1: Systematically develop gateways for participation. The real value of participation is that it creates a sense of personal efficacy — a feeling of effectiveness, usefulness and the ability to influence the environment that surrounds us. Participation helps kids feel valued and valuable, and it helps them develop and internalize this sense on their own. It's worth doing whatever you and your staff can to accelerate and strengthen the process.

- » Students in *Woodcraft Rangers'* middle school programs can recommend any kind of activity they want. As long as the staff agrees that it would be an interesting and valuable component, kids are given responsibility for designing it, identifying what supplies or equipment would be required, what skills the staff would need to have, what kids would get out of it and roughly how much it would cost. And, they have to recruit 19 other students who commit to participating in it. It's a great recruitment strategy – and it adds tremendous value and buy-in to the program.
- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* and *A World Fit For Kids!* include middle school students in their staff hiring process. Consider doing the same thing. Having young people be part of the interview team will provide you with an important perspective, and it will honor students for their input into major program decisions.



It's no wonder that young people in these programs have a sense of ownership and belonging. It's no surprise that they're enthusiastic and committed or that their negotiation skills improve or that they feel a sense of pride in what they accomplish. Opportunities for participation of this kind can change the lives of youngsters in your program, too!

The avenues younger students have for meaningful participation won't be this sophisticated, but this doesn't make them any less important. Giving elementary school students a role in decision-making processes builds their enthusiasm, increases their self-confidence and strengthens their self-esteem. You can do this in relatively simple ways.

- » Invite fifth graders to be part of your program's internal evaluation process. Ask them to help design, distribute and tally student surveys about physical activities and nutrition-related activities they might be interested in having included in your program.
- » Give fourth graders opportunities to be responsible for helping set up equipment for physical activities or cooking clubs and gardens.
- » Ask third graders to interview other students about how the program is going for them, and compile what they learn into written suggestions for your staff to review. If you have a newsletter or magazine club, publish their findings — and your responses.
- » Rotate line leader positions so that every day a different first grader has a chance to decide how students in his or her group will transition from one class to the next, whether it's hopping, jumping, skipping or a combination.



Step 2: Set high and equitable expectations. No matter whether students are physically fit or physically challenged, or whether their preference is for fruits and vegetables or fast food, it's important that your staff sets high, equitable and appropriate expectations. This means getting to know each student as an individual. Every young person already has a history, a set of experiences and perceptions of his or her abilities. In combination, these influence his or her beliefs about what he or she can or should do, for better or worse.

Meeting students where they are is the starting point for setting high expectations. High is a relative term. For some students the sky's the limit. For others, just a small step forward can be a challenge. The better your staff becomes at identifying what high expectations are for individual students, the more success they'll have and the more students will accomplish.

Understanding differences is the basis for setting equitable expectations. Equitable is not the same as equal. Establishing uniform expectations for everyone makes sense when it comes to setting standards for behavior. It doesn't when kids are involved in sports activities, yoga or circuit training. Equitable means fair, and

what may be a fair expectation for one child may not be for another. Help your staff learn to distinguish between equal and equitable expectations and focus on the latter.³¹

Determining how much students, as individuals and as members of a group, can do, and at what rate, is the key to setting appropriate expectations. Younger children are simply not physically capable of doing things that older children are. Overweight students may not be able to do all the things physically fit kids are adept at doing. If your staff expects too little, children will lose interest. If they expect too much, they'll be frustrated and discouraged. Work with your staff to set appropriate expectations for individual students as well as for their groups as a whole.

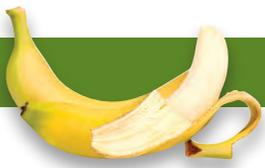
Culminating events provide an opportunity for students to showcase their accomplishments.

Step 3: Recognize and applaud students' accomplishments. Children and young people are intrinsically invested in making progress toward achieving goals that they see as personally important and worthwhile. Helping them set personal goals and acknowledging their progress are two of the most important things you and your staff can do. Provide ongoing, constructive feedback and recognition for their achievements. It will motivate them to continue their efforts.

Culminating events provide an opportunity for students to showcase their accomplishments. These can take place through performances, exhibits or presentations of completed projects, or assemblies where students have an opportunity to display the new skills and talents they've acquired through their experiences in your program. A successful event strengthens students' sense of community, and the impact of each individual's experience can be profoundly positive, whether these events are site-based or program-wide or regional.

- » *Fitness 4 Life* hosts a program-wide semi-annual triathlon, where students participate in swimming, bicycling and cross-country running — all of which they have prepared for during the year. Every youngster gets an award for being part of the event.
- » *After-School All-Stars, LA's* students opened for the Black Eyed Peas at the Key Club in Los Angeles and the Golden State Foods Foundations at the Globe in Anaheim with performances of their hip-hop and break dances. Every student became an instant star!
- » *CalSERVES* hosts annual health fairs and César Chávez Day events, where hundreds of families and community members have an opportunity to see what students have been doing to learn about and contribute to improvement in their eating habits, physical activity and overall health. Performances and exhibits bring the fair to life and serve as a way to recognize children's achievements.

There's also a side benefit to having culminating experiences and events. They serve to motivate students to participate more actively and inspire them to work hard and to do the best they can. They encourage children to set meaningful goals and to work together and independently to achieve them. And, they give young people a sense of pride in what they've learned and accomplished.



V. PROVIDE WAYS FOR EVERY STUDENT TO BE A LEADER AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Today's children are tomorrow's leaders. Giving students opportunities to develop their leadership skills is central to integrating youth development principles and practices into your program. It's vital to helping them recognize that they're capable of influencing positive changes in the world around them. And, it can be of enormous benefit to everyone!

The kids in your program are likely to be much more creative than they're given credit for. Give them a chance to offer their ideas, and you may be surprised at their ability to come up with innovative solutions — even to complex problems. Give them free rein to explore new possibilities, and you might find that their discoveries go well beyond what you and your staff might have considered. Capitalize on the leadership potential of every student in your program and help them achieve it!

Step 1: Help students become advocates. Give students a chance to step up and stand up for what they believe in. You're likely to be thrilled with their responses. Work with them to assess situations and advocate for changes they think are important and want to see implemented. Support their efforts to apply what they're learning in real world situations in their everyday lives.

Kids in many of the Healthy Behaviors programs have joined forces with staff members to make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of *all* of the students at their schools. Provide these kinds of opportunities for students in your program. They'll help kids build their leadership skills and equip them with the belief that they can influence things around them. They have a voice, and adults will listen. Help them become agents of positive change!

- » Students in *Fresno FRESH* are well-known for being nutrition activists. They successfully advocated for the replacement of high-fat and high-sugar snacks in vending machines on their school sites with healthier options such as yogurt, fruit, vegetables, water, 100 percent fruit juice and low-fat milk.
- » Through the student-led efforts of *Club Y.E.S.*, Madera's elementary schools added salad bars and increased the diversity of healthy meals served at lunchtime during the school day.
- » Students in *After-School All-Stars, LA* have not only changed their eating habits, they've gotten their peers to do the same thing. One young entrepreneur who had earned hundreds of dollars selling packets of kool-aid and gummy bears gave it up when she learned that sugar was a major contributor to type 2 diabetes and she was putting her friends at risk.
- » Youngsters attending *Mt. Diablo CARES* have adopted a slogan that continually reminds them of the importance of adopting healthy behaviors. *Put down your fries and exercise* is easy to remember and a great way to reinforce positive practices.

Step 2: Give students a chance to become servant leaders. Providing opportunities for students to be of service to others is a hallmark of exemplary afterschool programs and critical to producing the kinds of leadership outcomes that reflect positive youth development. Like adults, students feel important and valued when they're able to be of service to others. Their self-esteem is built on their personal assessments of their own worth as human beings, and as contributing members of their families, their communities and their society.

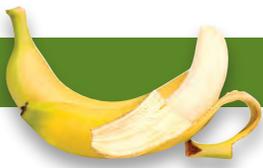
When children feel connected, they're able to develop empathy with others — an essential part of their ability to reach their potential and a quality that all strong leaders possess. Help students develop an ethic of service, and it will serve them well throughout their lives. Let them make decisions about what kinds of service they'll provide and how they'll go about doing it.

- » With the approval of the county health department, members of middle school cooking classes may want to prepare healthy snacks for community members in a local retirement facility — something that connects generations in a positive way.
- » Third graders in gardening classes may want to package some of the fruits and vegetables they've grown and take them to homeless shelters — something that will be greatly appreciated.
- » Kindergarten and first grade students in yoga or tae-bo classes might decide to put on a demonstration at a senior center — something that everyone will love and the little ones will be proud of!

No matter what they select, give older students primary responsibility for designing, developing and carrying projects through to completion, and evaluating what they've done. It will strengthen their leadership skills and teach them invaluable lessons in life. Let younger students assume as much responsibility as they can. It will prepare them to become leaders.

Step 3: Invest in helping children create the future! In the final analysis, the purpose of integrating nutrition and physical activity approaches with youth development principles and practices in your program is to make it possible for kids to acquire the knowledge, adopt the attitudes and practice the behaviors they'll need for healthy habits that can last for a lifetime. Children and young people who become servant leaders and advocates for change among their peers, in their families and in their communities have the potential to alter lives for the better in a huge way — both now and for decades to come! Doing everything you can to ensure that this happens is up to you, your staff and your partners. Make the investment, and help children lead the way!





INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #2:

Integrate Nutrition and Physical Activity Approaches with Youth Development Principles

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program's leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

- 1) We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
1	Our staff understands the principles and practices of youth development.					
2	Our staff understands that how they approach their work is as important as the activities they provide.					
3	Our staff creates and maintains a physically safe environment for all staff and students.					
4	Our staff creates and maintains an emotionally safe environment for all staff and students.					
5	Our staff demonstrates respect for differences in the physical and cognitive abilities, appearances and skills of students.					
6	Our staff demonstrates respect for diversity in abilities, skill levels and interests of students.					
7	Our staff develops a sense of belonging and self-confidence as well as knowledge and skill building among students.					
8	Our staff holds high, equitable and developmentally appropriate expectations for all students in our program.					

continued next page

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #2: Integrate Nutrition and Physical Activity Approaches with Youth Development Principles continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
<i>Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</i>						
9	Students feel supported by and connected with our staff.					
10	Students are confident that they can openly discuss their concerns or anxieties with our staff.					
11	Students participate in the planning, development and debriefing of a variety of activities that reflect their interests.					
12	Students engage in a variety of experiential learning experiences that allow them to internalize and master new and life-long skills.					
13	Students are respectful of each other, regardless of differences in physical and cognitive abilities, appearance and skills.					
14	Students engage in a variety of small group, large group and individual activities.					
15	Students are enthusiastic and excited about learning new things and acquiring new skills in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.					
16	Students are increasingly knowledgeable about the importance of developing and maintaining healthy habits.					
17	All students have the opportunity to participate in activities, regardless of their gender, age, physical size or abilities.					
18	Students have regular opportunities to assess what is working and what could be improved in the physical activity and nutrition education activities in which they are participating.					
18	We work closely with parents and guardians to provide them with information about the importance of healthy food choices and physical activity.					
19	We educate parents and guardians about available resources and ways to access them.					

Key:

- 1) We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.





Practice #3

Offer Exciting, Engaging and Meaningful LEARNING EXPERIENCES



Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Get students excited and engaged
- 2 Make sure learning experiences are meaningful
- 3 Reinforce and expand on classroom learning
- 4 Link activities with outcomes

“The biggest change we’ve seen in the last few years is that every child is totally engaged and really excited about learning. This only happened when we made sure the experiences we offer are meaningful to them and not just important to us.”

– Lorie Werner, Director, Club Y.E.S.



PRACTICE #3:

Offer Exciting, Engaging and Meaningful Learning Experiences

Your program can make a huge difference in the lives of children and young people by providing them with opportunities to develop their skills and expand their understanding of themselves and the world around them. It can help them increase their physical activity and improve their physical fitness. It can introduce them to new ideas and help them master new concepts. And, it can contribute to changing their food preferences and improving their eating habits.

You and your staff can be part of the solution to the childhood obesity crisis. You can help ensure that the children you're working with won't be among those who will face ongoing health problems as adults or have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. You have a unique opportunity to create the future and leave a lasting legacy by ensuring that the activities you offer and the approaches you use are engaging, meaningful and appropriately challenging.

You have a unique opportunity to create the future and leave a lasting legacy.

- » Activities are exciting when they tap into youngsters' natural curiosity and interests and spark their enthusiasm for learning.
- » They're engaging when young people are invested enough not only to be motivated to join in but to stay committed enough to follow through.
- » They're appropriately challenging when they inspire students to try new things and achieve new goals.
- » They're meaningful when they create an environment that leads to positive changes in children's attitudes and behavior that are capable of becoming lifetime habits.

It's one thing to offer a few activities and hope for the best. It's another to do what it takes to ensure that the experiences students have make a difference in their lives. No matter what activities you offer, include a variety of learning experiences that are relevant and interesting not just to students in general but to the students who attend your program. Make a commitment to provide young people with opportunities to reinforce what they're learning during school and apply what they learn in their everyday lives. Find ways to help children become more self-aware, and inspire them to make healthy, life-enhancing choices!

I. GET STUDENTS EXCITED AND ENGAGED

Getting students excited and engaged requires much more than just having them show up. It asks you to establish an environment that youngsters see as a caring, supportive place where they're physically and emotionally safe – one where they know that they'll be respected by your staff and by their peers. It goes beyond telling children what activities they'll be assigned to, to allowing them to participate in the decisions about what will be offered and giving them choices about how they'll be spending their time.

It means more than expecting young people to try new things and stretch themselves to perform at higher and higher levels, when some of them may not feel comfortable with what you're asking or confident in their capabilities. In short, there's a real difference between kids being really excited, engaged and enthusiastic and just being present – and it's up to you and your staff to make this happen!

Step 1: Be sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and experiences. Begin by creating a climate of respect in which ethnic and cultural diversity are accepted and celebrated. Offer a wide variety of experiences and use strategies that ensure that all students are included and everyone has the opportunity to be successful. Provide classes that reflect the ethnic diversity of the communities where students live and the traditions in which they've been raised. Be sure that students relate with each other in non-threatening, fair and cooperative ways. Follow these Healthy Behaviors programs' examples:

- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* offers hip-hop, break dancing and salsa in middle school programs that have predominantly inner-city African-American and Latino populations.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* includes drumming and Tae-Kwon-Do in schools that have large numbers of suburban Asian and South Pacific Island students and offers hip-hop aerobics with a disc jockey at its more predominately African American sites.
- » *Fitness 4 Life* offers ballet folklórico for its largely Latino student population, many of whom are from migrant farming families on California's central coast.
- » *San Francisco ExCEL*, the *YMCA of Silicon Valley*, *Club Y.E.S.* and *Mt. Diablo CARES* include multicultural cooking classes for their ethnically diverse student populations.

Step 2: Be sure activities are aligned with students' interests. The more your staff knows about the students they're working with, the better off everyone will be. Don't second-guess whether particular activities will be important to them – find out. Be sure your staff is familiar with the demographics of your student population. The socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences of students matter, and knowing more about them will help you design your program in ways that motivate children and young people to get involved and stay excited about learning.





Give students opportunities to work with you as partners in designing, implementing and evaluating program activities. They'll come up with great ideas. They'll let you know what's working and what's not. And, they'll have a vested interest in what happens. All of this strengthens youth development – and leads to greater student engagement. Student input into program planning is central to many of the Healthy Behaviors programs' philosophies because it works!

- » Ladies Choice, a young women's physical fitness club, was developed as a result of *After-School All-Stars, LA* student surveys.
- » Like many of its program components, *Woodcraft Rangers'* Low Riders Bicycle Club was initiated by students, and most of the planning has been done through a student-staff partnership.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* involves youngsters in ongoing assessments of what's working and what needs to be changed to make its program as exciting and relevant to youngsters as possible.



Step 3: Offer a variety of physical activities. Incorporate a broad spectrum of activities that students may already be familiar with and excited about into your program. Include team games and sports like basketball, baseball, soccer and cheerleading — and balance these kinds of activities with others that they can do on their own or with one or two other people, such as walking, low-impact jogging and aerobics.

Some children will be excited about learning to play volleyball, and others will be thrilled with earning martial arts belts for their personal accomplishments. Some kids will think that being on a soccer team is the best of all possible worlds, and others will prefer weight or strength training or table tennis. Team games and

sports help children learn the value of working together to achieve a common goal. Activities that are based on individual performance will promote development of skills and habits for lifelong personal fitness and help them learn more about themselves as unique human beings. Both will help them improve their flexibility, endurance, muscular strength and aerobic capacity — all of which are essential to their physical fitness.

Tap into students' potential talents by offering activities such as tennis, golf and swimming. The United States Tennis Association provides equipment, including rackets, balls and nets, and offers training at a very low cost for programs such as yours. The Tiger Woods Foundation supports youth programs, and many public, city-run golf courses provide golf clubs, balls and discounted green fees to students in afterschool programs. Many programs partner with local YMCAs and community centers to offer swimming lessons.

- » *A World Fit For Kids!* offers lacrosse and partners with Los Angeles' major league lacrosse team, Riptide, which provides opportunities for students enrolled in the program to attend their games at no cost.
- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* includes skateboarding, fencing, Wii Fitness and golf.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* makes Zenergy, KidTribe, Caterpillar Mat, karate and break dancing available to its students.

There are many ways to make nutrition education exciting and engaging to students.

Step 4: Make nutrition education real for students. There are many ways to make nutrition education exciting and engaging to students. Those that work best are based on acquiring the skills and knowledge described in the state's Health Education Standards and provide hands-on experiences that allow kids to try new things and creatively apply what they're learning in real situations.

- » *CalSERVES* and *Fitness 4 Life* regularly offer taste test opportunities for youngsters to try new fruits and vegetables, such as kiwis, mandarins, eggplants, persimmons and squash.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* provides field trips for kids to visit farmers' markets and go on grocery store tours where they practice comparing the nutritional value and costs of various products by reading labels and calculating comparative costs.
- » Students attending *After-School All-Stars, LA* write, direct and produce videos comparing healthy and unhealthy foods.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* publishes a student-written magazine that features nutrition and presents it in a powerful, age-appropriate way.
- » All of the youngsters enrolled in *Mt. Diablo CARES* work in the program's community garden and take fruits and vegetables home to their families.
- » *Club Y.E.S.* offers a unique and highly popular component called Crime Solvers Investigation (CSI) which integrates nutrition into year-long mystery solving activities.

Step 5: Draw on your staff's talents and strengths. Whether students will be engaged doesn't just depend on what activities your program offers. It also depends on how skilled, enthusiastic and talented your staff is. It's hard to get kids excited about being physically active when the adult who is working with them would much rather be doing something else. It sends exactly the wrong message if a staff member is sitting on the sidelines when students are struggling during circuit training.

It's naive to think that a staff person who prefers eating at local fast food restaurants and microwaving prepared dinners at home will suddenly be able to inspire students to try healthy recipes in her cooking class. Someone who has no experience with or love for gardening isn't likely to get students excited about trying unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. Students know when someone really knows what they're doing or is just winging it. They'll pick up the signals staff members send. Be sure they're the right ones!



To the extent possible, be sure that staff members are assigned to work with students who are in the age groups they connect well with. A person who's skilled in karate may be thrilled working with seventh graders and frustrated if he's assigned to third graders. Someone who loves the free-spiritedness of kindergarteners and the enthusiasm they have for trying just about anything may have a very difficult time dealing with fifth graders who may say everything is boring.

Although there aren't any easy ways to avoid these challenges, these are all very real examples of what can happen when the wrong people are placed in the wrong positions. Try not to let this happen in your program. Pay attention to individual staff members' interests and expertise. Go with their strengths, and they'll be excited and engaged — and so will their students.

II. MAKE SURE ACTIVITIES ARE MEANINGFUL

Activities are meaningful when they meet the needs and interests of *all* students — regardless of their physical characteristics, abilities or talents — *and* motivate them to make healthy habits a way of life. Ensuring that this happens requires focusing on both cognitive and physical outcomes — and not just one or the other. Communicate ideas and help students use their critical thinking skills to understand the concepts presented to them. Find creative ways for students to work and learn together, to spend time exploring new things and to acquire a better understanding of causal relationships — including relationships between nutrition and health and their physical and emotional well-being.

When students see an activity as personally meaningful, they'll be excited about learning. When they don't, they won't. The amount of energy they'll devote to something depends largely on:

- » How much they value the activity,
- » How confident they are that they can fully participate regardless of their abilities,
- » How much of their success will be determined on the basis of their individual progress and accomplishments, and/or
- » How clearly they see the personal benefits in terms of their own well-being.

When students see an activity as personally meaningful, they'll be excited about learning.

Step 1: Make the time kids spend in your program count. Children who acquire healthy eating habits and are physically active at a young age are much more likely to be well, stay well and do well in school. There's substantial evidence indicating that important health and fitness benefits can be expected for most children and youth who engage in 60 or more minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.³² Build this time into your program — and make it count!

It takes time for kids to acquire new skills and develop new habits. Children who've been couch potatoes since they were old enough to be put in front of a television set aren't going to suddenly make physical activity a way of life. Seventh graders who are used to drinking three soft drinks a day aren't likely to jump at the chance to replace them with water. And, first graders who want a hamburger, fries and free toy right after school might be less thrilled with the idea of a celery and peanut butter and juice snack when they come to your program.

You can't expect things to change overnight — and neither can you and your staff afford not to do everything you can to accelerate the change process. Once you've determined what activities you'll offer, be intentional about what you do. For example, if you allow free play in your program, replace it with structure that gets kids moving *and* promotes skill-building. Children need it, they'll appreciate it and it will make a difference in the quality of their experiences and the impact these have on their physical fitness. If you're offering different activities every day, or even three times a week, remember this: learning and skill-building depend on consistency and continual, positive reinforcement.

Step 2: Personalize nutrition and make it relevant. It's one thing for students to be taught about the importance of adopting healthy eating habits and another for them to change their food preferences. The competition is tough. The influence of television, friends and family is strong, and the messages that are sent are compelling. Students spend a third more time in front of the television than in the classroom. The food and beverage industry spends \$10 billion a year to influence them — and it works. The average child sees 40,000 commercials a year, 85 percent of which focus on fast food, candy, cereal and toys!³³

Your program already dramatically reduces the hours kids spend watching TV just by having them with you during the afternoon hours. It's equally important for you and your staff to help counteract the messages students are receiving — in ways that connect with them and influence their choices. Be real and be relevant. Meet children and young people where they are. In an age-appropriate way, tell them and show them what poor eating habits can lead to — and provide them with opportunities to experience how much difference good nutrition can make in their own lives.

- » *A World Fit For Kids!* helps students track what they eat, how much exercise they get and how they feel by providing them with journals and pedometers.
- » As part of a fitness challenge, several overweight students in *After-School All-Stars, LA* lost weight. Under the supervision of a doctor and with the support of his friends and the staff, one extremely overweight student lost 50 pounds in a year.

Step 3: Address different learning styles. The way you and your staff approach your work is as important as the activities you offer. Students come to your program with different learning styles and different experiences with learning. Some may be doing very well in school, and others may not have had much success. Some may be comfortable in a structured classroom



environment, and others will have a tough time sitting still. Some will learn best through listening, and others will respond better through hands-on experiences. Some may be able to concentrate well, and others may have a very short attention span.

Be sure your staff addresses the whole range of learning styles when they're working with students. When they're giving instructions, it's important to tell students what they want them to do, to show them how to do it and to ask them whether they really understand what's expected of them. It's also useful to have one or two students demonstrate these things to their peers, especially with younger students. Reinforcing what you want students to learn up front can save a lot of confusion later, and keep kids from losing interest or becoming frustrated.

Help your staff learn how to control the pace of what's happening.

Help your staff learn how to control the pace of what's happening. If things are moving too fast, a lot of children won't be able to keep up. If they're moving too slowly, they'll get bored. If students are engaged in vigorous physical activities, stop periodically for them to take a water break and rest. If they're watching a video on the food pyramid, press the pause button occasionally to allow for comments or questions. Give youngsters an

opportunity to debrief their experiences by talking about what worked for them, what might be improved and what they learned. All of this will go a long way toward ensuring that every student in your program does well — and has a positive experience.

Step 4: Use incentives appropriately. A lot of programs give out tokens or points that can be exchanged for prizes, privileges or rewards. If you do this, it's worth asking yourself and your staff why. Some will say that it motivates students to do better. Others believe that incentives such as these are easy to use and improve behavior. While there is some truth to this, there are also serious drawbacks.

Despite the widespread use of incentives in both the educational system and in afterschool programs, there is growing evidence that the impact is short-term — and that their extensive use can have undesired results.³⁴ If your real goal is for students' eating habits to improve and for physical activity to become a way of life, their motivation must be intrinsic, not extrinsic. Students who expect something in return for everything they do don't become self-motivated — and self-motivation is the only thing that leads to long-term change.

This doesn't mean eliminating incentives, but it does mean carefully evaluating the incentives you use and how you use them. Having a pizza party at the end of every month that rewards students for good behavior may be the wrong choice — unless pizzas are topped with low fat cheese and vegetables rather than pepperoni. If you're trying to encourage healthy eating preferences, it may detract from their taking on more ownership for their own behavior. Choose incentives that reinforce what you want students to be learning and are closely linked with the attitudes and behaviors you want them to adopt, not just when they're in your program but also when they're on their own.

- » By holding its triathlon twice a year, *Fitness 4 Life* has introduced a powerful incentive for students to improve their swimming, bicycling and running skills.
- » By giving students a chance to participate in a program-wide cheerleading competition, *After-School All-Stars, LA* ensures that they'll be motivated to practice every day.
- » By letting students prepare healthy snacks for parent and family nights and other special events, *Woodcraft Rangers* offers an appropriate incentive for them to come up with creative ideas and improve their cooking skills.
- » By holding its Nutrition Olympics, *CalSERVES* motivates youngsters to learn more about fruits and vegetables in order to answer questions and earn tickets to participate in exciting games, including shot-put with melons, javelin throwing with cucumbers and weight lifting with sacks of potatoes.

III. REINFORCE AND EXPAND ON CLASSROOM LEARNING

Students spend 180 days in school, and the equivalent of an additional 90 days a year in your program. Reinforcing what they learn in the classroom matters, and so does increasing the time they have to be physically active and the opportunities they have to apply what they're learning in nutrition education classes through real-life experiences. Take advantage of this by being intentional in how you approach your work.

Step 1: Align activities with state standards and frameworks. Academic standards are great resources for strengthening students' skills in a variety of critical areas. Published by the California Department of Education, these describe what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels. Not only will knowledge of these standards provide you and your staff with ideas on how to enrich your program's activities, they'll give you a common language and framework that principals and certificated teachers will appreciate.

These resources are valuable tools for ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of the activities you offer. Aligning activities with California's *Physical Education Framework*, *Physical Education Model Content Standards*, *Health Framework* and *Health Education Content Standards* is an important part of developing high quality afterschool programs and achieving worthwhile goals.³⁵ The leadership team of *A World Fit For Kids!* was trained on the *Physical Education Model Content Standards* so that they would better understand how to assist their students and staff build on the knowledge and skills students need for developing healthy lifestyles that will last a lifetime.

In addition to the more commonly offered physical activities such as salsa and hip-hop, an increasing number of programs are offering swing dancing, line dancing and ballroom dancing. These provide an effective way to help children and young people meet *Physical Education Model Content Standards* by helping them develop an introductory understanding of movement





concepts and building their skills in performing a variety of motor skills. And students enjoy these activities — a lot!

Cooking clubs are obvious choices for helping students meet California's *Health Education Content Standards* — and math and science content standards when students learn how to measure ingredients, change recipe quantities, determine equivalents and learn about chemical interactions and changes that take place during cooking. They'll also help students develop nutrition literacy skills by learning to read labels on prepared foods and comparison shop for the best prices and food value.



Gardening projects that are appropriately designed and delivered can be used to reinforce nutrition education and introduce third graders to fundamental patterns in nature—a basic science standard for that grade level—and provide opportunities for youngsters to reinforce and strengthen their language arts, mathematics and other skills at the same time.³⁶

Step 2: Be smart about the resources you use. Many of the programs we've worked with integrate the resources and approaches of SPARK, CATCH, the *Children's Power Play! Campaign*, Dairy Council of California, USDA's Team Nutrition and resources from CANFIT that are research-based.³⁷ CASRC and the San Diego County Office of Education's web site featuring physical activities for afterschool programs also offer excellent resources.³⁸ The *Network for a Healthy California's* web site offers healthy recipes and recipes tailored to various ethnic tastes.³⁹

A World Fit For Kids! provides their own Mentors in MotionSM training to all of their program and administrative staff so that they understand what a quality physical activity program is and how to conduct it with students.⁴⁰ This helps staff learn how to be more physically active themselves and learn success strategies for their personal and professional use.

There are many benefits to using these resources in your program, especially when you have new or inexperienced staff members. If your staff is more experienced, using these curricula is still important. They provide a sound basis for programming, but can be supplemented with appropriate material developed by your seasoned staff. When the approaches you adopt are intentional and the curricula you use already have proven results, physical activity is more likely to contribute to improved physical fitness, and nutrition education has a better chance of resulting in healthier eating habits.

Step 3: Create a healthy environment. As described in California's *Health Framework*, coordinated school health is a communitywide approach that includes eight components that recognize the multiple environments that affect students' behavior and attitudes, and influence their eating patterns and physical activity levels.⁴¹ These eight components are nutrition services,

health services, health education, physical education, health promotion for staff, safe and healthy school environment, psychological and counseling services, and parent and community involvement. Some of the most valuable ways to integrate these components into your program include the following:

- » Get to know school health personnel, including nurses, counselors, physical educators, health educators and nutrition service staff.
- » Participate as a member of local school wellness committees. This enables you to build alliances with others who are charged with the health and physical well-being of your students.
- » If Healthy Start or a family resource center is located on one or more of your sites, be sure to build a relationship with their staff. There are many areas in which you can pool your resources.
- » Work with food service managers to provide fruits and vegetables in addition to other healthy snacks made available through the USDA food and nutrition programs. Negotiate with them, as *Woodcraft Rangers* has, to store food you may be able to bring into your program through local food banks and farmers' markets.
- » Join food service staff, principals, community health professionals and others in advocating for more healthy choices throughout the school day and campus, and work to replace unhealthy snacks available in vending machines with healthier alternatives, as *Fresno FRESH* has done.
- » Work with districts and county offices of education to provide training. *Club Y.E.S.* works with the Madera Unified School District to train its staff. The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* contracts with the Santa Clara County Office of Education.
- » Be certain that special events, celebrations, family nights and staff meetings offer healthy foods and beverages rather than candy, sodas or other foods of poor nutritional quality. Consider a zero-tolerance approach to allowing unhealthy food and drinks in your program, as *Mt. Diablo CARES* has.



IV. LINK ACTIVITIES WITH OUTCOMES

A growing body of research and experience tells us that high quality afterschool programs are making a real difference in the lives of children and young people, and their families and communities.⁴² The Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with go beyond offering activities to linking activities with outcomes, and measuring and managing progress toward their achievement. Doing the same thing can make a huge difference in your program's success — and in the impact you have on children's lives.

Step 1: Think before you act. There are several important decisions you'll need to make before you create a system that enables you to measure and manage outcomes, or changes in students' attitudes and behavior, when it comes to their eating habits and physical fitness.



Considering the alternatives in advance will help you design a system that will work for you and your program.

- 1) Select outcomes that are specific and realistic. An overarching outcome such as *children will develop healthier lifestyles* will need to be broken down into something tangible and measurable. This might be that youngsters will adopt healthier eating patterns as demonstrated by increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables or consuming fewer calorie dense foods such as chips, fries, candy or donuts.
- 2) Pay attention to grant requirements. Be sure the outcomes you want are well-matched with the interests of your stakeholders and funders. *CalSERVES*, *Mt. Diablo CARES*, *Fresno FRESH* and *San Francisco ExCEL* all have *Network for a Healthy California* funding. *After-School All-Stars, LA* is partially funded by The California Endowment. *Fresno FRESH*, *San Francisco ExCEL* and the *YMCA of Silicon Valley* all have Carol M. White Physical Education Program grants. If you have one or more grants, be sure to give the highest priority to their requirements when you select the outcomes you want to assess.
- 3) Identify indicators that will accurately measure changes and capture the impact your program is having on students in the areas you've selected. Many of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with use district FITNESSGRAM® results. The upside is that they're independent, objective measures of students' fitness in several areas, including aerobic capacity, muscular strength, endurance and flexibility. The downside is that district data are only available for 5th, 7th and 9th grade students.

Although CDE mandates FITNESSGRAM® testing only for 5th, 7th and 9th grade students, *A World Fit For Kids!* conducts their own FITNESSGRAM® testing with 4th–12th graders as an evaluation tool for goal setting and self-improvement. They do pre-testing at the beginning of the year and then their coaches/mentors assist the kids in practicing areas that need improvement. They are then tested again in late spring so that students can measure their own success. It makes sense to follow their example. If you are unable to conduct your own FITNESSGRAM® testing, you may want to use other measures of physical activity that are available through the *Network for a Healthy California*.⁴³

- 4) Determine the extent to which you have concrete data to support your conclusions, including whether the records you have in place will let you know how often and how long children and young people have participated in what kinds of activities. Individual student attendance records will have to be sorted to determine these things. Be sure you have a large enough sample of pre-tests to account for students who may leave your program. The *Network's* impact evaluation protocol recommends that at least 50 students complete the pre- and post-test process.⁴⁴

Step 2: Track individual students' progress. Changes in food choices and physical fitness can be assessed through student surveys, small group discussions and observations of student choices. Whatever approach you choose, be sure you link activities to clearly defined outcomes and track progress in real time and over time. Use the information you gather to continually improve the quality of your program and the outcomes for children and young people.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* uses FITNESSGRAM® assessments in aerobic capacity, upper body strength and endurance, abdominal strength and endurance, and flexibility. They make certain that students understand why tests are taking place and how they relate to their own individual goals.
- » Students in *A World Fit For Kids!* are given an exercise prescription based on their tests as a way of addressing areas in need of improvement and designing a goal-setting calendar where students set their own goals and timelines, and track their progress.

No matter what tools you use or measures you decide on, be sure that your staff members and students understand not just what they're doing, but how and why this impacts students, both now and in the future. The important thing is to help students learn how to assess their own fitness and monitor improvement toward reaching their goals. Setting goals, monitoring progress and meeting goals will not only motivate them, it will help build their self-confidence and self-esteem and contribute to life-long, healthy patterns of behavior.

Step 3: Look for the answers to five questions. An outcome is a change from one point in time to another. When you're conducting any kind of assessment to identify outcomes and link them with the activities your program has provided and the impact it has had, the five most important questions you can ask are these:

- 1) What changed?
- 2) For whom did the change occur?
- 3) How much change really occurred?
- 4) Can the change be documented?
- 5) Did the change really make a difference in students lives?

Some of the information you gather should come from independent, objective sources that are available through the schools you're working with. For example, assessing changes in students' physical fitness can be done by examining FITNESSGRAM® results. Several of the programs we've worked with have used these, and the results are impressive.

- » Across all of its sites, over three-quarters of 5th grade students in *CalSERVES* were in the healthy fitness zone, far surpassing the previous year's results and the schools' as a whole.
- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* did the same thing and found that 81 percent of the students in its program who were unable to pass five of the six elements of the FITNESSGRAM® at the beginning of the year were able to do so at the end of the year.





- » **Mt. Diablo CARES** dramatically increased the availability of fruits and vegetables at its sites and, as a result, every student more than doubled the number of servings they ate each day.

Step 4: Use research-validated surveys. While it's tempting to design your own surveys, it makes a lot more sense to use those that are research-based, validated and available. The Nutrition Education Survey, published by the *Network for a Healthy California*, is one of these.⁴⁵ It will lend credibility to the results. In addition, Module E of the California Healthy Kids Survey⁴⁶ includes questions related to students' eating habits and levels of physical activity.

Take time to identify smaller wins along the way to achieving bigger goals. Recognize and applaud your successes as they happen.

A variety of less formal, more participatory and possibly more subjective, assessments can and should also be used. These include checklists, self and peer assessments, staff observations, portfolios, student and staff journals and parent and teacher surveys. These tools engage students and staff, and will provide you with evidence that your program is making a difference in students' attitudes and behavior.

In 2009–2010, the *Network* is pilot testing use of their on-line Geographic Information System (GIS) and Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (CX³) with youth in afterschool programs. The mapping and surveys that are part of this series allow users to examine the food environment within walking distance of their schools. Once

the pilot phase is completed, the surveys and methods may be available upon request along with training.

Step 5: Publicize and celebrate your successes. One of the most serious challenges programs face is that it takes quite a while to achieve goals that are really worthwhile — and it takes a serious investment of time, energy and money. It's easy to forget that early successes can and do make a real difference in keeping you, your staff and your partners excited and enthusiastic about the work you're all doing. Even small achievements can go a long way toward motivating your staff to stay committed and involved — and they take power away from cynics. Publicize your successes to your community and the media, on your web site, and to local, state and national policymakers! This can be an invaluable way to build and maintain support for your program, which can ultimately impact funding decisions. See Practice 6 for additional information on publicizing and marketing your accomplishments.

Concrete achievements, no matter how small, are the building blocks for bigger accomplishments. Take time to identify smaller wins along the way to achieving bigger goals. Recognize and applaud your successes as they happen. If one of your goals is to provide students with more fruits and vegetables, you don't have to wait until you hit the mark that **Mt. Diablo CARES** has achieved. Celebrate when you have the first food bank or farmers' market delivery!

If one of your objectives is to raise \$50,000 in the next year, make a big deal out of the first \$10,000 grant you receive. Who cares if it's only 20 percent of what you want? It's a major step in the right direction!

Celebrate your successes with everyone. Give your staff hand-written thank-you notes expressing your appreciation for the hard work they're doing. Throw a party for the children in your program featuring healthy snacks and physical activity, and invite parents. Highlight your successes in a newsletter. Recognize, appreciate and publicize every accomplishment along the way—it matters more than you might think!





INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #3:

Offer Exciting, Engaging and Meaningful Learning Experiences

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program's leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

1. We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
1	Our staff offers health-enhancing activities in nutrition education and physical activity that are exciting and engaging to students.					
2	Our staff offers activities and projects that are appropriate for students' ages and developmental levels.					
3	Our staff is knowledgeable about research-based, behavior-focused nutrition education and approaches.					
4	Our staff is knowledgeable about research-based, behavior-focused physical activities and approaches.					
5	The curricula our staff use and approaches they take are exciting to students and incorporate their interests, choices and preferences.					
6	Our staff offers activities that are culturally relevant and reflect the different interests of children in our program.					
7	Our staff is aware of cultural differences, preferences and styles of students in our program.					

continued next page

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #3: Offer Exciting, Engaging and Meaningful Learning Experiences continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
8	Students actively participate in ways that strengthen their physical, cognitive and social skills.					
9	Students are continually exposed to new ideas and experiences, which motivate them to adopt healthy lifestyles and acquire life-long skills.					
10	Students have opportunities to participate in vigorous physical activity.					
11	Students have a variety of opportunities to practice making healthy food choices.					
Partnerships with Schools, Parents and Community-Based Organizations						
12	Our nutrition approaches are aligned with the Health Framework, the eight components of coordinated school health and the Health Education Content Standards.					
13	Our physical activity approaches are aligned with the Physical Education Framework, the eight components of coordinated school health, and the Physical Education Model Content Standards.					
14	We engage parents and guardians as partners in developing and implementing nutrition and physical activity in our program.					
15	We engage community partners in developing and implementing nutrition and physical activity in our program.					
Evaluation and Assessments						
16	We consistently link activities and projects with specific desired outcomes in nutrition.					
17	We consistently link activities and projects with specific desired outcomes in physical activity.					
18	We have tools in place to measure and manage progress toward achieving our program’s goals and individual student goals.					
19	We regularly assess changes in the attitudes and behavior of staff and students as they relate to nutrition.					
20	We regularly assess changes in the attitudes and behavior of staff and students as they relate to physical activity.					

Key:

1. We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.





Practice #4

Commit to SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



“More than anything else, we’ve learned that we can’t go it alone. We can help children improve their eating preferences and become more active, but we can’t make a lasting difference without the support of their parents, our schools and our communities.”

– Cathie Mostovoy, CEO, Woodcraft Rangers

Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Give students a variety of off-site learning experiences
- 2 Make community service a priority
- 3 Connect with parents and family members
- 4 Collaborate with local agencies, nonprofits, businesses and the media
- 5 Be proactive in your community
- 6 Develop close relationships with schools



PRACTICE #4:

Commit to School, Family and Community Engagement

Reach out beyond your immediate environment! Engage your community, connect with the families of youngsters who attend your program and work closely with the schools where your sites are located. Children and young people are the prime beneficiaries of community engagement, but not the only ones. When parents, local organizations and schools become more involved, they'll become better partners and more willing contributors. They'll provide invaluable resources, many of which will have a positive and lasting impact on youngsters' health and well-being. And when you reach out, you can make an even bigger difference than you might think by:

- » Giving students a variety of off-site learning experiences;
- » Making community service a priority;
- » Connecting with parents and family members;
- » Collaborating with local agencies, nonprofits, businesses and the media;
- » Being proactive in your community; and
- » Developing close relationships with schools.



I. GIVE STUDENTS A VARIETY OF OFF-SITE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Students are well aware of their immediate environments. They know where the fast food restaurants are, what toys are currently offered in kids' meals and what it costs to super-size a hamburger, french fries and a soda, but they may not have much experience with other kinds of restaurants. They'll tell you which corner markets they shop at, and what's available, but may not have spent much time in supermarkets.

They know which parks are safe places to ride their bicycles or shoot baskets, and which aren't. They're all too familiar with where gangs show up to intimidate them or to recruit them, but may not realize that there are organizations that are ready, willing and able to support them. They have favorite professional sports teams, but haven't attended games even if sports arenas are nearby. They may live near the ocean or the mountains, but have never walked on the sand or hiked on a trail. They may know how to navigate through their school environments, but not how to function effectively or competently in their larger community.

Give children opportunities that would normally be financially prohibitive or geographically inaccessible to their families as well as those that aren't expensive or far away but that they just don't know about. Introduce them to new experiences and give them a chance to apply what

they're learning in real-life settings. Find ways for them to contribute to their communities. Help them acquire a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. Their self-confidence will grow. They'll begin to believe that they can influence things around them. And, they'll learn how to make healthier and safer choices that can last throughout their lifetimes.

Step 1: Ask kids what they know about their community. Begin by identifying parts of your community that students are most and least familiar with and those that they would like to learn more about. Draw on their knowledge about their community. It will help to shine a spotlight on your students' interests, expose gaps in their awareness and reveal a lot about their lifestyles. This will give you the information you need to build on and expand your program's existing enrichment components by including off-site learning experiences that can increase your students' physical activity and motivate them to improve their eating habits. In tough economic times, it's more important than ever to capitalize on opportunities that can be provided at little or no cost — and many of these are available in your community.

- » *Fitness 4 Life* discovered that although their students live close to the ocean, very few had ever been there and even fewer knew how to swim. For five years, the program partnered with the YMCA to ensure that over 2,000 students had the opportunity to acquire this skill. This year they changed their facility location to a local high school. That collaboration cut their facility usage fees in half. All the fees now support their local high school sports programs.
- » *Fresno FRESH* learned early on that youngsters living in close proximity to national parks had never visited them, and arranged for three-day camping trips that literally change their lives.

Step 2: Make nutrition education real. As part of what may be more formal educational approaches to helping children improve their eating habits, give them real-world opportunities to learn about the nutritional content of foods and the importance of comparison shopping. Create a *Top Chef* competition. Have your staff set a budget and ask small groups of five kids each to plan a healthy dish for the entire group. Teach them how to read labels and to know what to look for in fresh fruits and vegetables. Bring in newspaper ads and coupons so they can begin to get a feel for how they can take advantage of the cost savings that these provide and the benefits that come from advance planning.

Give students a few days to plan together, with your staff serving as their guides-by-the-side. The process will help them learn to work collaboratively, and it will sharpen their problem solving, decision making and critical thinking skills. It will also give them real insight into the cost of food and the importance of being creative. Once they've done this, schedule a visit to a supermarket and let students put their knowledge into practice. Give them a set amount

Draw on their knowledge about their community. It will help to shine a spotlight on your students' interests, expose gaps in their awareness and reveal a lot about their lifestyles.



of money to spend and be sure they take the coupons with them! If public transportation is available, use it. It will increase the chances that students will encourage their parents to shop there as well.



Make arrangements with the food service manager at the school site to use the cafeteria kitchen or see if the school has a cooking cart you can use. Spend the next day having the kids prepare dishes with the ingredients they've purchased. Judge the competition on the basis of taste, creativity and presentation, and give the winning group a voucher for food at the supermarket you've visited (many store managers will give this to you free of charge). After the students have eaten, ask them to reflect on their experience, talk about why they made particular choices and discuss what they've learned. They'll probably talk more about the shopping experience than the food itself — and this is just what you want!

- » *CalSERVES* takes kids on supermarket walking tours and has them join in scavenger hunts to find healthy foods. It's a real eye-opener — and it has made a difference in their families' shopping patterns.
- » *Fresno FRESH* works closely with Save Mart, which offers tours that emphasize the importance of shopping the store's perimeter, teaches kids how to read labels and includes a story time in the produce section that helps youngsters learn more about how fruits and vegetables are grown.

Step 3: Capitalize on local opportunities. Take kids out to an early dinner! If you offer cooking, gardening or nutrition education classes, take students to a moderately priced restaurant that serves healthy meals. Let them order from the menu and create an environment that shows them that dining can be a positive social experience. Many restaurant managers will offer deep discounts on prices during the off-hours in the afternoon. Negotiate a price in advance and agree on a maximum cost. Most folks will be happy to accommodate you and will be delighted to send sample menus home. It's good advertising for them, and a great opportunity for kids! Activities like this have an impact on children's attitudes about what's available in their communities. Have them reflect on this the next day — you'll discover just how much this counts!

You can also take this one step further in developing community connections by inviting a local newspaper columnist to join you at the restaurant for a human interest story or a television reporter and crew to video a spot for the 5:00 p.m. news. Some news days are slower than others, and you might just get lucky if you notify these folks in advance! Send them a press packet two weeks ahead of the scheduled event and follow up with a call to the reporters who cover these kinds of assignments.⁴⁷ Be sure to ask permission of the restaurant manager and get

photo releases from parents if you decide to do this — or include a press/photo release section on your student registration form at the beginning of the year to cover all of the opportunities that may come up during the course of the year.

Capitalize on local facilities. Work with community recreation centers and fitness clubs to explore ways to use their facilities. Having access to these will benefit students and your staff in many ways. It will help them connect with their communities, introduce them to new experiences and motivate them to become more physically fit. In many cases, arrangements can be made at little or no expense to your program. If there is a cost involved, small businesses and other groups may be willing to underwrite it if they see it as a worthwhile investment. Negotiate with school districts, cities and private transportation companies to reduce any travel costs that may be involved, and consider using public transportation if it's available.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* works with the county park and recreation department to make it possible for families to participate in hiking and other activities, and offers reduced-price memberships to YMCA facilities to staff and students.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* offsets costs to local fitness club memberships for its staff and high school mentors. Through a partnership with the Salvation Army Los Angeles Red Shield Youth and Community Center, they also get access to a variety of recreational facilities for trainings, including the gym, soccer field, auditorium, dance studio, etc.

Step 4: Partner with professional and collegiate sports teams.

National and collegiate sports teams are often strong supporters of afterschool programs, especially those that are located in low-income areas within the general proximity of their stadiums or sports complexes. It's common for them to provide tickets to events, offer clinics and donate equipment, clothing and memorabilia. Contact their community relations office to see what can be arranged. If you live in a rural community, there may be minor league or semi-pro teams relatively nearby, or you might consider a year-end celebration that includes a longer trip to a professional event. Invite your staff to participate, ask parents to volunteer as chaperones and request additional free or reduced-price tickets to events for family members.

Be sure to take advantage of using these events as opportunities not only to connect with your community, but also to focus on the importance of being physically fit. The experience itself will be memorable — and it will have a much longer-term impact if students are inspired to become healthier and more physically active.

- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* often gets free tickets to Chivas USA soccer matches. More than 500 children and their families have attended these exciting games at the Home Depot Center. As a special half-time event, they played a friendly match on the famous field and were cheered on by the spectators.

National and collegiate sports teams are often strong supporters of afterschool programs.



- » *A World Fit For Kids!* has built relationships with the LA Clippers (basketball), LA Kings (hockey), LA Dodgers (baseball), LA Sparks (women's basketball) and the University of Southern California Athletics Department and gets free tickets to events and games. They also received a small grant from the LA Lakers Foundation.
- » *CalSERVES* partners with the Scorchers, a local women's football team, and with Sonoma State University for tickets and clinics with the University's teams.

Step 5: Don't overlook less obvious physical activity opportunities. Go beyond team sports to including opportunities for students to participate in individual sports, such as tennis, golf and martial arts. The United States Tennis Association, the Tiger Woods Foundation and the American Tai-Kwon-Do Association all support the involvement of children and young people and are interested in providing opportunities to low-income families. In many cases, they'll provide equipment and instructional materials, and in some instances they'll offer free clinics and tickets to events in your area.

Local, county and state parks are an often overlooked resource—they may have programs that you can take advantage of. Rangers may be able to visit your program and then provide guided walks when your students visit.

If you're already using school campus fields as driving ranges or asphalt areas as tennis courts, go one step further. Talk with your city's parks and recreation department about allowing your staff and students to have access to public golf courses at reduced prices and to be able to use tennis courts at designated times.

Giving kids a chance to actually experience these sports in real settings will do a lot to encourage them to develop a life-long interest in being physically active. The same is true for martial arts classes. To the extent possible, arrange for students to compete at local events first, and then at regional and higher level events as they become more skilled. And, if you have other less traditional sports teams in your community, take advantage of them!



Step 6: Send kids to camp. It's tragic how few children and young people who live in high poverty areas have access to opportunities that are just outside their neighborhoods or communities. Most inner city youngsters haven't visited farms, gone fishing or experienced the thrill of rock climbing, hiking, boating or canoeing. Activities that are often taken for granted by children living in more affluent families are likely to be prohibitively expensive or simply out of reach for kids in your program. You can help bridge the gap by sending youngsters to camp during intersessions, spring breaks or summer.

Many cities, counties, universities and nonprofit organizations have camps. They may be more accessible, and affordable, than you realize.

Instead of sending kids to amusement parks at the end of the year, think about creating an experience that can change their lives, build their skills and expose them to a whole new world!

- » As a reward for contributing more than 15,000 hours of community service to charitable causes, *After-School All-Stars, LA* partners with UCLA's Uni-Camp to send 130 kids to the San Bernardino Mountains for an eight-day outdoor camping experience that includes mountain biking, swimming, hiking along the camp's many trails and learning the fundamentals of archery.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers'* summer camp programs encourage students to explore and test their strength and character in a safe and supportive environment. After participating in nature hikes, archery, scavenger hunts and survival skills, students return home with a better understanding of the outdoor world and greater confidence in their abilities.
- » CalSERVES takes its 4th and 5th grade students on an overnight camping adventure on the north coast, and *Fresno FRESH* partners with the parks and recreation department to take youngsters on a three-day adventure camp in the nearby mountains.

No matter what you choose, community service should be a core part of your program.

II. MAKE COMMUNITY SERVICE A PRIORITY

Community engagement comes in a variety of forms. One of the most important of these is community service. Some projects, such as canned food drives or volunteering at a local food pantry, can be relatively simple and easy to carry out. Elementary students at *San Francisco ExCEL* are actually in charge of running weekly food pantries on their school sites. And some projects may integrate the principles and practices of youth development in an intentional way by focusing on project-based service learning. No matter what you choose, community service should be a core part of your program.

Begin by finding out if the school day is already engaged in community service that your program could link to or build on. If not, you can start by scanning your community to discover and uncover potential service projects that may be of interest to your students and particularly meaningful to your community. Your local media will feature human interest stories that can often be a good starting point, and they will list upcoming activities in their calendar sections that may catch your attention. Think creatively as you do this. Go beyond traditional projects, such as park clean-up days, to those that may be more exciting to youngsters, like planting gardens, providing fruits and vegetables to less fortunate families or training for and participating in charity-based fundraising events.

Keep in mind that service learning, the approach to community service that maximizes the impact of service on the students, is the level to strive for. It benefits both the students and the recipients of their service by including service objectives and learning objectives that link the tasks with self-reflection, self-discovery and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills and knowledge content.⁴⁸



Step 1: Link community service with project-based learning. Community service isn't something that your staff members *plan* and children and young people *do*. It's something that students should be fully engaged in from start to finish. Be sure youngsters are active participants in the planning, design and implementation phases by using a project-based learning approach.⁴⁹ When ideas come from them, they'll be much more interested, motivated and committed — and it's much more likely that they'll develop the attitudes and begin to master the kinds of skills that will serve them well over time. The process will also help them learn to work collaboratively and set goals, solve problems and make decisions together rather than independently.

By adopting one or more charities to support, students learn the value of contributing to important causes.

If your program has a gardening project, students may want to give away at least some of the fruits and vegetables they're growing to people who are less fortunate. Once they've determined who these people are and how they will go about contacting them, they can launch the process of deciding how they will approach their work, what timeline they'll need to establish and all of the other details that will go into the project. They may decide to send pictures as their garden grows, write notes about what they're learning or make baskets to put their gifts in and deliver their harvests in person.

Whatever they decide, the benefits of project-based learning will take the process, and its impact, to a higher level.

Consider following *San Francisco ExCEL's* lead by creating a program-wide infrastructure to provide support to staff members who want to integrate service learning and community service into their existing projects. The program's César Chávez Club cohort provides materials and training, and helps plan service projects with staff and students. This kind of approach can provide lots of benefits and improve the skills of your staff and the impact these kinds of projects have on your students and your community.

Step 2: Participate in charity events. By adopting one or more charities to support, students learn the value of contributing to important causes. They gain invaluable knowledge about the organizations' work — some of which may be relevant to the needs and interests of their own families. And, they make a tangible investment in the health and well-being of their communities — and in themselves. *Jump Rope for Heart*, *Relay for Life*, *Race for the Cure* and many other community events are important venues for changing youngsters' attitudes about nutrition, physical activity and health — and offer opportunities for them to serve.

It takes time to plan and coordinate this kind of community service, and in most cases it also requires helping students prepare for it. The good news is that it focuses you staff's attention on a specific goal and it benefits kids in huge ways. The training that goes into getting ready for a mini-marathon or a walk-athon or any other event that requires physical endurance keeps kids active and connects activity with a purpose. The satisfaction that comes from completing an

event, and contributing to others in the process, is an added bonus — and one that often inspires kids not just to remain active but to improve their eating habits as well.

- » Hundreds of *After-School All-Stars, LA* students have participated in the annual César Chávez Walk, and joined Chávez family members, elected officials, celebrities and community members at the all-day event. Youngsters also raised \$5,000 to benefit the American Cancer Society and were part of the *Relay for Life Walk-a-thon*. They also developed relay teams that participated in the LA Marathon with the final miles completed by all youth.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* students also regularly participate in the Donate For Life—Jump for Life program.

Step 3: Sponsor health fairs. Health fairs bring people in your community together. They offer positive approaches to eating and exercise, and provide much-needed resources that can make a difference in the health and well-being of children in your program — and their families. They're an ideal venue for showcasing the work you're doing and the successes children are having. And, they're a lot of fun!

You may want to start out by participating in an established health fair rather than beginning one yourself. Many county health departments regularly schedule these kinds of events. You can find out which one might be the most appropriate by calling them or accessing their calendars on-line. Local nonprofit resource centers can also help you make connections. You should check with your school district's wellness committee to determine whether they conduct health fairs or would like to co-sponsor one.

If you decide to sponsor your own health fair, use the planning phase to develop a comprehensive list of potential participants and reach out to as many local organizations as possible. Ask members of the healthcare community to offer their services. Hospitals and clinics in your area may be willing to provide free medical and dental check-ups, and at minimum will provide information about their services and materials that are useful to the families of students in your program. Some may decide to become a sponsor, which will help you off-set the costs.

County health departments are likely to be eager to join you, as are rural healthcare districts if your program is located in areas where these exist. Your *Regional Network for a Healthy California* will provide information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) and make Harvest of the Month and other materials available. The Dairy Council of California also offers free resources.⁵⁰





Businesses that sell healthy food should be invited to set up booths. Advertising matters to them, as does the community service. If you live in a northern rural or semi-rural area and aren't already working with local farmers to bring fruits and vegetables into your program, contact the Community Alliance with Family Farmers.⁵¹ They can refer you to folks who may well be interested in providing fresh produce free of charge.

Don't overlook the importance of inviting local public officials and the media. Contact city council members, county supervisors, school board members, school principals, district superintendents, the district offices of state legislators and other community leaders. Let your local newspapers, radio and television stations know about the event well in advance. Their coverage will dramatically increase the visibility of your event and of your program. Be sure to have media packets available that contain information about your program and the impact it is having on your students and community as well as a fact sheet about the event, and be prepared to talk with reporters about the impact your program is having on your community.

- » More than 5,000 children and their families have participated in *CalSERVES'* César Chávez Day health fair events. Last year, it was filmed and aired by Telemundo television and attended by several prominent public officials, including the mayor and city council members.
- » *Fresno FRESH* takes an innovative approach at its elementary school sites by having its student leadership teams do most of the planning for its health fairs, including making arrangements with vendors. Typically, 200–300 families attend.
- » *YMCA of Silicon Valley* partners with schools to provide Walk-A-Thon events to help raise awareness about *America on the Move*, a national YMCA initiative to help communities lead healthier lifestyles by increasing the number of steps they take each day. Water bottles and pedometers are donated to all participants.

III. CONNECT WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

No matter how much great work you're doing with the children and young people in your program, it's extremely difficult to change their eating habits or make physical activity a way of life for them without the involvement and support of their families. If much of their home life is spent watching television, they'll still be bombarded with the food and beverage industry's advertising, and they won't be as active as they could be.

If the meals they're served aren't as healthy as they should be, your efforts won't have the impact they could have. If their neighborhoods aren't safe, and there aren't any parks or recreation areas they can take advantage of when your program's not in session, regular physical activity may not be possible. Engaging parents as partners matters, and there are several ways to do it.



Step 1: Invite family members to join in program activities. Parents and other relatives, including older brothers and sisters, often have very special talents and expertise that can make a difference in the lives of the young people in your program. Some may be willing to serve as guest chefs, making healthy recipes in your cooking class. Others may be skilled dancers or musicians, or be available to coach a sport for a day. Including these folks offers important benefits to both students and the adults involved.

In addition to the direct contributions they make, it's not uncommon for adults to tell their own stories about the importance of nutrition and physical activity in their lives, or to talk about the ways they've been influenced by their cultures. Make a point of asking your site staff to talk with parents at the end of the day to learn more about what they might be able to offer. And don't forget to ask youngsters about their families' interests and experiences in these areas. Involving parents and other family members helps connect neighborhoods with schools and expand interest in and support for your program's goals.

Educating families on the importance of health and nutrition can improve the quality of children's lives and literally save their lives.

Step 2: Include nutrition education in parenting and family literacy classes. All parents and primary caregivers want what's best for their children. One of the biggest challenges is that many don't connect the lifestyles they're leading with the future they're creating. Today's children are the first generation that may have a shorter lifespan than their parents due to the obesity epidemic — and no one wants this to happen!

Educating families on the importance of health and nutrition can improve the quality of children's lives and literally save their lives. If your program offers parenting or family literacy classes, take advantage of the opportunity to include sessions on nutrition, physical activity and other health-related topics. These kinds of activities provide invaluable connections with parents and can go a long way toward engaging them as partners.

- » *A World Fit For Kids!* partners with its elementary school parent outreach coordinator to offer nutrition classes to parents.
- » *Fresno FRESH* offers parenting classes where families learn basic nutrition and discover ways to apply at home what they learn. The local food bank and Fresno County Office of Education provide additional information on how to access free and low-cost healthy foods.
- » *CalSERVES* co-sponsors an *Eat Right When the Money's Tight* event with the *Network's Children's Power Play! Campaign*.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* partners with local schools to offer family nights that include healthy meals and fitness activities, and provide families with nutrition education resources and recipes.



- » *Fitness 4 Life* offered a pilot Fitness 4 Families program that gave 10 families a free six-month YMCA membership when they attended weekly nutrition literacy meetings and family workout time.
- » *San Francisco ExCEL* program staff works closely with school day personnel like nutrition education program coordinators to offer fun, interactive healthy family events.

Step 3: Include families in special events. Don't overlook the importance of inviting families to special events or weekend activities if you offer them. The more you engage parents in events featuring nutrition education and physical activity, the more likely it is that families will begin to encourage healthy eating and be more physically active on their own. Keep in mind that your ultimate goal is for children and young people to acquire healthy habits that can last a lifetime — and having the support of their families can make a huge difference in whether this happens!

- » The *Spirit Jam Dance Competition*, held annually in the spring, gives students who participate in *Woodcraft Rangers'* afterschool dance club teams a public forum to perform their choreographed three-minute dance routines in front of families, peers and a distinguished panel of honorary judges. Over 20 dance teams competed in last year's event, and more are expected this year. And, as part of its custom low-rider bicycle club, the program has significantly increased parent and family involvement by hosting weekend community rides.
- » Over 800 middle school students and their families participated in *After-School All-Stars, LA's Be Fit* event last year. Aimed at reinforcing the importance of being active and staying healthy, the event was a feature story on the ABC Evening News.
- » Annually, the *YMCA of Silicon Valley* invites the entire school community to participate in Healthy Kids Day—a free event at local YMCAs that encourages families and children to engage in creative activities that promote their wellness and healthier living.
- » Over 600 parents, children and community members attended *Club Y.E.S.'s Lights On* event, with opportunities for everyone to participate in the kinds of nutrition and physical activity that take place during the program.

Businesses and the media all have a vested interest in improving the health and well-being of your community.

IV. COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL AGENCIES, NONPROFITS, BUSINESSES AND THE MEDIA

With the childhood obesity crisis on everyone's mind, there are all kinds of possibilities for you to collaborate in interesting and rewarding ways. Public agencies, nonprofits, businesses and the media all have a vested interest in improving the health and well-being of your community, and they know that children and families in poverty are most at risk. You have what many organizations want and need — immediate and ongoing access to hundreds, if not thousands, of children and young people and their families.



Begin by developing a list of potential partners. The easiest way to do this is to start with your *Regional Network for a Healthy California*,⁵² the local First Five Commission or the school or district's school nurse and local school wellness policy committee. If the school has a family resource center or Healthy Start, they would also be able to offer suggestions. You could also search online for a county obesity prevention collaborative. Once you've done this, request information and materials from potential partners and determine what level of involvement may be most appropriate.

In some cases, gathering resources that can be passed on to your staff, students and families may be enough. In others, it may be well worth your while to pursue becoming more actively engaged by attending collaborative gatherings. And, in still others, it may be especially beneficial to begin to develop professional relationships

through one-on-one meetings. Typically, a combination of these approaches works best. The important thing is to be proactive.

Your community has a lot to offer, and it's up to you to take advantage of it. If you feel uncomfortable approaching any these organizations, remember this: children and young people are counting on you! Beyond this, you'll find in almost every instance that folks will be eager to have you and your program involved as partners in their efforts. Take the first step, and the next steps will be easier!

Step 1: Link up with the health community. Most health-related organizations already have a high level of community involvement and will welcome the opportunity to provide resources, information and support to the students in your program just for the asking. Local hospitals and medical centers, county health departments and rural health care districts, the Dairy Council of California, the *Regional Networks for a Healthy California* and collaboratives, the University of California Cooperative Extension, the American Cancer Society, and medical and dental associations are among these. Many of these organizations have outstanding programs in health, nutrition and physical activity that are appropriate for elementary, middle and high school students.⁵³ Partner with them to provide the best possible resources to children and families in your program.

For example, as part of its commitment to being proactive, **Fresno FRESH** partners with community organizations such as the Community Food Bank, the Central Valley Health and Nutrition Collaborative, and the city park and recreation departments towards establishing more farmers markets, community gardens and supermarkets with fresh foods in low-income neighborhoods; creating or improving parks, sidewalks and other opportunities for physical



exercise, including walking trails and bicycle lanes; and supporting healthy food and physical activity policies throughout the county. Other Healthy Behaviors programs are creating innovative partnerships as well, and you can do the same thing!

- » **San Francisco ExCEL** is partnering with the University of California, San Francisco in a research study on the benefits of physical activity in afterschool programs.
- » **CalSERVES** works with St. Joseph's Hospital, Kaiser Permanente and local free clinics, and **A World Fit For Kids!** partners with the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.
- » In collaboration with Kaiser Permanente and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, the **YMCA of Silicon Valley's Proyecto Movimiento** youth participants are co-producing a *Voice of the Youth* documentary focusing on the childhood obesity crisis and what's being done about it.
- » **Fresno FRESH** works with Kaiser Permanente to provide teddy bear clinics where children learn what it's like to go to the doctor's office for check-ups and routine vaccinations and to the dentist's office to have their teeth cleaned. The experience helps take the fear of these visits away and encourages healthy behaviors. Kaiser also supplies pedometers and supports the program's walk-to-school program, as does Anthem Blue Cross of California.

Step 2: Develop relationships with local businesses. Although many opportunities to engage your community and to become engaged with it take more time than money, you'll also want to be sure to develop the resources you'll need through both in-kind contributions and hard cash. Local businesses are the obvious choice for doing this. You have something they want and need — families who spend their money in your community. Your ability to influence how that money is spent matters, and business are keenly aware of this. In tough economic times, the incentives for working with you don't decrease, they increase!

Be intentional about whom you approach and selective about what you want. Be sure the businesses you approach share your values and your commitment to children's health and well-being. It may be tempting to simply take money if it's offered, but it can be very counterproductive to your goals if a company's interests aren't aligned with yours. If you're considering approaching a chain or a franchise, take care to do some research on the company's history and its affiliates. If you're focusing on locally-owned and operated businesses, ask community members who shop there for their counsel. Don't risk your program's credibility.

Be intentional about whom you approach and selective about what you want.

- » In recognition of its eight-week *Health and Fitness Challenge*, 6,000 **Woodcraft Rangers** students received gifts from co-sponsors Clear Channel Communications, Donate Life California, Disney Worldwide, Pollo Campero, Quicksilver, Panda Restaurant Group and Panner's Tasty Paste.

- » Since 2003, *After-School All-Stars, LA* has been supported by El Pollo Loco, which provided food and served at over 30 special events and activities in the last year alone.
- » *CalSERVES* partners with Food Max, a local market that donates grocery bags so that they can send 144 bags of healthy food, donated by the local food bank, home with kids once a week.
- » *Fresno FRESH* works with Save Mart and El Pollo Loco, both of which provide healthy food for special events and offer discount cards to family members.

Step 3: Tap into the media. One of the most important connections you can make is with your local media. The obvious advantage is in the numbers of people you'll be able to reach and the impact that this is capable of having. Many of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with have developed exceptional relationships with both the print and electronic media and will be happy to talk with you about how they've done it. Some of their approaches have been fairly traditional, and others extremely innovative. Some involved a simple telephone call, and others required a lot of advance planning and preparation. All of these efforts have the added bonus of contributing to fund development.

- » Latino children in the *YMCA of Silicon Valley's* program wrote and starred in a series of public service announcements (PSAs) that were recently aired on cable television.
- » *Fresno FRESH's* program consultant has been featured on the Central Valley Today talk show, in a segment entitled Family Fitness on a Budget.
- » MTV has aired a 30-minute documentary focusing on childhood obesity and the difference *A World Fit For Kids!* is making.
- » Student-run TV shows are created by kids in *San Francisco ExCEL's* César Chávez Service Clubs and aired on local cable television.⁵⁴

V. BE PROACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Become a champion for change! Take time to get to know members of your city council, school board and country board of supervisors. Show up at meetings when their agendas include issues that can either contribute to or detract from the achievement of your program's goals. Stay on top of what's going on in your community and make your presence known. Join community-wide campaigns that focus on healthy behaviors. Support resolutions and budget allocations that target environmental change for healthy eating, food security (ensuring that families have enough to eat) and favorable resource allocations.

Step 1: Partner with organizations that share your interests and priorities. Make collaboration a way of doing business. Serve on local, regional, statewide and national committees, and promote policies, procedures and budget levels that contribute to local economic development and social justice and have the potential to sustain change over time. Be sure to regularly inform, update and educate your





elected officials, including state legislators and members of Congress on the work you're doing. They often make budget decisions that can impact afterschool programs. Many elected officials appreciate the opportunity to visit your programs, particularly if their visit can be highlighted by the media or social networking sites, or publicized in newsletters and web sites. Your efforts will improve the quality of life in your community and significantly increase the opportunities available for children, young people and their families.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* joins Kaiser Permanente, state legislators, Santa Clara Unified School District and others in an annual well-attended media event focusing on the difference its program and others are making in the lives of thousands of children.
- » The executive director of *A World Fit For Kids!* is a nationally recognized expert and serves on numerous high-level committees. She is a leader in several local, state and national organizations and regularly flies to Washington, DC and Sacramento to advocate for policy changes to improve students' health and well-being.
- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* and *After-School All-Stars, LA* work closely with members of the state legislature and the Governor's Office.
- » *CalSERVES'* director has recently been appointed to head up California's VIP AmeriCorps economic stimulus package program.
- » *Fresno FRESH's* program consultant is a frequent speaker and presenter at community health fairs and in university classrooms, promoting the importance of children and young people acquiring healthy behaviors early in life.

Step 2: Create social networks. Use technology to your program's advantage. Go beyond having your own web site to putting videos of students (and videos that they've produced) on YouTube, using Facebook as a vehicle for your staff and others to communicate with each other and using Twitter as a way to reach a larger audience to generate interest in and support for your program.

**Create social networks.
Use technology to your
program's advantage.**

- » *Woodcraft Rangers* and *After-School All-Stars, LA* regularly use YouTube to keep students, staff, families and communities informed about the exciting activities and events their students are involved in.
- » *CalSERVES* uses Facebook, YouTube and Flickr to connect AmeriCorps and other members of its staff, their program's alumni community, parents and community members and keep them updated and engaged in virtual conversations.

Follow *After-School All-Stars, LA's* example and create networks among potential advocates and supporters. Inspired Stars is a network of young professionals committed to supporting their program. It offers exciting opportunities for emerging community leaders to become active in the greater Los Angeles area while socially connecting through enjoyable and rewarding experiences that the program arranges, such as its Second Annual "I WANNA ROCK" music event held at West Hollywood Key Club.

Step 3: Help kids and families become more empowered. Changing the environments in which kids live will go a long way toward helping them become healthier — and you can contribute to this in important ways. Encourage your staff, and children and their families to become active participants on community commissions, neighborhood safety groups and community garden projects. Keep parents informed about local zoning ordinances that may impact their neighborhoods by including informational handouts among other materials and resources you already make available to them.

Encourage students to be aware of local advertising that promotes and glamorizes unhealthy foods and drinks, including billboards. Consider offering a video production class, as many programs have, that has students film examples of the food and beverage industry's efforts to influence them to make unhealthy choices. Get kids and parents involved in beautification projects, on your school sites and in your neighborhoods. California Project LEAN has developed a variety of resources which offer teens ways to work with their school community and the media.⁵⁵

- » *Woodcraft Rangers* recently planted more than 100 flowering plants throughout the passage ways of one of its inner city middle schools, and it has made a huge difference in the school environment.
- » *CalSERVES* frequently has parents and students participate in city council meetings.
- » Five hundred *After-School All-Stars, LA* students attended the XXVI Border Governors' Conference with Governor Schwarzenegger. For many of these kids, this was a first step toward recognizing that they have a role to play in influencing their communities.

Once students have done these kinds of things, arrange for them to make presentations at school board meetings and other public venues. The children and families in your program are vital resources and important partners in creating the future you and your program envision. Work closely with them to create new social and ecological norms in your community! The environment matters — and you can lead the way in changing it for the better!

VI. DEVELOP CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS

The stronger and more positive your connections are with schools, the greater the benefits will be for students in your program. See yourself as a friend and an advocate. Work with principals, certificated teachers and classified personnel to develop a shared vision and common purpose in promoting healthy lifestyles among students. The better you become at doing this, the easier it will be to engage schools as partners in developing a strategic plan in which the total school and afterschool environments support the development of healthy eating patterns and physical activity among all students.

Step 1: Find out what resources are already on campus. You don't have to do everything on your own — and you shouldn't! There may be hidden gems on your school sites that you simply aren't aware of yet. School health committees, nutrition advisory committees, site



councils, Healthy Start, family resource centers and other organizations may already be on your campuses and can provide invaluable resources and support. Don't overlook Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs), Parent, Teacher, Student Associations (PTSAs) and other parent organizations.⁵⁶



Talk with principals and ask them to introduce you to these folks if you haven't already met them. Learn all you can about what their focus is, and how it might fit in with the efforts you're making to improve children's health and well-being. Let them know what your priorities are and how they can help. Ask for a copy of your local school wellness policy and its overall goals and objectives. (School boards set district policy and were required to adopt a district-wide wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006–2007 school year.) California Project LEAN offers a variety of school wellness policy tools including engaging parents in implementing and evaluating local school wellness policies.⁵⁷

If the district wellness policy does not already address afterschool programs, participate in the meetings of the school health or wellness committee to find out how you can make that happen. Learn how policies are being carried out at the school-site level, what your program can do to support them and whether a member of your staff can join the health/nutrition or wellness council or committee if one is in place. You'll discover there's a lot of common ground to build on. Take advantage of it!

- » **CalSERVES** is included in the Roseland Elementary Unified School District's wellness plan, and their site staff serves on school committees.
- » **Fresno FRESH** has been involved in all phases of the development and implementation of district and school wellness plans and takes the lead in following up to ensure accountability.
- » Nutrition education teachers (school day as well as partners like *Children's Power Play! Campaign* and Dairy Council of California) offer nutrition education classes to **Woodcraft Rangers'** staff and work with them to support the district's wellness policy.
- » **A World Fit For Kids!** has been largely responsible for ensuring that the wellness plans at many of its sites are effectively implemented.
- » In collaboration with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has developed a *Fit for Learning After School Resource Guide*. They and other Santa Clara County afterschool programs are now implementing this resource in 170 schools, ensuring that students are getting consistent messaging in nutrition and fitness education both in school and after school.

Step 2: Advocate for practices that support students' health and well-being. Use the relationships you develop with schools to advocate for the things you care about and that are essential to children's health. Do your best to make sure that the foods and beverages available on school sites comply with state law and reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.⁵⁸ Insist that posters and other forms of advertising displays reflect only healthy choices. *Harvest of the Month* offers a variety of posters depicting fresh fruits and vegetables. Encourage the use of indoor gyms and outdoor playing fields by your students, and work with school personnel to share equipment and space. Support your PTA in finding healthy fundraisers.⁵⁹

If the opportunity arises or if you see the need, offer to help design plans that will expand the joint use of facilities beyond school hours.⁶⁰ Work with principals, custodians and cafeteria personnel to be certain that space is adequate during afterschool hours to accommodate all students and that snack space provides pleasant surroundings that reflect the value of the social aspects of eating. If space is available, suggest planting a garden either in the ground or in containers. Talk with your food service managers and find out if they're willing to let you use the kitchen for your cooking classes and special events. Don't forget that parents have power—and they can be important allies in advocating for positive changes. Enlist their support.

- » Students who attend *Fresno FRESH* advise food service staff on healthy foods they'd like served in the cafeteria at lunch time, serve as food tasters and encourage their peers to try new things. This innovative approach can work in your program as well.
- » In Gilroy, middle school and high school students participating in the *YMCA of Silicon Valley Youth Health Advocate* program meet with their local school board representatives and community leaders to present health topics as well as discuss local health policies.

Be sure that your policies promote everyone's health and well-being.

Step 3: Set an example and lead the way. Actions speak louder than words — and some actions count more than others. It's one thing to offer a nutrition education class to students, and another to ban unhealthy food from your program. It's great to send healthy recipes home

to parents, and it's hypocritical to allow them to bring fast food to campus while their kids are transitioning from school to your program. It's a step in the right direction to encourage students to drink more water and to have it available during program hours, and it's a problem if your staff are seen with soft drinks. Be sure that your policies promote everyone's health and well-being, and that they're fully implemented — and highly visible. Set the example you'd like the entire school community to follow and lead the way!



INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #4:

Commit to School, Family and Community Engagement

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program's leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

- 1) We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Community Engagement						
1	Our leadership team and staff are committed to engaging schools, parents and guardians, families and community members to support children and young people in our program.					
2	We draw on community resources to offer a wide range of opportunities for students that otherwise would not be available to them because of the limited financial resources of their families.					
3	We utilize community resources such as <i>Network</i> programs to provide students with opportunities to learn about the importance of nutrition.					
4	We utilize community resources such as <i>Network</i> programs to provide students with opportunities to learn about the importance of physical activity.					
5	We regularly provide opportunities for students to be involved in field trips and off-site learning experiences that promote physical activity and sound nutrition practice.					
Parent and Family Engagement						
6	We provide opportunities for students and their families to participate in or attend local sports, dance and other community events that highlight or reinforce the importance of health, nutrition and physical activity.					

continued next page

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #4: Commit to School, Family and Community Engagement continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Parent and Family Engagement continued						
7	We encourage parents and guardians to have their children take advantage of school breakfast and lunch programs.					
8	We keep students and parents and guardians informed about upcoming community family events.					
9	We regularly involve parents and guardians as contributors to nutrition and physical activity components of our program.					
10	We encourage parents to share personal experiences that have influenced positive nutrition and physical activity habits in their lives.					
School Engagement						
11	Our site staff works closely with Healthy Start, certificated teachers and school nurses, to provide support and expertise to our program.					
12	Our staff works closely with the school’s food service staff and/or dietitian.					
13	Our site staff actively participates in the implementation of our district’s wellness policy at the site level, and it includes the afterschool program.					
14	Our site directors serve on school health committees.					
15	Our site staff is aware of the curricula and standards for nutrition and physical education used during the school day and reinforces them with afterschool activities.					
16	Our staff shares information with certificated teachers about student progress in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.					

Key:

- 1) We haven’t yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We’ve done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We’ve made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We’ve achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We’re clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.





Practice #5

STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY



“When children don’t have enough to eat, it impacts their lives in every way.

We were determined to do something about this and by working closely with our community partners we’re moving in the right direction”

– Debra Mason, Mt. Diablo CARES

Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Create an environment that supports healthy eating habits
- 2 Provide students with more fruits and vegetables
- 3 Encourage students to take advantage of school breakfast, lunch and summer meal programs
- 4 Keep families informed and engaged
- 5 Make food security a priority



PRACTICE #5:

Strengthen Food Security

Many of the students in your program have a lot more to be concerned about than you and your staff may think. A high percentage of these children and young people live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level, and the number is growing. They're seven times more likely to be in poor or fair health than children living in high-income households.⁶¹ Racial and ethnic inequalities make matters worse by compounding disparities in income. More African-Americans, Latinos, Native-Americans and Pacific Islanders are in poorer health than whites at practically every income level.⁶²



While more affluent families don't have to worry about their next meal or go hungry because of their inability to buy food, all too many of the children you work with simply don't have enough to eat or access to enough healthy food to support an active, healthy lifestyle. This is known as food insecurity, and it has a huge impact on children's lives.⁶³ Participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, which provide more than half of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for the calories they require, helps.⁶⁴ So does the snack your program offers. But these still fall well below what kids need daily — and deserve.

The impact of food shortages on children and young people is devastating. Youngsters who don't regularly have enough to eat, miss more school and are less prepared to learn. It's difficult for them to concentrate, grasp basic concepts and develop cognitive skills. They perform poorly in the classroom, and their grades and test scores are low. Not having enough to eat also impacts their psychological, social, emotional and behavioral well-being. They're likely to be more anxious, irritable, inattentive, aggressive or depressed.⁶⁵ And you would be, too!

Over time, unless something is done, more than a third of the kids your staff works with are likely to acquire type 2 diabetes, and a growing number either already have it or will by the time they're in their late teens.⁶⁶ As adults, they'll have serious heart and circulatory problems, miss work, spend a lot of time in hospitals, incur huge medical bills and die prematurely. The stakes couldn't be higher. Your program is changing lives — now it's time to save them! You can do this if you:

- » Create an environment that supports healthy eating habits.
- » Work with local organizations to provide additional fruits and vegetables to supplement the snacks you offer, and allow kids to take food home.

- » Encourage every student to take advantage of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, as well as Summer Meal Programs.
- » Provide information to parents about ways to increase their access to more food through the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — formerly known as the Food Stamp Program⁶⁷, and other resources.
- » Keep parents informed about the positive changes you're seeing in their children's eating habits and food preferences. Encourage them to partner with you in promoting their children's health and well-being.

**Your program is
changing lives — now
it's time to save them!**

I. CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS HEALTHY EATING HABITS

The problem of not having enough food is exacerbated by having the wrong kind of food. Malnutrition and childhood obesity are two stunning examples — and they're both on the rise. It's in your students' best interests, and in the best interests of your staff, to do something about this as quickly as possible. Your program can address childhood hunger directly — if everyone is informed, knowledgeable and intentional in how they approach their work with children and their families and with your community.

Step 1: Begin with your staff. The more your staff is aware of the impact hunger has on students, the more attuned they'll be to changes they may see in youngster's behavior, the more sensitive they're likely to be in dealing with it and the better they'll understand the urgency of working together to find solutions. Begin by making sure that the food security issue is an integral part of your overall staff training and staff development plan. There are many organizations that will be willing to deliver a workshop and provide background information and materials, and most will be happy to do so free of charge.⁶⁸ Take advantage of this. It's a first step, and a critical one!

Once your staff knows something about childhood hunger, it's important to make a practice of bringing the subject up in staff meetings and talking about it informally. Link food shortages with the things your staff is most concerned about, including discipline issues and a lack of student engagement, excitement and enthusiasm about learning. Choose your words carefully so that they understand that this is a sensitive topic and important. You're not just placing another demand on their time — when kids don't have enough to eat or aren't eating well, a lot can and will go wrong.

Ask your staff about changes they may have seen in students' ability to concentrate, or their aggressiveness, irritability or possible signs of withdrawal or depression. If they include community circles or use Tribes⁶⁹ or similar formats for encouraging students to talk about what's going on in their lives, ask them to take advantage of opportunities that may arise to let kids talk openly about things that are bothering them. Hunger may be one of them. Remember to be sensitive and supportive — members of your own staff may be experiencing the same problems in their own lives!



- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* takes a multidimensional approach to training its staff on food security, with an emphasis on helping them understand how the environments in which kids live influence and limit what's available and what choices they have, or don't have.
- » *CalSERVES* provides its staff with information on the demographics of its student population. They take advantage of the knowledge and life experiences that many of its AmeriCorps members have by asking them to share ideas and options.

Step 2: Establish policies that support healthy choices. Set the example you'd like your staff to model, and encourage the behavior you'd like them to adopt. Provide healthy snacks at meetings and training sessions. Include fruits and vegetables, and replace soft drinks with water. If your staff is bringing fast food to your program because they're pressed for time or think they don't have enough money for anything else, help them by discussing how they, too, can access healthy choices within their budget. It doesn't cost much to provide healthy alternatives, and it can make a big difference in their lives and their influence on students.

Establish policies that support healthy choices.

If parents are bringing unhealthy snacks for their children to eat between the end of school and the start of your program, or during the time you've designated for snack, think about creating a policy that prohibits this. Hold a parent meeting, or send information home to explain why. If older kids are going off campus to corner markets to buy sodas and unhealthy snacks before they come to your program, don't allow it. Make it clear that the gates will be closed, or that kids who show up with food that doesn't meet the standards you've set won't be able to join in.

If you're willing to take an even stronger stand on behalf of children's health and well-being, think about banning all unhealthy food and drinks during program hours. You may encounter resistance at first, and it may be serious. Don't give up. The Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with have had consistently good results once their staff, students and parents have gotten beyond the initial shock. Change your policies — and get to work on finding viable alternatives by building relationships with school food service managers and organizations such as food banks, local food pantries, farmers' markets and Farm to School programs to improve the quality of snacks and supplement them with fresh fruits and vegetables!

- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* instituted a no-junk-food zone in their program, and it has made a huge difference in children's eating habits.
- » *A World Fit For Kids!* banned vendor carts from their school sites and are working to enforce local laws that require that vendors stay at least 300 feet away from school sites.
- » *Fresno FRESH* adheres to written school wellness policies. Although it doesn't ban any particular kind of food from its program, it does spend a lot of time ensuring that youngsters understand why it's so important to develop healthy eating patterns and preferences, and creates an environment in which children influence each other to do the right thing.

Step 3: Improve the quality and quantity of snacks. If the snacks provided in your program are paid for through the National School Lunch Program, it's important to do everything you can to ensure that what's offered is of high quality and nutrient-dense (high in nutrients compared to calories).⁷⁰ You should be aware that these snacks must meet both USDA standards and state standards.⁷¹ Decisions about the content of snacks come from one of two sources: your district or your school sites. In either case, if you, your staff and your students are unhappy with the selections, be proactive. Students don't have to have the same snacks every day, and they're entitled to the best options possible. There are many helpful resources that offer ideas for healthy snacks for afterschool programs.⁷²



Work with food service managers to improve both quality and variety if that's needed. Ask if you can go over the alternatives with them and come up with a mutually acceptable weekly menu. Ask if there is a possibility that fruits and vegetables left over from lunch can be made available to kids in your program to supplement what they're already receiving. Although there are some challenges to having this happen, it's worth a try. If you don't ask, you'll never know whether it might have worked out. A small bag of carrots or some apple slices can make a difference in a child's life!

- » Like most programs, snacks provided at *CalSERVES*' sites are paid for by the district through the National School Lunch Program. The difference is that CalSERVES, not the district, orders snacks independently and is reimbursed up to the maximum amount allowed per child.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* works with food service managers to provide left over produce once a week to supplement afternoon snacks.
- » In its effort to provide fresh fruits and vegetables every day to children participating in its afterschool and summer camps, the *YMCA of Silicon Valley* participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to receive federal reimbursements.

II. PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

While there's no doubt that the snacks provided in afterschool programs compare favorably with what children and young people might be eating were they not attending, it's also clear that the quality varies and that the amounts are seldom enough — especially for older children. The programs we've worked with have been very proactive in their efforts to secure additional, healthy food, and you can do the same!



Step 1: Reach out to local organizations. Make every effort to supplement snacks with fruits and vegetables from food banks, food pantries or other local sources such as the National Farm to School Program, farmers' markets and local supermarket chains. For many students, this contributes in a tangible way to reducing their hunger and improving their health. It's well worth the time and effort it takes to make this happen — particularly since it's possible that for at least some of the children these snacks will be their last food of the day.

Work with your school food service manager to arrange for the regular delivery and storage of fresh fruits and vegetables. If you have funds, consider purchasing a small refrigerator. The additional food will be well received, and it will help compensate for the shortages that may exist at home — especially at the end of the month when money may be especially tight.

- » *San Francisco ExCEL, Mt. Diablo CARES* and several of the other Healthy Behaviors programs partner with food banks to secure additional food either free of charge or at cost. They've made hundreds of tons of fresh fruits and vegetables available to children and their families.
- » *Fitness 4 Life* supports its organic, free, lunchtime farmers' market with a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant and partners with the Farm to School Program, the Community Alliance with Family Farmers and Live Earth Farm to ensure that youngsters have seasonal produce year round at lunch and snack time.
- » *CalSERVES* developed a relationship with the Redwood Empire Food Bank, receiving free food for the back pack program and having afterschool staff and students serve as volunteers. Now, even though the grant that originally covered the cost of the food is no longer available, the food bank has continued the program, providing 144 families with 7-10 pounds of groceries every Friday.
- » Bella Frutta, a fruit and nut grower and packer, sends produce from local farmers to *Fresno FRESH* sites and opens its plant for student tours where youngsters learn how to identify fruits and vegetables and check for their freshness.



Step 2: Grow your own fruits and vegetables. Most Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers have gardens, and it's important for you to consider this as well. If your campuses have suitable open areas on their grounds, ask principals if this might be an option. If this kind of space isn't available, think about planting fruits and vegetables in containers. Check with custodians to see if they're knowledgeable and interested. In many cases, these are the folks who can help you the most! Parents and family members are also often willing to help with your garden, doing everything from initial start-up work to garden maintenance. Two organizations, the California School Garden Network and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, offer excellent online resources for establishing and maintaining a garden, and linking gardening to California education standards.⁷³

Home Depot, Target, Lowe's and other local stores often donate shovels, rakes and other equipment, and companies such as Burpee provide seeds at little or no cost. If your program already has a garden, take advantage of the opportunity not only to provide additional fruits and vegetables as part of the snack, but also to send at least some of them home when your program ends.

- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* has one of the largest and most diverse community gardens anywhere, as well as individual gardens at each of its sites. Students and their families receive fresh produce throughout the year.
- » *Fitness 4 Life* has organic gardens and assists in administering the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program for the Pajaro Valley Unified School District.
- » *CalSERVES* works with schools to partner in growing and composting their gardens through garden grants awarded by the California Department of Education's Nutrition Services Division, and has been able to secure donations for seeds and other small purchases.
- » *Fresno FRESH* tends its gardens by giving students at every grade level responsibility for maintaining designated areas.

Advocate for changes in what corner markets provide and where items are placed.

Step 3: Advocate for changes in corner markets and local vendors.

One of the most serious challenges to helping children and young people improve their eating habits is the easy access they have to unhealthy foods. Corner markets and convenience stores are disproportionately located in low-income neighborhoods and close to schools. In many areas, vendors selling

ice cream, chips, candy and other products make a practice of showing up right outside school entrances when school closes. Youngsters don't have to go far, and even if they're in your program, at least some may take part of the transition time to make these kinds of purchases. It's important for you to try to keep this from happening. You, your staff and your students can also advocate for changes in what corner markets provide and where items are placed.

- » With 10 vendors showing up at its sites when school let out, *CalSERVES* made the vendor issue a safety issue. They held a community meeting, talked with vendors and were able to reduce the number to three — all of which now stay at least a block and a half away from their campuses.
- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* persuaded vendors to switch from selling candy and ice cream to selling healthy foods during their summer program sessions.



III. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND SUMMER MEAL PROGRAMS

Support student participation in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, which are open to all students; students from families meeting income eligibility standards can qualify to receive meals free or at a reduced price. It's important to increase access to and participation in subsidized high quality meal programs by sharing information about these programs with students, parents and guardians, and teachers. For all too many children and young people, these meals, and the snacks provided after school, are the primary source of fruits and vegetables they will have on any given day. For some students, the School Breakfast Program is the only alternative to no breakfast at all.

Encourage students to take advantage of school breakfast, lunch and summer meal programs.

If your program is open during the summer, you should be serving summer meals that are federally reimbursed. Depending on your hours of operation, you could be providing up to two meals (breakfast and lunch, breakfast and supper, or one meal and a snack). CDE maintains a toll-free message line to answer your questions and get you started (1-800-333-5675). If you are not open during the summer, you can find sites that will be open and serving summer meals. Then let your families know. CDE maintains a web site that provides this information.⁷⁴

Step 1: Help students overcome real and perceived barriers. There are two common barriers to families signing their children up for these programs. The first is lack of knowledge. Parents and guardians may not be aware of the programs, don't believe they qualify or don't know how to apply. Make this information available, and follow up to be certain that parents know how to go about enrolling their children.

The second obstacle is social. Especially among older students, qualifying for free and reduced price food programs can be uncomfortable and embarrassing. It's up to members of your staff to help them overcome this — and they can! Help your staff and school personnel understand the importance of removing stigmas that may be attached to qualifying for free and reduced price meals.

Keep in mind that it's very likely that at least some members of your staff are already taking advantage of federal programs, such as SNAP/food stamps and WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children), or that their children are participating in free breakfast and lunch programs at their schools. This provides a natural bridge to families and opens the door for conversations that can help alleviate psychological or social barriers that may be getting in the way of their asking for what their children need and deserve.

Step 2: Support direct certification. Direct certification is a process by which families that are eligible for SNAP/food stamps or CalWORKS are automatically eligible for free participation

in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs — without an application. It makes participation in these programs easier. School districts are required to do direct certification matching, and can do it locally with their county department of social services or can participate in the CDE direct certification matching process through the California School Information Services (CSIS) match that is updated monthly. School districts are encouraged to match both ways in order to maximize the number of children qualifying for free participation without having to apply. Find out if your students are already benefiting from this. They should be!

Step 3: Help students start their day off right! The School Breakfast Program plays a critical role in addressing the epidemic of overweight and undernourished children. Research shows both educational and nutritional benefits to children who eat breakfast, and according to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), 8.8 million low-income children participated in the national School Breakfast Program during the 2008–2009 school year. While that’s an increase of more than six percent over the previous school year, the program still misses more than half of America’s eligible low-income children.⁷⁵ And, with the worst economy in decades, it’s likely that substantial numbers of new children will become eligible for the School Breakfast Program (and School Lunch Program, too) as families lose jobs or have their incomes reduced.

If the schools where your program is located have these programs, encourage parents to have their children take advantage of them! Bring the subject up in informal conversations at the end of the day, send materials home with students and make a point of including information at family nights and in adult nutrition education classes.

If any of your school sites do not offer the School Breakfast Program, team up with the food service staff, family members and other community partners to support adding breakfast. Unfortunately, in some cases, breakfast is not offered due to logistical reasons such as bussing schedules, custodial concerns or other staffing issues, but many schools have overcome these barriers.

Step 4: Support policies that give students more choices. Work with the cafeteria manager to ensure that school meals and afterschool snacks meet state and federal nutrition requirements. It’s also important that foods are fresh and provide sufficient variety and choices, including fruits and vegetables, new foods and foods prepared in ways that meet the taste preferences of diverse student populations. Advocate for school policies that support the use of the cafeteria and other facilities during afterschool hours for cooking classes, family events and the storage of materials, equipment and snacks.

- » *Mt. Diablo CARES* partners with the district food service coordinator, who provides input on recipes for cooking classes, works with her staff to get the healthiest choices for daily snacks (including fresh fruit at least once a week) and partners in promoting the *Network’s* Rethink Your Drink/Soda Free Summer Campaign.





- » *Fresno FRESH* and *Woodcraft Rangers* work closely with food service managers at their sites to supplement afternoon snacks with additional fruits and vegetables when they're available.

IV. KEEP FAMILIES INFORMED AND ENGAGED

Poverty severely limits choices — and you can expand them! Getting children enough food to avoid hunger may well depend on helping eligible families enroll in SNAP/food stamps or WIC and/or providing information about emergency food supplies from food banks and other community organizations. These resources are widely available through county health and human services departments, local charities and other programs.

Poverty severely limits choices — and you can expand them!

The bad news is that according to USDA, California has the worst rate of SNAP/food stamp participation among working people in the country. In 2007, just 33 percent of eligible working households in California participated in SNAP/food stamps.⁷⁶ The good news is that as part of the 2009 federal economic stimulus package, there has been a significant increase

in SNAP/food stamp benefits.⁷⁷ This can make a huge difference in the lives of the children and family your program serves — if they take advantage of it!

Step 1: Help families access critical resources. Parents of students in your program who currently receive SNAP/food stamp benefits or who will apply in the future are entitled to increased benefits through September 2010. It's more critical than ever to be sure they're aware of this opportunity and act on it right away. It's up to you and your staff to make this information readily available.

The California Association of Food Banks has newly translated food stamp outreach materials with new income guidelines (effective October 1, 2009) and additional materials that afterschool programs can use to inform families about the program.⁷⁸ The California Department of Social Services also maintains an informative food stamp (SNAP) web site with applications translated into four languages, frequently asked questions and information for non-citizens.⁷⁹ If members of your staff are eligible for food stamps and other benefits, consider taking them on community tours to increase their awareness of what services may be available, including free clinics and food banks. *CalSERVES* has done this, and it has made a big difference.

Keep in mind that many of the kids in your program have younger brothers and sisters. There are organizations and programs that can help meet their needs as well. WIC not only provides food vouchers for children up to five years of age who are at nutritional risk, it also includes a major focus on nutrition and health education.⁸⁰ The more low-income families become familiar with these resources, the more likely they are to access them.

Step 2: Find creative ways to share information. Your program has a variety of ways to share information with families. If you require parents and guardians to pick up their children at the end of the day, which most high quality programs do, your staff has an obvious channel for providing invaluable information — so long as they're well-informed, knowledgeable and open to these kinds of conversations. Some programs use their part-time staff or mentors who themselves receive SNAP/food stamp benefits as resources for parents and guardians. This is especially effective when relationships between staff and parents have already been formed and when the languages spoken are the same.

Informal conversations can help parents get beyond the social and psychological barriers that may make them hesitant to talk about issues that may be seen as too personal or private to discuss with strangers. Your staff doesn't have to have a high level of expertise on SNAP/food stamp or WIC policies. They simply have to be familiar enough with what's required on the application forms and the benefits the programs offer in order to be able to talk about them appropriately and intelligently.

If parents don't pick up their children at the close of your program, another approach is to send the information home with students, in the appropriate language. Although this has its own pitfalls, and at least some risk that it won't be successfully delivered, it makes sense to complement other approaches with this one, especially if contact with some parents is limited or nonexistent. Also, be sure that information is always available at special events, such as parent orientations and health fairs, and in parenting and family literacy classes, and consider including flyers in student registration packages.

- » *Woodcraft Rangers* created a simple 4x6 foot board with pockets for parent information that includes how to apply for SNAP/food stamps, WIC and other community services and refers families to neighborhood organizations that offer free grocery nights.
- » *CalSERVES'* AmeriCorps members talk freely with parents since they are in a similar financial situation and can easily relate with them.
- » *Fresno FRESH* integrates materials and resources into its wellness programs, hands out literature in parent meetings and distributes information through its newsletters.
- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* makes information easily accessible to families by providing brochures on current assistance programs, posting updated news in sign-out areas as it becomes available and announcing new and existing opportunities at family nights.

Step 3: Host family nights. Bring families together to share a meal and learn more about developing healthy eating habits, becoming more physically active and taking advantage of community resources. Some programs do this as often as once a month. Others offer these events on a quarterly or semiannual basis. And still others link these nights with holidays. No matter what you decide to do, it's important to take advantage of all opportunities to reach out to parents.



Remember that your goal is to develop relationships with family members that will encourage them to reinforce what their children are learning in your program. Give students a chance to showcase what they're doing. If there are dramatic examples of how their lives have changed as a result of increased physical activity or healthier eating habits, ask them and their parents to talk about it. These stories can motivate other parents to become more involved.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* hosts a Cinco de Mayo family potluck. Healthy recipes are given to parents in advance, and staff members bring healthy dishes as well. Piñatas are filled with sugar-free candy and little toys such as erasers and stickers.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* provides family wellness nights at its sites, uses these as opportunities to ensure that families are informed about available resources in their communities and gives out healthy recipes to take home.
- » *Fresno FRESH* offers family nights that emphasize both nutrition and physical activity. They have instituted a program called “My family is a bunch of losers” which encourages healthy weight loss through fun and engaging activities such as Wii Fit, the Wii Sports Pack and Wii Work Out.

Step 4: Be sensitive to communication issues. Choosing the most useful approaches depends on understanding how the information you and your staff provide will be received and the impact it's likely to have. In selecting your means of communication, three things are worth keeping in mind.

- 1) Communicating exclusively in writing may be the only thing you can do, but it has serious disadvantages. If the reading skills of family members are limited, even if the materials are translated into different languages, it won't be useful.
- 2) Communicating by telephone is an option, but it's time consuming. Phones are often disconnected or the numbers have changed, or no one is available. And, it will only work if both your staff member and the person he or she is speaking with are fluent in the same language.
- 3) Whenever it's possible, meeting with families in person is likely to have the most positive impact and get the best responses, whether it's at a program orientation or a special event or through a conversation at the end of the day.

Step 5: Highlight students' achievements. Your site staff is especially well-positioned to deliver good news to parents and guardians about the achievements of their children. The importance of this shouldn't be overlooked or underestimated. All parents love to hear about good things their children are doing and the progress they're making. As this happens, they're much more likely to express greater interest, become more involved and improve food choices at home.

Students want to be recognized for their accomplishments — and they deserve to be! If a youngster is eating more fruits and vegetables, has become more active, or lost weight, it matters! If a middle school student has given up chips and sodas for healthier foods and water,

it can be life saving. If a fifth grader passes even just one more part of the FITNESSGRAM® test than he did last year, he should be applauded. Small accomplishments lead to bigger achievements — especially when parents know about them. It's up to you and your staff to make sure this happens.

- » Personal Best Day awards are given to *YMCA of Silicon Valley* students for their continued success in the areas of physical activity and healthy eating behaviors.
- » Culminating events held at *Woodcraft Rangers'* sites give parents and family members opportunities to see first-hand what their youngsters have accomplished.
- » *After-School All-Stars, LA* celebrates the successes of individual students in its impressive annual reports.
- » *Fresno FRESH* and *CalSERVES* send newsletters home, featuring healthy recipes students have created and giving kids credit for their contributions.



Step 6: Ask students to share what they've learned with their parents. Encourage students to talk with their parents and families about the projects they're involved in and the things they're doing. If they're in cooking classes, have them make recipe books and take them home. If they're part of a gardening project, allow them to take some of the fruits and vegetables home and suggest planting school/community gardens as a healthy food resource for neighborhoods. If students are taking exercise, aerobics or yoga classes, encourage them to teach their parents, and their brothers and sisters what they've learned. Keeping these channels of communication and influence open and strong can make a real difference in the food security and physical well-being of the children you work with.

- » The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* sends healthy recipes home with students in their cooking and nutrition education classes. Over a third of the parents who received these used them. The program also partners with Second Harvest Food Bank to provide supplemental snacks as well as an assortment of healthy, ready-to-eat foods each Friday for children to take home.
- » *CalSERVES* encourages parents to try recipes distributed in family and educator newsletters once kids have tried them in their cooking classes. The response has been very positive.
- » *Woodcraft Rangers* and *Fresno FRESH* have created their own recipe books and distribute them to youngsters and their parents. As a result of using these recipes, more families are eating healthier evening meals.
- » A recent evaluation of *A World Fit For Kids!* confirmed that more than half of all participating students regularly shared what they were learning in the program with their families, and the number is rising.



V. TO CHANGE LIVES AND SAVE LIVES, MAKE FOOD SECURITY A PRIORITY!



The impact of not having enough to eat, or of eating unhealthy foods, is devastating to children and young people and their families. While your program can't address all of the problems that contribute to food insecurity, it can make a real difference in alleviating at least some of them. You can address child hunger by creating an environment that supports healthy eating habits. You can work with local organizations to provide additional fruits and vegetables to supplement the snacks you offer and allow kids to take food home.

You can make sure that every student who qualifies takes advantage of the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. You can provide information to parents about ways to increase their access to more food through SNAP/food stamps and other resources. You can keep families informed about the positive changes you're seeing in their children's eating habits and food preferences and encourage them to partner with you in promoting their children's health and well-being. You have the opportunity to change lives – and to save lives. Don't let this opportunity pass you by!

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #5:

Strengthen Food Security

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program’s leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

- 1) We haven’t yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We’ve done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We’ve made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We’ve achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We’re clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
1	Our leadership team, staff and partners understand what food security means.					
2	Our staff is knowledgeable about the ways in which food insecurity negatively impacts children and young people’s lives and their risk of obesity.					
3	Our staff is familiar with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, the Food Stamp Program/SNAP, the WIC Program and other programs that provide food resources to low-income families.					
4	Our staff is knowledgeable about local food resources such as food banks, pantries, etc.					
5	Foods offered in our program are healthful and comply with state laws and requirements for schools.					
Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills						
6	Students in gardening classes have the opportunity to take fresh vegetables and fruits home with them after they’re harvested.					

continued next page



INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #5: Strengthen Food Security continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
<i>Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills continued</i>						
7	We encourage all students to participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs.					
8	We work with students to help them overcome barriers that may discourage them from participating in the school breakfast and lunch programs.					
9	We recognize that children and young people are capable of influencing the eating habits of their parents in a positive direction and actively encourage them to do so.					
<i>Partnerships with Schools, Parents and Community-Based Organizations</i>						
10	We routinely inform parents and guardians of the progress their children are making in choosing healthy foods.					
11	We have a system in place to regularly inform parents and guardians about the availability of federal food assistance programs they may be entitled to participate in.					
12	We routinely make information about food sources available to families of children enrolled in our program.					
13	We use a variety of approaches to educate parents about the importance of nutrition.					
14	We regularly hold special events that include healthy meals, which include fruits and vegetables, for children, young people and their families.					
15	We participate in the federal After School Snack Program, and work actively with our school district's food service staff to improve the quality, quantity and variety of snacks for students in our program.					
16	We proactively collaborate with our school district's food service program to provide additional fruits and vegetables for children and young people.					
17	We work with local organizations to provide additional fruits and vegetables as part of our snack program.					

Key:

- 1) We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
- 2) We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
- 3) We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
- 4) We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
- 5) We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.



Practice #6

Secure

ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING



“It takes a lot of money to support a high quality afterschool program and a real sense of purpose to ensure that what children are learning makes a difference in their lives. We’ve learned to work smarter in both areas.”

— Mary Hoshiko, Vice President
YMCA of Silicon Valley

Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Determine how much revenue you’ve already generated
- 2 Focus on cost savings
- 3 Summarize your findings in an executive summary
- 4 Find a champion and develop a guiding team
- 5 Build a balanced, diversified and sustainable funding base



PRACTICE #6:

Secure Adequate and Sustainable Funding

No matter where your program is at this stage of its development, it can and should become a vital part of the urgently needed, comprehensive solution to challenges to the health and well-being of children and young people. By helping students acquire the knowledge and motivation they need to support a habit of making wise decisions about nutrition and physical activity, and helping them access sufficient and healthful food, your program has the potential to create a much better future for them than is currently projected.

Whether your program achieves its potential depends on two things: the extent to which it reaches a high level of quality and the degree to which it becomes financially sustainable. This guide has addressed many of the ways you can take your program to the next level of quality. This chapter will take a hard look at how to go about ensuring its long-term financial vitality and viability.

Attracting financial support begins with becoming knowledgeable about the benefits your program provides and learning how to make a clear, persuasive case that stands out in the highly competitive world of funding. It requires developing, expanding and strengthening relationships with potential funders. And, it asks you to demonstrate a positive return on potential and actual investments.

To be really successful, you'll have to think differently! Keep in mind that the value of your program in general, and the work you are doing to improve children's nutrition, physical activity and food security specifically, may be obvious to you and to everyone else who's directly involved with it — but it may not be at all clear to anyone else. Say the words “afterschool program” and you'll elicit a lot of different images, and they'll come up short of what your program is really doing and the impact it's really having.

It's up to you to intrigue people, not just to inform them.

It's up to you to intrigue people, not just to inform them. Tell folks about the difference your program is making, and they'll want to learn more. For starters, it provides children with a safe environment during the hours they're most at risk – and it helps students improve their academic performance and strengthen their interpersonal skills. It offers young people opportunities and experiences that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. It reconnects neighborhoods with schools. And it helps parents become better partners in their children's education.

These are incredibly important and undeniably valuable, and they make outstanding message points. But they still don't speak loudly or clearly enough. What will get people's attention is the impact your program is having, or is capable of having. Even if it has only been around for a relatively short time, it has probably already brought millions of dollars into your community,



generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost-savings, created hundreds of jobs, contributed to local economic development, saved low-income families countless childcare expenses and resulted in a significant return on investments.

This is huge! And it's overlooked all the time. If you've missed the opportunity to share these things about your program, don't let it be a lost opportunity. At a time when public agencies, nonprofit organizations, foundations and the private

sector are asked to do more with less, it's essential to shift your thinking in a new direction. There are powerful incentives and compelling arguments for cities, counties, school districts, businesses and private foundations to invest in afterschool programs.⁸¹ Make your program one of those they choose. Think differently, and you'll position your program to stand out from the competition! There are five steps to doing this well:

- 1) Calculate the total revenue your program has brought into your community;
- 2) Determine the cost savings that you've contributed to over the years;
- 3) Create and distribute an executive summary;
- 4) Find a champion and develop a guiding team; and
- 5) Build a balanced, diversified and sustainable portfolio.

I. DETERMINE HOW MUCH REVENUE YOU'VE ALREADY GENERATED

It's likely that your program has brought millions of dollars into your community. It's up to you to determine the actual amount. Focus first on money that has come in from outside sources, but be sure to keep tabs on revenue that has been generated within your community as well — it will be important when you're applying for grants or trying to leverage local investments. Only include in-kind contributions if they have an actual dollar amount that can be determined accurately over time.

Step 1: Calculate the dollar amount since your program began. Start by adding up the total amount of revenue your program has brought into your community for each year your program has been in existence. For example, if you had earlier state funding for 10 sites for three years at \$75,000 per site (\$2.25 million) and post-Proposition 49 dollars at \$112,500 per site for two years (\$2.25 million), that's \$4.5 million. If you've also had a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant and/or other grants, the bottom line will increase dramatically.



By determining the funding that your program has secured over the years, you'll have a much clearer picture of the impact it has had.

Taken together, federal, state, private foundation and corporate grants, and individual contributions are often much higher than you might think. Most of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with initially under-estimated how much money they had brought in over the years — and most were amazed at how large the actual amount was after they had gone through this calculation process. By determining the funding that your program has secured over the years, you'll have a much clearer picture of the impact it has had. These are dollars that would not otherwise be available in your community — and they count in a big way!

Step 2: Determine how many children and families have directly benefited.

If your program has grown in size over the years, you've provided invaluable services to an increasing number of low-income children and their families at little or no cost to local taxpayers. If you began with five sites and now have 20, that's a 400 percent increase. Calculate the total number of students who have been enrolled since the time your program began, no matter how long they attended. Even if the number is just a reasonable estimate, it will undoubtedly be much larger than you thought.

- » Over the last ten years, **Club Y.E.S.** has brought \$21 million into low income, rural communities in the Central Valley and made a difference in the lives of more than 19,000 children and their families — 80 percent of whom live below the federal poverty level.
- » **After-School All-Stars, LA** has grown from three to 21 sites in the past four years, brought \$5 million into inner city neighborhoods and made a difference in the lives of more than 6,000 middle school students and their families.
- » The **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has increased program services from ten afterschool sites to 52 over the last eight years and has a positive impact on the lives of more than 7,200 children and young people daily.

II. FOCUS ON COST SAVINGS

Your program isn't the answer to all the problems that contribute to poverty, but it has a measurable impact on the health and well-being of the children and young people who attend — and on the quality of life of their families. It can also make a real difference in the financial vitality of your community! When times are tough, the return on an investment in high quality afterschool programs is more important than ever — and it typically exceeds the cost of doing business in other ways by 1,000 percent or more.⁸² Much of this is achieved through cost savings to school districts, cities, counties, healthcare providers, local businesses and community foundations. By focusing on these, you can position your program to attract significant, long-term funding.

Step 1: Identify the benefits and cost savings to districts and schools. If your program has achieved a relatively high level of success, it already supports the interests and goals of school boards, districts and schools in concrete ways. When students consistently attend high quality afterschool programs, student academic performance improves, often as much as two to three times more than for those not enrolled in afterschool programs. Attendance during the school day increases by two to three weeks a year among students with previously high absenteeism. Disciplinary actions are reduced and grade retention drops. English language learners increase their fluency levels at a faster rate.⁸³ Students' attitudes and behavior improve, and they report liking school better, are more enthusiastic about learning and are less likely to drop out of school.⁸⁴

As you begin to devote more of your attention to helping students improve their nutrition, physical fitness and food security, the impact of your program will be even more striking. Students who have a regular and sufficient diet of healthful foods, including fruits and vegetables, and are physically active, attend school more often. This results in increased revenue and cost savings for schools — often amounting to tens of thousands of dollars or more annually.

Youngsters who are healthy are more alert and concentrate better. They're able to grasp basic concepts more easily. They develop a wide range of cognitive skills more quickly, and they perform better in the classroom. This leads to better grades and higher test scores.⁸⁵ When children are less anxious, irritable, aggressive, withdrawn or depressed (all of which can be common consequences of poor nutrition and a lack of exercise), teachers are able to devote more of their time to teaching and less to dealing with behavior issues.

Determine how much grades, test scores and behavior have changed by surveying classroom teachers, students and parents and by working with your district accountability office. Improved academic performance and tangible cost savings are strong incentives for school districts to become financial investors.

Step 2: Calculate the cost savings to your city. The financial well-being of your city depends on several factors, not the least of which are employment rates, workplace productivity and the availability of affordable childcare. Given the current state of the economy, it's not uncommon for one in five adults to be out of work in low-income communities. Bringing employment opportunities into your community matters to mayors and city council members — a lot! Unemployment negatively impacts the tax base and increases demands on social services.

Your program is helping to counteract this by providing jobs that would not otherwise be

Improved academic performance and tangible cost savings are strong incentives for school districts to become financial investors.



available. There are two ways to demonstrate the impact of your program on employment. First, review your records and add up the *total* number of individuals who have worked in your program in any capacity since it began, no matter how long they stayed with you. You may be surprised at how large this number is — and pleased to note that this is the only time that staff turnover can work to your advantage! Second, if you've added new sites over the years, you'll be able to demonstrate a trend. If you began with three sites and 20 staff, and now have 25 sites and 200 staff, this shows that while employment is declining in some sectors, it's increasing in yours.

- » **Woodcraft Rangers** has employed more than 1,200 residents of the greater Los Angeles area, with the number increasing by 400 percent over the last two years.
- » **Club Y.E.S.** has enabled more than 230 people to work in meaningful jobs in the Central Valley, where unemployment is nearly the highest in the state.

It's equally important to identify childcare cost savings. One of the greatest barriers to employment is the prohibitive cost of childcare. If your program is offered free of charge, it has a profound impact on your community. Childcare expenses average between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a year for school-age children. Although it's obvious that low-income families couldn't afford these costs, it's also clear that free childcare makes it possible for single parents, and women in particular, to enter and remain in the labor force, build their personal and professional skills and become financially self-sufficient. In difficult economic times, the importance of free childcare as a means to employment is absolutely critical. Beyond this, the childcare savings that accrue to low-income families increase their discretionary income — most of which is spent in local neighborhoods and contributes to local sales tax revenue.

To determine the approximate savings in your community, multiply the number of students who have been enrolled in your program by the average cost of school-age childcare. For example, if your program has had 10 sites serving 100 students each for the past five years the calculation looks like this: 1,000 students x 5 years x \$3,500/year (the annual childcare cost) = \$17.5 million.

- » **Fresno FRESH** has saved parents more than \$28 million in childcare expenses over the last seven years, making it possible for thousands of low-income parents to find work and stay in their jobs.
- » In Santa Clara County, the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has saved more than \$76 million in childcare-related costs for 5,000 families over the past three years.

Step 3: Look at the savings you provide to your county. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that overweight is the most common medical condition in six to 11 year olds — and getting worse.⁸⁶ Poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles cause serious health problems, lower self-esteem, negatively impact student academic performance and lead to social and psychological problems. If this eating and lifestyle pattern continues into adulthood, as it usually does, it will lead to an unprecedented rate of premature death and disability, diminished workplace productivity and serious financial repercussions for families, insurers, healthcare providers and our society.⁸⁷

Overweight children are much more likely to become overweight adults unless they adopt and maintain healthier patterns of eating and exercise. The impact of poor nutrition and limited physical activity is staggering. Obesity-associated hospital costs for children have more than tripled over the last two decades, and are on the rise.⁸⁸

- The additional medical costs to our society for obesity in 2008 is estimated at \$140 billion — and increasing.
- In California alone, the total cost for health care and lost productivity attributable to physical inactivity, obesity and overweight are projected to reach over \$41 billion in 2006.⁹⁰

As tragic as this is for the individuals themselves, it has also contributed to a crisis in healthcare costs that impacts everyone. A large number of families are dependent on Medi-Cal, underinsured or simply aren't covered by any form of health insurance. They're less likely to schedule regular visits and annual check-ups with family physicians. They can't afford expensive prescription drugs, and conditions that could have been prevented or at least identified early on worsen. Type 2 diabetes is only one of these, although it's one of the most serious. Your program is having a cost-saving impact — and everyone needs to know about it!



The students you and your staff work with are much less likely than their peers to engage in unhealthy behaviors, whether it's drug, alcohol and tobacco use, or simply being physically inactive or having poor eating habits. If nothing else, your program seriously limits the opportunities students might otherwise have to engage in negative activities. And, your program is helping children and young people acquire the skills, self-esteem and self-confidence they need to make choices that support rather than hurt their health and well-being. Talk with principals, counselors and teachers, and conduct parent surveys. The chances are very good that the behavior of many of the students attending your program has improved.

Children who are left alone between the end of the school day and 6:00 p.m. are also disproportionately likely to be *victims* of crimes and accidents. Cases of victimization requiring medical attention or social services intervention are higher when children aren't supervised.⁹¹ And, the number of injuries children sustain is much greater. While safety is obviously the most important factor, cost savings shouldn't be overlooked. Emergency room visits, child protective services interventions, counseling sessions and other services run up taxpayer expenses in a big way. You can obtain evidence for the impact your program is having from county health departments and parent surveys.



The savings to your county also result from decreases in juvenile crime and gang involvement. Students in your program are learning to make better choices, solve problems more effectively, become more successful in school and focus more on their future. As this happens, they're less likely to become involved in activities that lead to incarceration. While your program isn't the only answer to these problems, it clearly makes a difference — and this shows up in costs savings.

- » The average public expense incurred from the time a crime is committed by a young person to the end of a one-year incarceration in a juvenile detention hall is approximately \$50,000 — or 40 times higher than what it costs for the same child or young person to attend your program for a year.⁹²
- » If your program keeps just three or four young people from entering the juvenile justice system, it will more than pay for itself in the short-term and save your county countless dollars over time.

Find out what the actual costs are in your own community. Work with sheriffs' offices, police departments, district attorneys' offices and other law enforcement agencies to determine the impact your program is having on reducing juvenile crime and gang membership in the areas where your sites are located. And, talk with youngsters and their parents. Many of them will probably tell you how different their lives would have been without your program!

Your program is helping children and young people acquire the skills, self-esteem and self-confidence they need to make choices that support rather than hurt their health and well-being.

Step 4: Align your interests with the business and foundation communities.

Among the most serious concerns expressed by business leaders, two stand out — high rates of employee absenteeism coupled with low levels of productivity, and the quality of the future workforce. The good news is that your program is making a difference in both of these areas.

Parents of students attending afterschool programs miss fewer days of work and are more productive when they're at work. This measurably improves the bottom line for employers. There's a simple explanation. When parents don't spend their time worrying about where their children are or what they're doing, they're much more focused on their work. When their kids are in a safe, supervised environment, they're much less likely to take time off to deal with emergencies. And, when their children's eating habits and physical activity levels are improving and they're in school more, they don't miss work as often.

Assessing the impact of your program on workplace productivity is easier than you might think. It can be done through a one-line questionnaire that takes just a minute to administer to a random sample of employed parents or other primary caregivers when they pick up their children at the end of the day. A "yes" or "no" answer to the following question will give you the data you'll need to make the connection between your program and workplace productivity: *I've*

gotten more done at work since my son or daughter has been in this program. Typically, the response is overwhelmingly positive.

The longer term issue concerns the emergent labor force and whether the next generation will be able to carry out its responsibilities in ways that meet the standards of prospective employers. This isn't just about youngsters' ability to read and write. It's about their ability to relate well with people, to think critically, to solve problems appropriately and to communicate effectively. And, it's about their physical and emotional health and well-being.

Everything your program is doing, or is capable of doing, contributes to helping children and young people acquire these skills and become healthier, more productive members of the future workforce. Be sure to include assessments of students' social, physical and emotional development as well as their academic performance in your program evaluations to demonstrate the impact you're having.

III. SUMMARIZE YOUR FINDINGS IN AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Once you've gathered as much of this information as you can, there's a lot you can do to be sure that potential funders begin to see your program as the go-to place to invest in. One of the most important tools for doing this is an executive summary. Although this is often thought of as an abbreviated form of a longer document, it doesn't have to be. Limit what you write to one or two pages. An executive summary is very different from a newsletter or an annual report. It doesn't describe what your program does — it powerfully and succinctly conveys the impact it's having. Written well, it will become a boiler plate for all of your fund development and grant writing.

Step 1: Identify key message points. Begin with a powerful introductory paragraph that captures the reader's attention and then use the message points highlighted earlier as the topic sentences for each subsequent paragraph. Tailor the examples below to reflect the evidence you uncover, and follow each one with three or four sentences that are captivating enough to motivate the reader to want to learn more. The following are examples of powerful topic sentences used in the executive summaries of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with.

- » Over the last six years, our program has brought millions of dollars into 27 low-income neighborhoods in our community, and made a difference in the lives of more than 14,000 children.— *Fitness 4 Life*
- » Three-quarters of the students in our program are attending school more regularly, doing better academically and developing more positive social skills.— *CalSERVES*
- » Since 2005, our program has provided meaningful employment for more than 400 community members. — *After-School All-Stars, LA*
- » By offering our program free of charge, low-income families have benefited from more than \$10 million in childcare savings and been able to enter and remain in the workforce. — *Woodcraft Rangers*



- » Ninety-seven percent of the parents of children in our program report that they are more productive at work during the afternoon hours. – *YMCA of Silicon Valley*
- » Since our program began, students are making better choices and our community is saving hundreds of thousands of dollars. – *Club Y.E.S.*

Step 2: Brainstorm a distribution list. Once you're satisfied with your executive summary, talk with your colleagues and community partners about where to send copies. Be sure to include mayors and city council members, county executives and department heads, community-based organization CEOs, school district superintendents and board members, and foundation program officers. Make it available to local newspapers and magazines, television networks and local cable stations, corporations and businesses and the district offices of your statewide elected officials and congressional representatives. Don't forget your own board members (if you have them), principals at the school sites where your program is located, members of your leadership team and your site directors!

Step 3: Request meetings with community leaders and potential funders. After you've made your case in writing, the next step is to begin to develop relationships with folks who have the ability and authority to make financial commitments on behalf of their organizations, agencies and departments — or can influence others to make these commitments. Mail your executive summary to these people and give them two weeks or so to read it. Then follow up with a call requesting a brief meeting to continue to lay the groundwork.

This meeting isn't about asking for funding — that will come later. It's designed to accomplish three purposes. It will give you an opportunity to begin to develop personal relationships. It will give you a chance to reiterate in person what you've already presented in writing. And, it will give you insight into who might be interested in becoming a champion or a member of your guiding team — individuals who are willing to help you bring in funders.⁹³

IV. FIND A CHAMPION AND DEVELOP A GUIDING TEAM

The publication of your executive summary and the initiation of relationships with key community leaders are starting points for developing the kinds of relationships that can lead to funding, or at least connect you with individuals and organizations that can support your efforts. You'll want to find a champion if you don't already have one, and create a guiding team — a small group of individuals who have real influence in your community. If you're a nonprofit organization with a board of directors, encourage board members to take on this role as well.

Step 1: Be selective. The people you want as champions and members of your guiding team are those with exceptional credibility, skills, knowledge, connections, influence, authority and access to financial resources. If you have any doubt about the importance of this, keep this in mind: *The messenger is often as important as the message.*

- » When a mayor tells city council members that investing in your program can leverage state and federal funding and bring millions of dollars into their community, it matters.

- » When a county supervisor talks with his colleagues about how your program can create jobs, increase workplace productivity, reduce childcare costs and stimulate local economic development, it makes a difference.
- » When a school district superintendent informs school board members about the way your program can reduce absences during the school day and improve academic performance and test scores, people pay attention.
- » When a corporate community relations director or foundation program officer talks with her associates about the way your program is contributing to a healthier, more productive workforce, both now and in the future, it piques their interest.

Step 2: Take community leaders on site visits. Once you've captured people's attention, follow up by taking local leaders on site visits. This not only increases their familiarity with the impact your program is having, it creates an emotional connection. Invite three or four people to visit a site together, and join them. Be sure they have time to really see the neighborhood where the site is located. Tell them about the demographics and show them the conditions in which children and families are living. Structure the experience to be sure they have an opportunity not only to observe what's going on, but also to speak directly with the principal, teachers, students, program staff and parents.

Prepare your staff members for visits. Try to ensure that as little as possible is left to chance and that everyone is prepared enough to feel comfortable and confident. Be sure that visitors have an opportunity to see the various components your program offers and get the information they need to really understand how these connect with their own interests. After each visit, follow up with personal thank-you notes.

**The more positive
publicity your program
gets, the better!**

Step 3: Expand awareness through the media. The more positive publicity your program gets, the better! In addition to highlighting the important work you're doing to help kids develop healthier eating habits and become more physically active, television, newspaper, radio and Internet (social networking) coverage will help you reach a much larger audience than would be possible in any other way. This coverage greatly expands awareness — and it creates the potential for making new connections that can have both immediate and long-term benefits. Early on you may have to initiate and cultivate these relationships on your own. When you have a champion and a guiding team, they'll provide invaluable assistance through their connections.

Capitalize on your program's special events. Use them as ways not only to increase and sustain students' enthusiasm but also as vehicles for connecting with your community. Invite the media, local leaders, your champion and members of your guiding team. This will begin to lay the groundwork for greater community involvement in your program and can pay huge dividends.



Make it your goal to develop relationships that lead to these kinds of outcomes:

- » **Woodcraft Rangers** has been highlighted on Clear Channel radio, ABC and Fox News, KMEX (Spanish speaking television) and in local newspapers, reaching literally tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of people.
- » **CalSERVES** has received extensive coverage in the local newspaper, the Press-Democrat, on local Spanish- and English-speaking radio stations and in the free press.
- » **After-School All-Stars, LA's** annual fundraising gala was highlighted on Access Hollywood and All-Stars of Rock was featured on the popular Hispanic television station, Telemundo, and on Los Angeles' number one FM radio station, KIIS-FM. This has made a dramatic difference in their visibility. Their Be Fit celebration also attracted the attention of local media, which televised the efforts of students making healthy choices after school.
- » **Mt. Diablo CARES** is frequently featured in the *Contra Costa Times* and other local and regional newspapers, and many of these articles have been picked up by the Associated Press and reprinted across the state and the nation.

Focus your efforts on developing a portfolio that creates a wide range of funding streams.

Step 4: Keep in mind that timing may be everything! If you're requesting funding from your city council, county board of supervisors or school board, it's critically important to know to the extent possible what the outcome of the vote will be, and that it will be favorable. If you aren't sure, continue to work with members of your guiding team until you, and they, are confident. The bad news is that if you act too soon, you'll be putting everything at risk and you may not get another chance. The good news is that if your timing is right, you'll get the money — and when you have at least one local investor, the prospects for additional funding increases dramatically.

The same thing applies when you're writing grants. Although most foundations have designated deadlines for grant applications, some are open to submissions at any time. Some fund throughout the year, and others are more likely to have additional money available at certain times if their allocation for the year hasn't already been spent or if previously funded organizations have returned money and the opportunity is available for a new award. It's up to you to do the research. Contact foundations, ask what their funding cycles are and take advantage of timing that may work in your favor.

V. BUILD A BALANCED, DIVERSIFIED AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING BASE

Funding that's well-balanced and diversified is sustainable. Set your sights on securing revenue from a variety of sources at the federal, state and local levels. Focus your efforts on developing a portfolio that creates a wide range of funding streams that provide core funding to support your program over time. Ideally, strive for a third of your funding to come from state sources, a third from federal grants and a third from local investments.

Step 1: Use the power of leveraging to your advantage. Investing in your program at the local level is fiscally prudent, politically attractive and socially responsible. By leveraging their investments, school districts, cities, counties, special districts, corporations and foundations can realize a return on their money that often exceeds the cost of doing business in other ways by as much as 1,000 percent or more.⁹⁴ The short-term value is in outside revenue generation and cost savings. The long-term value is in increasing the number of children and young people who become healthy, productive adults and contributing members of their communities. In combination, these are powerful incentives for funding your program. Use this argument to make your case.

Step 2: Identify potential funding sources. Take advantage of every opportunity to secure state, federal and local funding. When After School Education and Safety (ASES) Programs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants are announced, apply for them. Stay on top of other possible funding sources that the California AfterSchool Network and Regional Leads identify on their web sites and in their newsletters.⁹⁵ Regularly check in with the Finance Project web site to see what this outstanding organization may be recommending.⁹⁶

- » The **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has received almost \$6 million in grant funds over the last three years to support the mission and ongoing work of the organization — \$75,000 from Community Foundation of Silicon Valley Algebra Success Initiative; \$3 million over six years from a Carol M. White PEP grant; \$300,000 in USDA federal food program funds; \$2.5 million from a Centers for Disease Control REACH grant; and \$50,000 from Kaiser Permanente.
- » **CalSERVES** is supported by several businesses, including Costco, Target, Wal-Mart and Starbucks, which provide gift cards and free materials.
- » The S.H. Cowell Foundation helps fund the **Fitness 4 Life Teach Academy**, which provides at-risk high school youth with leadership skills training. After extensive training and under adult expert coach direction, these students provide instruction to elementary and middle school students during afterschool.
- » **Woodcraft Rangers** received gifts for 6,000 students in its eight-week Health and Fitness Challenge from co-sponsors Clear Channel Communications, Donate for Life California, Disney Worldwide, Pollo Campero, Quicksilver, Panda Restaurant Group and Panner's Tasty Paste.

At the local level, keep in mind that school districts often support programs through their general fund, Title 1 and other categorical sources. Cities frequently invest in afterschool programs through their general funds or through specific allocations that may be available through special local taxes or through money that becomes available through cable television and other excess profit resources. Federal stimulus dollars may also become an important source for cities, and for counties as well. Counties themselves use both general and designated funding streams to invest, as do rural healthcare districts. A more comprehensive list of potential resources is provided in the endnotes to this chapter and will help you get started.



Step 3: Partner with other organizations. Don't overlook the value of entering into school or district based funding partnerships. For example, the *Network for a Healthy California* assists local public entities in conducting nutrition education and promoting physical activity for SNAP/food stamp eligible and low-income Californians. Through its Local Incentive Award (LIA) Program, it funds local education agencies that provide nutrition and physical education in order to enhance existing efforts. Several Healthy Behaviors programs have received support through this channel, and it's worth pursuing yourself. Talk with your school district and see if it already receives funding from the *Network*.⁹⁷ Don't close the door on any possibilities!

- » *CalSERVES* initially worked with its district LIA and later was able to apply and be funded on its own — which it has been for the past three years.
- » As part of the Fresno County Office of Education, *Fresno FRESH* is a Local Incentive Awardee and works closely with the Fresno unified districts in this capacity.

Step 4: Capitalize on current funding trends. The childhood obesity crisis is one of the most potentially devastating and widely recognized issues our country is facing. Not surprisingly, many businesses, non-profit organizations, foundations and public agencies are funding efforts to help alleviate this problem. Your program is uniquely well-positioned to impact thousands of children and young people over the next several years — and longer. Seize the moment!

Build a solid, sustainable financial based by balancing and diversifying your core funding through a combination of public and private investments. Remember that while grants in almost any form are time-limited, they can make a real difference in supporting your program's financial viability. They enable you to enhance the quality of what you offer children and their families, and expand the impact you're having on your community. The Center for Collaborative Solutions and several other organizations have researched and identified federal funding streams, foundations and other resources that you can access. They can be found in the Endnotes.⁹⁸

INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #6:

Secure Adequate and Sustainable Funding

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every three months by you as a program director or member of your program’s leadership team, and by site directors, site staff and partners. This will make it possible for you to identify areas in which this practice is especially strong and areas where it can and should be improved. The more input you have in this process, the more reliable the information will be. Keep in mind that the purpose of this tool is to assist you in creating and implementing action plans that will hasten the achievement of your goals and help you measure and manage your progress along the way.

Key:

1. We haven’t yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We’ve done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We’ve made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We’ve achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We’re clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Generating Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Local Funding						
1	We are clear about the ways in which our program generates new revenue and provides cost savings in our community.					
2	We are clear about the ways in which our program provides new revenue and cost savings to the school districts where our sites are located.					
3	We have developed strong relationships with public officials and community leaders.					
4	We are successful in convincing public officials and community leaders of the value of investing in our program.					
5	We have secured adequate state, federal and local funding to support our program.					
6	We stay informed about potential revenue sources and funding streams to support our program in general and its nutrition and physical activity components in specific.					

continued next page



INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #6: Secure Adequate and Sustainable Funding continued

INDICATORS		1	2	3	4	5
Securing Funding for Nutrition and Physical Activity Components						
7	We are clear about the importance of combating childhood obesity and take advantage of the financial opportunities available to support this effort.					
8	We have a system in place that enables us to draw on federal funding to support nutrition and physical activity through grants and other forms of support.					
9	We are knowledgeable about private foundation grants that are available to support our efforts in strengthening the health and well being of students in our program.					
10	We have developed close connections with Network agencies in our area.					
11	We have secured grants to support our work in nutrition and physical activity and are meeting our grants' goals and objectives.					
12	We receive adequate in-kind donations to provide supplies for nutrition and physical activity components in our program.					

Key:

1. We haven't yet addressed this, or are just beginning to work in this area.
2. We've done some work in this area, but have a long way to go.
3. We've made significant progress and are doing reasonably well.
4. We've achieved a high level of success in this area.
5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This guide reflects the combined knowledge and experience of recognized leaders in the afterschool, physical activity and nutrition fields. An expansion of the *Developing Exemplary Practices in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Food Security in Afterschool* guide, it provides step-by-step guidance to implementing the Exemplary Practices based on lessons learned from our statewide learning community afterschool programs.

In partnership with the *Network for a Healthy California*, CCS launched the Healthy Behaviors Initiative in 2004. The initiative came from our belief that afterschool programs can become a driving force in helping to combat the childhood obesity crisis, especially impacting the low-income children that publicly-funded afterschool programs serve.

Following extensive research and consultation with nutrition and physical activity experts across the state, key informant interviews and Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings, six practices were identified.⁹⁹ Eleven multi-site, rural and urban afterschool programs that had a proven record of at least some success in this area, and a commitment to moving to the next level, were selected on the basis of a competitive application process to participate in a statewide learning community. Over a three-year period, members of the leadership teams of ten of these programs worked together and independently to expand their knowledge, share information and refine and field test these six practices.

Peer reviewed by CDPH and CDE and numerous other experts, the guide to *Developing Exemplary Practices in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Food Security in Afterschool Programs* was first published in March 2007 and updated in September 2008. Our Healthy Behaviors programs encouraged us to expand the guide to include more specific guidance about how to implement the Practices. Their counsel was not taken lightly since they had created 17 Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers that implemented the Practices at an exemplary level.¹⁰⁰ We agreed that expansion of the guide, rather than development of a companion guide would be the most effective tool for programs to use.

It is our hope that this guide will inspire you to think more strategically, work more collaboratively and act more intentionally as you approach your work — and will provide you specific guidance on how to go about it. The work that you do is already changing the lives of the children and youth you serve. Incorporating healthy eating, physical activity and food security in an intentional way, using this guide, will help you change and save the lives of those children.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Andria J. Fletcher is Chief Afterschool Consultant for the Center for Collaborative Solutions. She is a nationally recognized expert in afterschool program and policy development. As the founding Director of Sacramento START, Andi initiated the program in 1995 with 20 sites, 120 staff, 2,000 students and \$850,000 in funding. Under her leadership, within three years, student attendance increased to 4,000 and funding exceeded \$3.4 million. In 1997, she and Carla Sanger of LA's BEST afterschool program worked with Assembly Member Deborah Ortiz to launch California's first afterschool legislation, which has now led to \$550 million in state funding.

Andi has been a keynote speaker and workshop presenter at over 150 national, state and regional conferences including the California Department of Health Services' Obesity Conference, National School Boards Association Conferences, California Department of Education-sponsored afterschool conferences, Council of Chief State School Officers 21st Century Community Learning Centers sessions, Harvard University's Symposium of Evaluation, the National League of Cities, the Disney Institute, the National Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, the National Summit on Afterschool and several U.S. Department of Education Regional conferences. She is the author of numerous publications, many of which are among the most widely read in the field. She is the co-author, together with Sam Piha and Reba Rose of the Community Network for Youth Development, of *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*. Most recently, she authored *Expand and Excel, A Step-by-Step Guide for Managing Growth and Strengthening Quality in Afterschool Programs* (2006), *Lessons in Leadership* (2007), and the *Developing Exemplary Practices in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Food Security in Afterschool* guide (2008). Andi earned her doctorate in Political Science at UCLA.



ABOUT THE CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

Founded in 1991, the Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps individuals and groups work together to discover innovative and effective ways to achieve shared goals. CCS' Afterschool Services Division focuses on building high quality, sustainable afterschool programs and partnerships. CCS has provided leadership in the afterschool arena both in California and nationally since 1998 by designing and implementing a variety of initiatives to strengthen afterschool programs, by publishing material on exemplary afterschool practices, and by providing direct coaching and technical assistance to afterschool programs. For more information about CCS' afterschool work, visit www.afterschoolsolutions.org.

ABOUT THE NETWORK FOR A HEALTHY CALIFORNIA

The *Network for a Healthy California (Network)* is a statewide social marketing program that empowers low-income Californians and their families to live better by eating healthy and being physically active every day. Its goals are to transform the norm in low-income communities and double fruit and vegetable consumption, increase daily physical activity and reduce hunger. Local assistance projects are supported by a statewide infrastructure of 11 *Regional Networks* that deliver targeted campaigns and programs including the *Children’s Power Play! Campaign*, *Latino Campaign*, *African American Campaign*, *Be Active! Worksite Program*, *Retail Program*, *Harvest of the Month* and *Physical Activity Integration*. The *Network* targets parents and children living in households with incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. The *Network* is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. In California, food stamps provide assistance to low-income households, and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.



Since its establishment in 1997, the *Network* has provided leadership and built administrative capacity that has grown local assistance projects from two schools and two local health departments to nearly 160 public and non-profit organizations today. Its efforts seem to be working. In contrast to national trends, fruit and vegetable consumption in low-income adults is rising, and in 2007, California’s two lowest-income segments reported reaching the five-serving minimum goal for the first time ever, better than the highest income segment.

You can visit the *Network* web site at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/Pages/default.aspx.

ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT

The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation created in 1996 as a result of Blue Cross of California’s creation of WellPoint Health Networks, a for-profit corporation. The California Endowment’s mission is *to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians*. The Endowment’s program work focuses on three areas: access to health, culturally competent health systems, and community health and the elimination of health disparities. It funds work to strengthen communities to become healthy places to live and is involved in public policy to achieve meaningful change in access to quality health care and improvements in the health status of California’s underserved communities.



You can visit The California Endowment’s web site at www.calendow.org.



ABOUT THE DAVID AND LUCILE PACKARD FOUNDATION

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation is a private family foundation created in 1964 by David Packard (1912–1996), cofounder of the Hewlett-Packard Company, and Lucile Salter Packard (1914–1987). The Foundation provides grants to nonprofit organizations in the following program areas: Conservation and Science; Population and Reproductive Health; and

Children, Families, and Communities. The Foundation makes national and international grants and also has a special focus on the Northern California counties of San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. In its Children, Families and Communities program, afterschool is an important component that seeks to ensure standards of excellence and support the development of sustainable public and private funding models and mechanisms. The Foundation funds intermediary organizations and model programs that are highly collaborative and serve the field at large. The Packard Foundation also often funds youth-serving organizations in five Bay Area counties through its Local Grantmaking program.

You can visit the David and Lucile Packard Foundation web site at www.packard.org

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Implementation Notes

If you have questions or need assistance as you move forward, please call the Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS) at (916) 567-9911 or visit our web site at <http://www.afterschoolsolutions.org>.

The listing below provides you with general contact information for each of the Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers if you want to visit or get additional assistance in implementation of the Exemplary Practices. For specific individuals to contact, visit <http://www.afterschoolsolutions.org>.

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS INITIATIVE (HBI) LEARNING CENTER (LC) PROGRAMS

After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles
(323) 957-4426

CalSERVES
Napa COE
Rohnert Park
(888) 560-7378
HBI LCs: Roseland & Sheppard Elementary

Club Y.E.S. (Youth Education and Enrichment at School)
Madera COE
(559) 662-3836
HBI LC: Parkwood (K–8)

Fitness 4 Life
Pajaro Valley USD
Watsonville
(831) 786-2390
HBI LCs: F4L (1–8), César Chávez Middle

Fresno FRESH (Fresno County's Recreation Enrichment and Scholastic Help)
Fresno COE
(559) 443-4809
HBI LC: Madison Elementary

Mt. Diablo CARES (Collaborative for Academics, Recreation, & Enrichment for Students)

Bay Point
(925) 458-1601
HBI LCs: Riverview Middle & Holbrook Elementary

San Francisco ExCEL After School Programs

San Francisco USD
(415) 750-8650
HBI LCs: Sunset & E.R. Taylor Elementary

Woodcraft Rangers

Los Angeles
(213) 249-9293
HBI LCs: San Antonio Elementary

A World Fit For Kids!

Los Angeles
(213) 387-7712
HBI LCs: Norwood & Frank del Olmo Elementary

YMCA of Silicon Valley

San Jose
(408) 351-6400
HBI LC: Pomeroy Elementary

Endnotes

- ¹Greenfield Foundation for Success Afterschool Program dropped out of the Healthy Behaviors Learning Community in 2007, leaving 10 Learning Community programs.
- ²*Student Wellness: A Healthy Food and Physical Activity Policy Resource Guide*. California School Boards Association and California Project LEAN. This guide includes research that connects student nutrition and physical activity to academic achievement and contains policy recommendations for addressing the obesity crisis of California students. Visit <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/resourceLibrary/genResourceLibraryDetail.asp?CGUID=%7B933FD388%2D8CE8%2D4643%2DB3FF%2DE96ECB476535%7D&CIID=res%5F1025&CIV=6&CATNID=1031&CATNGUID=%7BEC63CE25%2D9FE4%2D4D03%2D8703%2DFB01D34F32C4%7D>.
- ³Vinacor, Frank, M.D. Director, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Diabetes Division. cited in April 29, 2004, "Revised Definition Means Millions More have Pre-Diabetes," News Release from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.hhs.gov/news>
- ⁴Olshansky, S.Jay, Ph.D.; Passaro, Douglas J., M.D.; Hershov, Ronald C.; M.D.; Layden, Jennifer, M.P.H.; Carnes, Bruce A., Ph.D.; Brody, Jacob, M.D.; Hayflick, Leonard, Ph.D.; Butler, Robert N., M.D.; Allison, David B., Ph.D.; and Ludwig, David S., M.D., Ph.D. "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century," *New England Journal of Medicine*, Volume 352:1138–1145, March 17, 2005
- ⁵*Student Wellness: A Healthy Food and Physical Activity Policy Resource Guide*, op.cit. Also, "Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity, American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement," Committee on Nutrition, Pediatrics, Vol. 112 No. 2, August 2003.
- ⁶Visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/qsatool> to view the tool.
- ⁷U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*, Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General. 2001, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/toc.htm>
- ⁸American Academy of Pediatrics. *Statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics for the Senate Subcommittee on Competition, Foreign Commerce and Infrastructure on the Rise of Childhood Obesity*, American Academy of Pediatrics, Washington, D.C. March 2, 2004
- ⁹Mahar, Maggie. "Fat" – Part 2 Understanding Obesity—Reason for Hope, Health Beat, a project of The Century Foundation, November 21, 2008. <http://www.healthbeatblog.com/2008/11/fat-part-2-understanding-obesity-for-hope.html>
- ¹⁰*Student Wellness: A Healthy Food and Physical Activity Policy Resource Guide*. Op.Cit.
- ¹¹*National Poll on Children's Health 2009*, Publication of C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation Unit, Vol. 7 Issue 2, August 10, 2009, http://www.med.umich.edu/mott/npch/pdf/20090810_Top10Report.pdf
- ¹²Narayan, K.M. Venkat, M.D.; Boyle, James P., Ph.D.; Thompson Theodore J., M.S.; Sorensen Stephen W., Ph.D.; Williamson, David F., Ph.D. "Lifetime Risk for Diabetes Mellitus in the United States. *JAMA*, 2003; 290: 1884–1890. One in two children of color born in the year 2000 is likely to acquire type 2 diabetes unless something is changed.
- ¹³Olshansky, S. Jay, Ph.D.; Passaro, Douglas J., M.D.; Hershov, Ronald C., M.D.; Layden, Jennifer, M.P.H.; Carnes, Bruce A., Ph.D.; Brody, Jacob, M.D.; Hayflick, Leonard, Ph.D.; Butler, Robert N., M.D.; Allison, David B., Ph.D.; and Ludwig, David S., M.D., Ph.D. "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century," *New England Journal of Medicine*, Volume 352:1138–1145, March 17, 2005.
- ¹⁴Collins, Karen, R.D. "The Soft Drink Explosion Among Kids," *Nutrition Notes*, October 1, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6142711>. National dietary surveys show that carbonated soft drink consumption more than doubled in youths aged 6 to 17 between 1977–78 and 1994–98, the most recent years for which national data were available.
- ¹⁵For more on the federally-funded free and reduced price meal programs, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/>.
- ¹⁶As of October 1, 2008, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program, although California has not adopted a new name yet. See <http://www.frac.org/index.html>. For information on the WIC program, see <http://www.wicworks.ca.gov/>.
- ¹⁷These programs can be found at <http://www.catchinfo.org/> and <http://eafit.ucdavis.edu/levelone/whatis.html>. For a list of recommended nutrition and physical activity curricula by grade level and supplemental instructional material, visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/pages/liaprogramguidelinesmanualappendix.aspx> (items A8 and A9).
- ¹⁸Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RegionalNetworks.aspx>.
- ¹⁹The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program is found in 45 California counties. For a link to their programs and information about resources they offer, visit <http://camastergardeners.ucdavis.edu/>.
- ²⁰CASRC's web site is <http://www.californiaafterschool.org>. CHKRC's web site is <http://www.californiahealthykids.org>.
- ²¹*California Food Guide: Fulfilling the Dietary Guidelines for Americans* can be downloaded from <http://www.cafoodguide.ca.gov>
- ²²These are posted at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/pages/liaprogramguidelinesmanualappendix.aspx> (Items A8 & A9).
- ²³*Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (adopted by the State Board of Education March 2008), <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.doc>
- ²⁴<http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/>
- ²⁵*Youth Development Guide: Engaging young people in after school programming*, Community Network for Youth Development, San Francisco, CA, 2001
- ²⁶Fletcher, Andria J., Ph.D., Piha, Sam, and Rose, Reba. *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*, Center for Collaborative Solutions, 2005
- ²⁷<http://www.Californiaafterschool.org>. The Physical Activity e-manual includes specific advice for students with asthma (see Inclusion, Strategy 8).
- ²⁸Roberts, Clay, of the Search Institute in keynote address at 2006 Annual Region 9 Afterschool Leadership Conference in Palm Springs, California. See also "Resiliency: Superhuman Strength or Normal Human Capacity" from WestEd regarding the importance protective factors (caring relationships, high expectations) play in strengthening resilience and predicting positive outcomes for high risk children, R&D Alert, 2003, Vol. 5, No. 2. See http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/rd-03-02.pdf.
- ²⁹Fletcher, Andria J., PhD, op.cit.
- ³⁰ibid.

- ³¹See the California After School Resource Center (CASRC) Physical Activity e-manual at <http://www.californiaafterschool.org>. See *Inclusion, Strategy 8* for a full discussion.
- ³²Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee. *Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Report*, 2008. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008, Summary, pp. 3, 5, 6. Visit <http://www.health.gov/PAGuidelines/Report/>.
- ³³Common Sense Media, <http://www.common Sense Media.org/resources>
- ³⁴*Guide for Practice...Engaging and Re-engaging Students in Learning at School*, UCLA Center, Mental Health in Schools Program and Policy Analysis, p. 7. Visit <http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engagingandreengagingstudents.pdf>.
- ³⁵*Health Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (2003), adopted by the State Board of Education, March 2002; *Physical Education Framework for California Public Schools*, adopted by the State Board of Education, September 2008; *Physical Education Model Content Standards for Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (2006); and *Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* (2009), adopted by the State Board of Education, March 2008. All frameworks can be downloaded from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfws.asp>. All standards can be downloaded from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>.
- ³⁶*A Child's Garden of Standards*, published by CDE, clearly lays out the academic standards associated with various gardening activities. The book can be downloaded from CDE's web site. Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/childsgarden.pdf>.
- ³⁷For more information about SPARK, visit <http://www.sparkpe.org/>. *Coordinated Approach to Child Health* (CATCH) is an evidence-based coordinated school health program designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices. For more information, visit <http://www.catchinfo.org>. The *Children's Power Play! Campaign* includes a media campaign as well as nutrition-related activities for children aged 9–11 designed to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables. For more information, visit the *Network for a Healthy California* web site or contact your *Regional Network for a Healthy California* Coordinator. CANFIT is a statewide, non-profit organization whose mission is to engage communities and build their capacity to improve the nutrition and physical activity status of California's low-income African American, American Indian, Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islander youth 10–14 years old. Its web site offers a rich source of information on both nutrition and physical activity for afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.CANFIT.org>.
- ³⁸Access at <http://www.afterschoolpa.com>. Developed in partnership with the California Department of Education with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. SDCOE's key physical activity/education staff have long been recognized for their leadership in this area.
- ³⁹Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/Recipes.aspx>.
- ⁴⁰For a description of Mentors in MotionSM, visit www.worldfitforkids.org and look under program components.
- ⁴¹<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP>
- ⁴²Visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm>
- ⁴³Visit www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/ImpactEvaluation.aspx.
- ⁴⁴Fourney, Andy, DrPH, *Impact Evaluation Handbook and Compendium: A Guide for Network for a Healthy California Local Incentive Awardees*. 2008–09 Edition. Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Network-ImpactEvaluationHandbookCompendium.pdf>, pp. 12–13.
- ⁴⁵Fourney, Andy, DrPH., op. cit. The handbook contains a variety of nutrition and physical activity surveys. Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Network-NutritionEducationSurvey.pdf>, p. 128.
- ⁴⁶California Healthy Kids Survey, Module E: Physical Health, accessible at http://www.wested.org/cs/chks/view/chks_s/5?x-layout=surveys
- ⁴⁷For more information and materials, contact www.afterschoolsolutions.org.
- ⁴⁸The Learn and Serve: America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse provides extensive information on service learning associated with different objectives. Visit <http://www.learnandserve.gov/> and <http://www.servicelearning.org/index.php>.
- ⁴⁹For more on project-based learning, see Buck Institute for Education's Project Based Learning web Site: www.bie.org/index.php/site/PBL/overview_pbl/ and Houghton Mifflin's Project-Based Learning Space: <http://www.college.cengage.com/education/pbl/background.html>.
- ⁵⁰Visit www.dairycouncilofca.org.
- ⁵¹www.caff.org/programs/farm2school.shtml. For resources and contacts in southern California contact www.cafarmtoschool.org.
- ⁵²Go to www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/pages/default.aspx for contact information.
- ⁵³Many of the Healthy Behaviors programs partner with the University of California Cooperative Extension (www.ucanr.org/ucce.shtml), the Dairy Council of California (www.dairycouncilofca.org/) and the *Regional Network for a Healthy California (Children's Power Play! Campaign)*, and use *Harvest of the Month* (www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/pages/default.aspx).
- ⁵⁴Live show streaming is available online at San Francisco ExCEL's web site, or by clicking on the Access San Francisco 2 button or by watching Comcast Cable Channel 76.
- ⁵⁵View <http://www.californiaprojectclean.org>. In the Resource Library you'll find *Playing the Policy Game Advocacy Guide* and *Jump Start Teens*.
- ⁵⁶The National PTA has a useful guide for parents with concrete tips on how to increase their families' physical activity, improve their nutrition, and find out more about wellness policies. To view the *PTA Healthy Lifestyles: A Parent's Guide*, visit http://www.pta.org/documents/GSK_Parent's_Guide_Booklet_disclaimer_added.pdf.
- ⁵⁷Visit <http://www.californiaprojectclean.org> and view School Wellness Policy Tools.
- ⁵⁸www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/
- ⁵⁹Visit <http://www.californiaprojectclean.org> and view *Creative School Fundraising Ideas* in the Resource Library for a long list of ideas.
- ⁶⁰A new web site, www.jointuse.org, helps organizations learn more about joint use agreements.
- ⁶¹*Amazing Facts about Health*. Visit http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/AmazingFacts_small.pdf. p. 1.
- ⁶²Ibid, p. 3
- ⁶³Bickel, Gary; Nord, Mark; Price, Christofer; et al. *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security*. Vol 2. 2 ed: Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA; 2000. Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/files/fsguide.pdf>. "Food secure" means that a family has access at all times to sufficient food for an active, healthy life. If a family is "food secure," it has enough to eat a variety of healthy foods. The family doesn't have to worry about their next meal or go hungry because of their inability to buy food.
- ⁶⁴<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Breakfast/>. Federal regulations mandate that school lunches and school breakfasts offer one third and one-fourth of the RDAs, respectively.
- ⁶⁵Alaimo, K.; Olson, C.; Frongillo Jr., E.A. "Food Insecurity and Academic and Psychological Development," *Pediatrics*, July, 2001; 108 (1) 44-53. Weinreb, L.; Wheler, C.; Perloff, J.; Scott, R.; Hosmer, D.; Sagor, L.; Gundersen, C. "Hunger: Its Impact on Children's Health and Mental Health," *Pediatrics*, October 2002; 110 (4) e41.
- ⁶⁶Narayan, K.M. Venkat, M.D. op. cit.

- 67**As of Oct. 1, 2008, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program at the national level. California has not yet renamed it. For more information on the program, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/>.
- 68**To learn more about the availability of food security workshops, see <http://www.foodsecurity.org/aboutfsc.html>.
- 69**To learn more about this approach, see <http://www.tribes.com>.
- 70**In its guide, *Making the Most of Child Nutrition Funding*, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) recommends that programs serve fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and low fat milk, that water is always offered, and that juice is served infrequently, if at all. This guide is available at www.frac.org/CA_Guide/.
- 71**The California AfterSchool Resource Center's e-guide to Healthy Snacks lays out these standards in a clear, easy-to-understand format. See http://www.californiaafterschool.org/c/@_JNO6dfTiYw9k/Pages/nutrition.html.
- 72**A great resource on healthy snacks for afterschool programs is CANFIT's *Healthy Snack Guide for Your After School Program*, which can be downloaded from <http://CANFIT.org/pdf/CANFITHealthySnackGuide.pdf> as well as CASRC's e-guide to Healthy Snacks.
- 73**The California School Garden Network web site provides user-friendly guidance on starting and maintaining a school garden including their downloadable book, *Gardens for Learning: Creating and Sustaining Your School Garden* that also links to the state education standards (<http://www.csgn.org>). The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom also offers a variety of resources and lesson plans by grade level (<http://www.cfaic.org>). Resources developed for the WE Garden with the First Lady of California (including lesson plans linked to state education standards) are available directly at <http://www.cfaic.org/wegarden/>.
- 74**For a list of current and past sites, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/> and view the Summer Meal Service Sites.
- 75**The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national organization working to improve public policies in order to eradicate hunger; see <http://www.frac.org/>.
- 76***Reaching Those in Need: State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Rates in 2007*, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/FILES/Participation/Reaching2007.pdf>
- 77**Under the final federal stimulus package, food stamp benefits increased 13.6 percent. Visit <http://www.cpa.net>.
- 78**To access these materials and for information on food stamp application and eligibility information, go to <http://www.myfoodstamps.org>. Spanish-speaking families can be referred to the Spanish language web site at <http://www.misalimentos.org>.
- 79**Visit <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/foodstamps/default.htm>.
- 80**For information on WIC application and eligibility requirements, call 1-888-942-9675 or go online at <http://www.wicworks.ca.gov>.
- 81**For additional information, see Fletcher, Andria J., "A Guide to Developing Funding for Afterschool Programs," Center for Collaborative Solutions, 2008.
- 82**Fletcher, Andria J. Ph.D. "A Formula for Securing Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Funding for Afterschool Programs," Center for Collaborative Solutions, 2004
- 83**<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/publications.cfm>
- 84**Huang, Denise; Kim, Kyung Sung; Marshall, Anne; and Perez, Patricia. *Keeping Kids in School: An LA's BEST Example, A Study Examining the Long-Term Impact of LA's BEST on Students' Dropout Rates*, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST), University of California, Los Angeles, December 2005
- 85**Symons C. W., and others. "Bridging Student Health Risks and Academic Achievement through Comprehensive School Health Programs," *Journal of School Health*. 1997; 67(6) 220-227
- 86**American Academy of Pediatrics, op.cit.
- 87**Vinter, S.; Levi, J.; St. Laurent, R.; and Segal, L.M. *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2008*. Trust for America's Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Visit <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/081908.3424.fasinfat.pdf>.
- 88**Oregon School Boards Association. *Focus on Critical Issues*, "The High Cost of Childhood Obesity," winter 2005. Visit http://www.osba.org/Resources/Article/Improving_Education/~media/Files/Publications/Critical%20Issues/ciobese.ashx. p 4.
- 89**Finkelstein, Eric A.; Trogdon, Justin G.; Cohen, Joel W.; and Dietz, William. "Annual Medical Spending Attributable to Obesity: Payer-And Service-Specific Estimates," *Health Affairs*, September-October 2009, 28, no. 5 (2009):w822-w831 (Published online July 27, 2009). Cited by VOA News in "Study Estimates Cost of US Obesity at \$140 billion," Chimes, Art, July 29, 2009. <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2009-07/2009-07-29-voa32.cfm?renderforprint=1>.
- 90**California Center for Public Health Advocacy. *The Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity and Physical Inactivity Among California Adults—2006*. Study conducted by Chenoweth & Associates, Inc., July 2009. <http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/costofobesity.html>
- 91***California's After-School Choice: Juvenile Crime or Safe Learning Time*, A Report from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California, September 2001. Visit <http://www.fightcrime.org/CA>.
- 92**Ibid.
- 93**Fletcher, Andria J., PhD, et.al. *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*, op.cit.
- 94**Fletcher, Andria J., Ph.D. "A Formula for Securing Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Funding for Afterschool Programs," op.cit.
- 95**You can sign up for the Network's Listserv at <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org> and find Afterschool Regional Lead web sites at <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/regions>.
- 96**<http://www.financeproject.org>
- 97**Although total LIA funding is currently capped, if your district already receives LIA funding, it may be able to expand the nutrition education and resources it offers to include your program by expanding its scope of work.
- 98**The following resource list will help you locate a wide variety of funding and programmatic resources:
- Afterschool Alliance.** Funding Publications. Key web site. This web site lists several publications that will help programs access different funding sources. It also has a series of publications that provide data supporting the value of afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding.cfm>.
- Ben B. Cheney Foundation.** The Ben B. Cheney Foundation provides support for private, nonprofit tax-exempt organizations located in selected areas of Washington, Oregon and Northern California. Support is provided for the following categories that might apply to afterschool: education, health, and youth. Visit <http://www.BenBCheneyfoundation.org>.
- California AfterSchool Network.** Key web site. This web site provides information on a wide variety of resources available to afterschool programs, including a page specifically targeted at nutrition and physical activity. Their web site and Listserv provide updates on grants, research, and trainings. Visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org>.
- California After School Resource Center (CASRC).** Key web site. The California After School Resource Center provides information about resources (curricula, guides, DVDs) that they have reviewed and approved for use by California-funded afterschool programs. These resources are

available for loan. In addition, they offer trainings and an e-guide to Healthy Snacks and an e-guide to Physical Activity. Visit <http://www.californiaafterschool.org>.

California Association of Food Banks (CAFB). This web site can be used to link you to your local food bank, and it also provides hunger and nutrition information, and links to their food stamp outreach web site. Visit <http://www.cafoodbanks.org>. Also visit their food stamp outreach web site at <http://www.myfoodstamps.org>.

California Department of Education (CDE). Key web site. This web site provides links to the After School Programs Office (within the Learning Support and Partnerships Division) and the Nutrition Services Division; offers an electronic notification system for all departmental grant making (including ASES and 21st CCLC RFAs); and provides links to FITNESS-GRAM® test results through its data and statistics section. Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov>.

The California Endowment. Major funder. Their grants focus on three broad areas of interest: access to health, culturally competent health systems, and community health and the elimination of health disparities. They fund non-profits and government and public agencies. No deadlines for applications. Their primary focus now is on creating healthy environments by funding select communities over a period of time. Visit <http://www.calendow.org/>.

California Food Policy Advocates (CFPA). Key California food security web site. This web site provides important advocacy resources, child nutrition information and data, and a California County Nutrition Profile that provides county-by-county useful information about food security, related health problems and nutrition program utilization rates. Visit <http://www.CFPA.net>.

California Project LEAN. Key web site. This web site provides research-based, user-friendly tools and resources on nutrition and physical activity, school wellness, and parent and youth engagement. Visit <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org>

California Wellness Foundation. The California Wellness Foundation's mission is to improve the health of Californians by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. They provide core operating support. Fifty percent of their grants are for preventive health systems. Funding interests include community action, and public education and policy. Visit <http://www.calwellness.org/>.

CANFIT. CANFIT is a statewide, non-profit organization whose mission is to engage communities and build their capacity to improve the nutrition and physical activity status of California's low-income African-American, American Indian, Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islander youth 10-14 years old. The web site provides a variety of information and resources on both nutrition and physical activity for afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.CANFIT.org>.

Carol M. White Physical Education Program Grants. Major funder. The Carol M. White Physical Education Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, provides grants to initiate, expand and improve physical education programs, including afterschool programs, for students in kindergarten through 12th grade in order to help them make progress toward meeting state standards for physical education. Grantees include local education agencies and community-based organizations. They cover equipment and teacher education among other things. Visit <http://www.ed.gov/programs/whitephysed/>.

The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools. The Center is a non-partisan resource center at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services. This site provides notifications of funding opportunities at least weekly. Visit <http://www.healthinschools.org/en/News-Room/GrantAlerts/Education-and-Health-and-Human-Services-Grants-various-locations.aspx>.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. Key Web site. This web site contains extensive information on these subjects and links to interactive web sites including BAM and Fruits and Veggies Matter. BAM (Body and Mind) is an online destination for kids created by the CDC for kids 9-13 years old. BAM provides information they need to make healthy choices as well as interactive activities linked to national education standards for science and health. It offers help to teachers. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa>.

Children Now. Children Now publishes an annual California Report Card that rates the status of various children's health and education indicators, providing valuable data for programs. They also provide county-specific data in their California County Data Book. Visit <http://www.ChildrenNow.org>.

The Finance Project. Key web site. This web site provides access to a variety of publications, many very timely, that provide information about a variety of funding sources for afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.financeproject.org/>.

The Foundation Center. The Foundation Center's mission is to strengthen nonprofits by connecting nonprofits and grant makers. They publish a weekly bulletin of national funding opportunities. To subscribe to this newsletter, visit <http://foundationcenter.org/newsletters>.

Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Key national food security web site. This national nonprofit works to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in the U.S. The following publication addresses funding for snacks in ASES programs in California: *Making the Most of Child Nutrition Funding: A Guide for After School Education and Safety Grantees*; Crystal FitzSimmons, September 2007. Visit <http://www.frac.org> and select Publications & Products.

General Mills Box Top Education. This program has helped schools earn over \$300 million to purchase needed equipment and supplies since the program started in 1996. Schools have used the money earned from Box Tops to purchase playground and physical education equipment. The program also includes a Box Tops credit card and Box Tops online shopping at 60 well-known stores. Visit <http://www.boxtops4education.com>.

General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids. The General Mills Foundation, in partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness, developed the General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids Program. The initiative consists of grants to community-based groups that develop creative ways to help youth adopt a balanced diet and physically active lifestyles. In addition, the General Mills Foundation funds up to 50,000 youth to participate in the President's Challenge to earn the President's Active Lifestyle Awards for their commitment to a physically active and fit lifestyle. Check the web site in the fall for application information for the following year. The web site also provides access to research-based programs. Visit <http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/commitment/champions.aspx>.

GoGirlGo! The Women's Sports Foundation supports education programs to promote all sports and physical activities for women of all ages and skill levels. The goal of its GoGirlGo! Grant and Education Program is to maximize the use of sport/physical activity as an educational intervention and social asset to enhance the wellness of girls as they navigate between childhood and early womanhood. They are dedicated to the development and funding of girls' sports/physical activity programs that combine athletic instruction and programming with delivery of educational information by qualified adults aimed at reducing risk behaviors that threaten the health and social advancement of girls in third to eighth grade. They fund non-profits (\$155,000 nationwide in grants). The Women's Sports Foundation web site includes physical activity resources and information on additional grants that they administer. Visit <http://www.womensportsfoundation.org>.

Grantmakers for education. Mapping the field. Scope and goals of grantmaking to improve the effectiveness of out-of-school time. May 20, 2005. This short report identifies results of a December 2004/January 2005 survey that identified 70 foundations supporting afterschool programs. Visit http://www.edfunders.org/downloads/Mapping_the_field.pdf.

Grants.gov. This web site allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for over 1,000 grant programs offered by federal grant-making agencies and is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Visit <http://www.grants.gov>.

The Grantsmanship Center. The Center (located in Los Angeles) was founded in the 1970s to offer grantsmanship training to non-profits and government organizations. Its web site has a wealth of well-organized information on funding available in California by different fund sources: the top giving foundations in California, California community foundations, and California corporate giving programs. Go to the Web site and click on Funding Sources, then on California. The listing of top giving foundations in California is in rank order of total annual giving and links to each of the foundations' Web sites. Each of the foundations has indicated an interest in funding proposals although not necessarily in the field of health or education. The listing of community foundations shows the geographic areas that they focus on. Community foundations, in addition to providing grants, often play a community leadership role and broker training for local non-profits. The corporate giving programs listing shows the corporations with their headquarter city. The Center provides additional information for a fee. Visit <http://www.tgci.com>.

Healthy Start Listserve. The Healthy Start Listserve often forwards funding opportunity information. Visit <http://hsfo.ucdavis.edu/listserv/index.html>.

Josephine S. Gumbiner Foundation. This foundation provides support to non-profit organizations for programs that benefit women and children in the Long Beach area of Southern California. This includes programs focusing on day care, education, recreation and health care, with a special emphasis on intervention, prevention and direct service. Visit <http://www.jsjf.org/>.

Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit. Major community funder. Kaiser is organized into northern and southern California divisions. They make funding available to afterschool programs and also have a major community-focused initiative, Healthy Eating, Active Living (HEAL). Visit <http://info.kp.org/communitybenefit/html/grantmaking/global/grantmaking.html>.

Network for a Healthy California. Key web site. This web site provides nutrition education information, contact information for the *Regional Network* offices, food security information, recipes and access to all of the *Network's* campaigns including the *Children's Power Play! Campaign*. Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/Pages/default.aspx>.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Key web site. One of the goals of this foundation is to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by improving access to affordable, healthy foods and increasing opportunities for physical activity in schools and communities across the country. They offer research, breaking news and grant funding. Sign up for their newsletters. Visit <http://www.rwjf.org>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Key web site. This site provides extensive information and resources, including the Food Guide Pyramid (MyPyramid) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Visit http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1.

U.S. Department of Education, Promoting educational excellence for all Americans, Federal Resources for Educational Excellence: Health and Physical Education. This federal web site provides information on programmatic resources related to health and physical education. Visit www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=2438res_feature_request=1. Click on Health and Physical Education for available resources.

⁹⁹These six practices are built on the shoulders of 14 practices that had been developed through a three-year statewide learning community that identified and field tested exemplary practices in afterschool programs that are most frequently observable in high quality, sustainable afterschool programs. They were published in *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*. Considered to be a seminal work in the field, this original guide is used by school-based and school-linked programs throughout California and the United States, and by the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Labs.

¹⁰⁰For a listing of the Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers, see Implementation Notes section.





*Unleashing the Power of
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