99 WAYS

TO MAKE YOUR AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM EVEN HEALTHIER

TOOLKIT INCLUDING SIMPLE IDEAS ON HOW TO:

PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING | PROVIDE TIME FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY | INCORPORATE CULTURE
MAKE STAFF DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY | PROVIDE YOUTH WITH POSITIVE ROLE MODELS
ENGAGE YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP ROLES | GET FAMILY INVOLVED
USE THE COMMUNITY AS A RESOURCE | EXAMINE MEDIA AND ADVERTISING
PROMOTE A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE | COLLABORATE WITH SCHOOLS
WORK IN COALITIONS | BECOME A BRIDGE TO HEALTHCARE

Many of the ideas in this handbook may be appropriate to be adopted as policies for your program.

PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

GET UNHEALTHY FOOD OUT

1. Serve only foods that meet healthy nutrition standards (including party foods).
   ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Applying the USDA Dietary Guidelines to Your After School Program*
2. Make a NO OUTSIDE FOOD policy, so you don't need to make rules about what foods youth can and cannot bring to program. Offer the same healthy snack to everyone.
   ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Tips That CANFIT into your After School Program.*
3. If there are vending machines at your after school site, work with vendors to make healthier snack alternatives available.
4. Develop signs or posters announcing nutritional information for popular snack items like chips and soda so that youth become aware of what they are eating.

BRING HEALTHY FOOD IN

5. Create a list of healthy foods that you would like parents to donate and a list of foods your organization cannot accept.
   ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Healthy Snack Guide for Your After School Program*
6. Choose snacks that are low in fat and sugar and reduced sodium. Include fruit and vegetable snacks.
7. Conduct taste tests of new healthy snack choices. For example, local fruits and vegetables in season.
   ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Taste Test Activity*

CONCENTRATE ON HEALTHY BEVERAGES

8. Have youth and staff drink only water at your program. (Try adding lemon for taste.)
9. Replace soda vending machines with a water dispenser. A dispenser may be more appealing to youth than tap water or water fountains.
10. If you include juice, purchase only 100% juice with no added sugar.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *How does your Drink Measure Up?*

SEND HEALTHY FOOD HOME

11. Make healthy dinners available for youth and their families to take home for free or at minimal cost.

{ To access More Information Links, see the Online Version at: www.canfit.org/99ways }

Include Healthy Cooking

12. Institute weekly cooking projects with easy recipes that will get youth involved in helping to prepare food and learning about nutrition.
13. Teach youth how to prepare foods in different ways. Try raw, steamed, sautéed or roasted. Use different sauces, seasonings and dips.
14. Take youth on a "food tour" of different neighborhoods or to a local farmers market. Get them excited about variety—from that you can create a subsequent activity or lesson to make some of the foods that they tried.
15. Teach serving sizes using easy to remember references.

    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *National Institute of Health's Serving Size Card*
16. Stage an Iron Chef-type competition where youth promote healthy cooking through creativity. Have them vote on the healthiest ingredients.
17. Have youth plan, prepare, and serve a healthy meal to their families—be sure to share the recipes and use locally available ingredients.
18. Involve youth in planning and preparing healthy after school snacks, including thinking up snacks with low fat and sugar that are tasty and healthy.

GROW YOUR OWN!

19. Have youth and staff plant, tend and harvest a garden together.

KEEP FOODS HEALTHY FOR FIELDTRIPS, HOLIDAYS, PARTIES, AND FUNDRAISERS

Field Trips

20. Serve healthy options like turkey burgers, turkey dogs and wheat buns during field trips and summer BBQs.
21. Bring a picnic on a field trip. It's cheaper than eating out and you won't give in to getting fast food!

Holidays and Parties

22. Serve healthier alternatives (such as fruit, nuts, meringues, festive salads) on traditionally sweet-laden holidays like Christmas, Halloween, Valentines Day, birthdays.
23. Ask youth in your program to bring in family recipes. Modify them to make them healthier. Have youth prepare the recipes for a holiday party. Put the recipes on recipe cards and give them to families as a holiday gift.
24. Let youth make their own healthier pizza instead of ordering pizza for a pizza party. If you do order pizza, get a veggie pizza with half the cheese.

Fundraisers

25. Allow no unhealthy foods at fundraisers. For example, host a craft fair instead of a bake sale.

    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *List of Alternative Fundraisers*
26. Include at least one physical activity as a fundraiser each year (i.e., car wash, walkathon, jump rope-a-thon).

BUILD IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

27. Incorporate physical activity in all programming. Provide 10 minutes of physical activity for every 50 minutes of program.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Physical Activity Pyramid*
28. Teach youth how to warm up and cool down properly before and after physical activities.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Basic Stretching Tips*
29. Start each program with a quick physical activity game.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Active Ice Breakers*
30. Play music to encourage dancing.
31. Limit use of video games and choose active games, like *Dance Dance Revolution*.
32. Do not use physical activity as punishment.

TEACH NEW GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

33. Show students how they can play a variety of games using simple and inexpensive sports equipment, like a ball. Challenge them to come up with a physical activity using only two or three items.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Play Your Way*
34. Bring in outside instructors or friends of the community to give physical activity demos (e.g., Capoeira or break dancing).

MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE TO PARTICIPATE

35. Be sure there are physical activity niches for everyone. Introduce youth to new types of sports and physical activity like tai chi, Pilates or yoga.
36. Provide alternatives to competitive sports for non-competitive youth.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT MOVE Guide*
37. Don't force—recommend! Forcing a youth to do something is a natural turnoff. Instead "recommend" they exercise regularly.
38. Play games where everyone is involved at all times.
39. Choose physical activities that appeal to youth. For example, relay races rather than running laps around a track.
40. Break youth into small groups that they feel comfortable in. They will be more apt to participate in sports if they feel they are not being watched or judged.

MAINTAIN YOUR FACILITIES

41. Make sure sports equipment are in good working order for outdoor play.
42. Assess all places for youth to play on the program site on a regular basis.

TRAIN STAFF IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

43. Train staff in indoor/rainy day physical activities.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Rain or Shine Activity*
44. Make sure staff feel competent in directing non-competitive games and physical activities.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Trainings in PA for Youth Providers*

INCORPORATE CULTURE

45. Remember to include foods from a variety of cultures and ethnic groups in snacks, meals, parties, and taste tests. Also integrate ethnic dance and games into physical activities.
46. Examine the role of culture in the eating and physical activity habits of youth so they can be improved in culturally appropriate ways. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT's Cultural Needs Assessment Guide*
47. Take field trips to places that grow or sell foods from a variety of cultures.
48. Provide resources in the languages spoken by your families. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT Spanish Language Materials.*

MAKE STAFF DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY

49. Include nutrition and physical activity training during new hire orientation.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT Trainings and Workshops*
50. Allow adequate time for staff to take breaks and debrief activities.
51. Provide regular/annual staff training on how to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into programming and snack preparation.
52. Include healthy choices of snacks and some form of physical activity during staff meetings.

PROVIDE YOUTH WITH POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

53. Ask after school staff to sign a commitment to "good role modeling," and review what that means. A strong commitment from youth leaders to uphold healthy choices will lead to youth making healthier choices as well.
54. Send out positive messages about body image, healthy eating and fitness.
55. Model healthy living and physical activity behaviors like taking stairs instead of riding an elevator.
56. Require that youth leaders participate in games and physical activity with youth.
57. Try new foods yourself.
58. Decorate your after school facility with appealing posters or projects that promote wellness.

ENGAGE YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

59. Identify youth with leadership skills and develop a "train the trainer" program for them.
60. Involve youth in making decisions about healthy snacks to serve at the program as well as brainstorming ideas for physical activity.
61. Let youth be the teachers. Let older youth in your program give food preparation demonstrations and lead exercises. They will feel good while learning the information they are presenting.
62. Have youth map healthy eating places and places for physical activity around their after school program; use this information to explain how the community influences individual choices.

GET FAMILY INVOLVED

63. Orient parents on healthy food choices.
64. Have parents agree not to send their child to your program with junk food such as chips and soda.
65. Provide a take-home list of healthy alternative ideas for lunches and snacks for parents.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Healthy Snack Guide for Your After School Program*
66. Create a monthly newsletter for parents in their native language. Include a simple, healthy recipe and a fun family activity.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT Newsletter*
67. Host a multi-cultural pot-luck and encourage youth and their families to cook together. Send home the recipes with the families.
68. Hold a cultural event and ask parents to demonstrate a cultural activity or game.
69. Create activities around cultural holidays and celebrations.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT's 2008 Multi-cultural Calendar*
70. Provide translations of all handouts and resources for parents. Ask parents for feedback and input for newsletters and activities.
71. Post helpful and healthy eating and physical activity tips on the bulletin board next to where parents sign out their children.
72. Have information available for parents by the sign out sheet—in appropriate languages—that reinforces your wellness policies.

USE THE COMMUNITY AS A RESOURCE

73. Map your community to see what is advertised to youth and encourage local convenience and liquor stores to take down unhealthy food and beverage ads.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT Snack and Move Guide*
74. Work with local vendors to change what is offered to youth in the local environment (such as at corner stores, farmers markets, fitness facilities).
75. Bring in a local "celebrity" to speak on the importance of healthy eating and regular physical activity.
76. Have a local chef give a healthy cooking demonstration.

EXAMINE MEDIA & ADVERTISING

77. Think about the health messages you want to promote when considering donations of food, educational materials, or products from the food/beverage industry. The industry is usually trying to build brand loyalty.
78. Discuss with youth why less healthy food is low priced.
    ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *What Are You Really Paying For?*
79. Examine and critique TV commercials and magazine ads that promote fast food and other junk foods with the youth in your program. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!*
80. Have a contest to create your own healthy food jingles to counter fast food jingles.

PROMOTE A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

81. Promote health at every size and combat myths and stereotypes about size and health. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *The Body Positive*
82. Never use the words "fat," "obese" or "overweight."
83. Emphasize inner qualities of youth rather than appearance.
84. Teach respect, create a positive atmosphere and do not tolerate size discrimination.
85. Be conscious of unintended subtle discrimination toward heavier children from both staff and students. If witnessed, pull the person aside to help them become aware of the negative effects their actions can have on a young person.
86. Role-play how staff can effectively respond to negative comments about body image.
87. Do not allow teen magazines that promote an unhealthy body image. Replace them with alternative magazines that focus less on outside beauty. Check out *Yo! Youth Outlook*, *New Moon*, *Teen Voices* and *Sierra* magazines.
88. Talk with the youth in your program about body image and the issues they face. Create activities or subsequent discussions that work on tackling unhealthy body image and low self-confidence. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Body Image Activity from CANFIT Super Manual*

COLLABORATE WITH SCHOOLS

FOR SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS:

89. Make sure after school is represented on your local School Wellness Policy Committee and included in School Wellness Policies. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Resources for Incorporating After School Nutrition and Physical Activity into Your School Wellness Policies*
90. Work with the school's nutrition services department to provide healthy after school snacks.

FOR ALL PROGRAMS:

91. Be aware of school cafeteria menus, and teach children to identify healthier choices.
92. Work with schools to eliminate unhealthy foods and include more fresh veggies and fruits. (Encourage the older youth in your program to be involved in this movement.)

WORK IN COALITION

93. Network with directors of other after school programs for support and new ideas, and to advocate for changes.
94. Become involved in community issues that affect your program, such as safety, park availability and street vendors. Joint-use agreements with schools and local government can open up these facilities for use by after school programs. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *Road Map to Changing Food and Physical Activity Environments for Better Health*.
95. Hold joint events such as softball games or field day tournaments with health-related youth organizations.
96. Create projects around health and fitness with other organizations with one shared mission.

BECOME A BRIDGE TO HEALTH CARE

97. Use local health care providers and officials as guest speakers and workshop facilitators. For example, a nutritionist can discuss recommended daily diets.
98. Use information from health-related websites. ▶▶ MORE INFORMATION: *CANFIT LINKS*
99. Be aware of your children's health care status and provide resources for their families in need of health care.

CANFIT helps bridge the gap between communities and policymakers. Since 1993, we have been at the heart of the movement to improve healthy eating and physical activity environments for adolescents in low income communities and communities of color. From grassroots to government, we work with community-based and youth-serving organizations to identify local solutions and support the development of culturally competent policies and practices.

CANFIT

Communities · Adolescents · Nutrition · Fitness

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