



Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition in Afterschool Settings: Ideas for Afterschool Program Leaders and Policy Makers

Afterschool programs and policymakers are in an ideal position to help combat trends in childhood obesity by promoting physical activity and nutrition in afterschool settings. These programs reach children at a developmental stage when they are still forming their long-term health habits. Their activities occur during a time of day when children are likely to be sedentary or eat poorly if not given active choices and nutritious meals or snacks. Further, children at high risk for obesity, including those in poverty or minority groups, are often participants in afterschool programs. Program leaders have the opportunity to act as role models for children and positively influence a child's choices and exposure in a safe and supportive environment, as well as engage parents about making healthy choices at home. Policy makers can assist program leaders in these efforts by developing policies that provide support and build capacity for afterschool programs.

What Can Afterschool Program Leaders and Policy Makers Do?

Afterschool program leaders and policy makers have a range of opportunities to encourage children and youth to be healthy. The following checklist offers strategies and resources available to help these leaders take steps to reverse childhood obesity trends among school-age children in their programs and communities. This document is intended to serve as a companion tool to the Afterschool Investments publication, *Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policy Makers* (available online at <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/presources.html>), which provides a framework of financing strategies, ideas for afterschool programming, and additional resources for efforts to improve childhood nutrition and physical activity. This checklist summarizes strategies and resources discussed in the guide and can be used by program developers and policymakers to guide strategic discussions and planning around policy and program options.

Ideas for Program Leaders

√ Incorporate Physical Activity and Good Nutrition into Afterschool Programming

- Research and identify best and promising practices in promoting physical activity and good nutrition through afterschool programming.
- Access information resources, educational materials, and other support from national, state, and/or community-level campaigns.
- Develop innovative and interactive activities to promote physical activity and good nutrition.

Resources:

- ▶ FitSource <http://fitsource.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/fitsource/>
- ▶ Action For Healthy Kids (AFHK) <http://www.afhk.org>
- ▶ Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment Tool Kit (USDA) <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm>
- ▶ Shaping America's Youth (SAY) <http://www.shapingamericasyouth.com/Default.aspx>
- ▶ VERB: It's what you do. <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/>

√ Encourage Parents to Make Healthy Choices at Home

- Educate parents and provide them with resources about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.
- Involve parents in activities designed to promote good dietary and exercise habits, such as potlucks or exercise clubs.

Resources:

- ▶ Eat Smart, Play Hard (USDA) <http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/default.htm>
- ▶ We Can! Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/>

Ideas for Policy Makers

√ **Develop Health and Nutrition Guidelines and Training for Afterschool Providers**

- Include health and nutrition in licensing and accreditation standards.
- Provide training to assist afterschool providers in implementing standards and guidelines on health and nutrition.

Resource:

- ▶ National Institute on Out-of-School Time: Healthy Choices Afterschool Report
<http://www.niost.org/publications/healthy%20choices%20afterschool.pdf>

√ **Help Afterschool Programs Access Food and Nutrition Entitlement Programs**

- Facilitate provider access to federal food programs, including the National School Lunch Program, Child Care and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program, and their educational resources.

Resource:

- ▶ The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) Afterschool Resource Guide
http://www.frac.org/Afterschool_Guide.pdf

√ **Encourage and Disseminate Research on Afterschool Programs' Impact on Health**

- Educate afterschool providers about promising practices in the afterschool wellness field.
- Develop public education campaigns about the childhood obesity epidemic.
- Translate studies of "what works" into user-friendly guidelines and assessment tools for use by program providers.
- Provide guidance in how to assess the impact of obesity prevention efforts on children's health.

Resources:

- ▶ American Public Health Association (APHA): Toolkit for Obesity Prevention
<http://www.apha.org/programs/resources/obesity/prosobesitykit.htm>
- ▶ CDC Healthy Youth! School Health Index <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/>
- ▶ Girls Health Enrichment Multi-Site Studies (GEMS) http://www.epi.umn.edu/cyhp/r_gems2.htm
- ▶ Trial of Activity for Adolescent Girls (TAAG) <http://www.csc.unc.edu/taag/desc.php>

√ **Involve Afterschool Providers in Childhood Obesity Policy Discussions**

- Inform and involve afterschool providers as key partners in local wellness policies and planning.
- Involve afterschool program leaders in state policy discussions on physical activity requirements for schools.
- Engage afterschool providers as partners in assessing and planning for community development and improvements in infrastructure to ensure they are conducive to promoting youth physical activity.

Resources:

- ▶ Local Wellness Policies <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html>
- ▶ State Childhood Obesity-Related Legislation
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/ChildhoodObesity-2006.htm>
- ▶ Healthy Environment Designs <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/children.htm>

Finding Resources

√ **Develop and Use Creative Financing Strategies**

- Leverage dollars to support physical activity and nutrition efforts.
- Maximize Federal and State revenue by keeping abreast of potential funding opportunities to support your goals.
- Create more flexibility in existing funding categories, such as by blending funding streams and strategies to address obesity prevention within a larger context.
- Build public-private partnerships that
 - ▶ Work towards greater coordination between Federal, State and local agencies, and
 - ▶ Create infrastructure for identifying and sharing best practices across providers and agencies.
- Create new dedicated revenue streams such as through community fundraising efforts.

Resources:

- ▶ *Thinking Broadly: Financing Strategies for Comprehensive Child and Family Initiatives*
<http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/ThinkingBroadly.pdf>
- ▶ *Financing Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs: Federal Funding Sources and Other Strategies* <http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/obesityprevention.pdf>

