

Improving Physical Activity and Healthy Eating During Out of School Time

The following are best practices for improving physical activity and healthy eating during out-of-school time programs. These practices can be used to create goals that are specific to your program.



Physical Activity



- Offer daily physical activity time that includes both structured activity and free play.
- Provide a variety of physical activities that meet the needs, preferences, and skill level of many children.
- Aim to include vigorous physical activity, such as running or jumping, as well as bone- and muscle-strengthening activities.
- Limit screen time and sedentary time.

Healthy Eating

- Serve a variety of meals or snacks that include whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy.
- Consider the cultural backgrounds of children when planning meals and snacks.
- Provide water and encourage children to drink it.
- Limit sugary drinks and foods high in added sugar and salt.
- Limit foods brought in from outside the program. Allow children to decide when they are full.
- Limit using food as a reward.
- Ensure there is enough clean space to make and store food.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn about healthy eating, including trying new foods.



Staff Engagement

- Model health eating and active living. For example, have staff site with children during snack and play with children.
- Provide training for staff to learn about health eating and physical activity.

Program policies support program practices by:

- Giving everyone the same information.
- Keeping people accountable.
- Making sure practices continue when new staff are hired.

Create policies to support the change you want to see in practice.

To learn more, explore these resources

- [Healthy Bites](#), a Wisconsin guide for improving childhood nutrition.
- [Active Out-of-School Time](#), a Wisconsin guide for improving childhood physical activity for school-age-children.
- [OSNAP Guide](#) for Writing After-School Wellness Policies.

