



**Healthy  
Behaviors  
INITIATIVE**

*Powered by the Center for Collaborative Solutions*

*Changing Lives, Saving Lives*

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

**SECOND EDITION  
JANUARY 2015**



**Healthy  
Behaviors**  
INITIATIVE



# Changing Lives, Saving Lives

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## Preface to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

**W**e at the Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS) are delighted to be able to update and publish our Changing Lives, Saving Lives Guide. We are most grateful for funding from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Branch, and a special grant from the Centers for Disease Control through the Public Health Institute, which made this possible!

Our first edition was published in 2010 following years of work—including extensive research and consultation with a broad range of stakeholders; development and refinement of Exemplary Practices through study and direct application among afterschool programs participating together in a Healthy Behaviors Learning Community; establishment of afterschool program Learning Centers; and the Centers' extensive experience in implementing the Practices. Since then, we have sponsored additional learning communities and created a total of 26 learning centers throughout California.

In this second edition we have augmented the discussion of each Practice, expanding our examples to more fully illustrate how to successfully apply each one. We have also updated our extensive list of resources and endnotes to reflect the changing research in the fields of nutrition, physical activity and food security, and to include the latest information on the many wonderful sources of help and support now available to you.

We express our deepest gratitude to the many individuals and programs who share our HBI vision of changing lives and saving lives and contributed significantly to this effort. It is our hope that this newly revised and updated Guide will inspire you to think more strategically, work more collaboratively and act more intentionally as you approach your healthy behaviors work — and will provide you with much useful guidance on how to go about it.

**Janet Walden**

*CCS President & CEO*

*Sacramento, California*

*2015*

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This material was developed as part of the Center for Collaborative Solutions' (CCS) Healthy Behaviors Initiative (HBI). Now celebrating its tenth year, HBI came about through the vision of leadership at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), who were eager to test the concept of using afterschool as a platform to improve the health of low-income children. HBI has been made possible by funding from The California Endowment, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Branch of CDPH via funds from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). We express our deepest appreciation to these champions and funders.

The author of this Guide is Andria Fletcher, PhD, Chief Afterschool Consultant for CCS, to whom we also express much gratitude. Dr. Fletcher's tireless passion and unparalleled expertise shine throughout the pages of the Guide. The Practices that form the basis for this Guide were developed by CCS in consultation with leaders from 10 outstanding afterschool programs engaged in a learning community focused on these practices, and with input and guidance from CDPH as well as the California Department of Education (CDE) and a statewide HBI Stakeholder Advisory Group. We are grateful to these many people, organizations and afterschool programs that have supported this Initiative, including numerous nutrition and physical activity experts across the state and the multi-site, rural, urban and suburban afterschool programs, school districts, county offices of education and community-based organizations that participated in learning communities, became Learning Centers and provided other support over the last eight years.

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## HEALTHY BEHAVIORS INITIATIVE AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS CONTINUED

### LEARNING CENTER AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Afterschool programs that provided input in the development and update of this Guide include:

A World Fit For Kids! (Los Angeles)  
After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles  
Butte COE After School, Oroville City Elementary School District  
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FRESH (Fresno County’s Recreation Enrichment and Scholastic Help)  
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Woodcraft Rangers (Los Angeles)  
YMCA of Silicon Valley

### STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP

The following Stakeholder Advisory Group members participated in the development and updating of this Guide.

**Rocio Abundis-Rodriguez**, Executive Director, ASAPconnect  
**Jane Adams**, Executive Director, California Park & Recreation Society  
**Diego Arancibia**, Acting Executive Director, ASAPconnect  
**Edith Ballesteros**, BEST Fit Director, LA’s BEST  
**Stephen Bartlett**, Health Educator III (retired), California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
**Jessica Bartholow**, Director of Programs, California Association of Food Banks  
**Kelly Benarath**, Communications Coordinator, California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom  
**Marilyn Briggs**, Co-director, Center for Nutrition in Schools, University of California, Davis  
**Nathaniel Browning**, Policy & Programs Intern, California School Boards Association

## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP CONTINUED

**Teri Burns**, Senior Director, Policy & Programs, California School Boards Association

**Patrice Chamberlain**, MPH, Director, California Summer Meal Coalition, Public Health Institute

**Cheri Chord**, Youth Services Specialist, Sacramento City Unified School District

**Judy Culbertson**, Executive Director, California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

**Jeff Davis**, Program Director, CA AfterSchool Network

**Cyndi Dean**, MA, Physical Education, Wellness and Nutrition Consultant, Fresno FRESH, Fresno County Office of Education (COE)

**Mariela De Leon**, MBA, After School Health Program Manager, California After School and Healthy Kids Resource Centers

**Mark Drewes**, After School Co-Lead, Region 3, Sacramento COE

**Mafaddal Ezzy**, Legislative Aide, Senator Darrell Steinberg's Office

**Susan B. Foerster**, MPH, RD, Chief, Policy, Planning and Evaluation Section (retired), CDPH

**Valodi Foster**, Education Programs Consultant, Learning Support and Partnerships Division, California Department of Education (CDE)

**Steve Fowler**, Partner, FowlerHoffman LLC

**Erin Gabel**, Legislative Aide, Assemblyman Tom Torlakson's Office

**Tanya Garbolino**, MBA, Program Administrator, (PHI)

**Leslie Garner**, Program Supervisor, Sacramento START

**Terry Garner**, Program Manager, California Association of Food Banks

**Nancy Gelbard**, MS, RD, President, Gelbard Consulting

**Martin Gonzalez**, Assistant Executive Director, Governance and Policy Services, California School Boards Association

**Monica Gonzalez-Williams**, After School Co-Lead, Region 3, Sacramento COE

**DeShannus Gray**, Healthy Out-of-School Time Manager, Sacramento County, Alliance for a Healthy Generation

**Gloria Halley**, After School Lead, Region 2, Butte COE

**Doreen Hassan**, After School Programs and Enrichment Specialist, YMCA of Silicon Valley

**Jessica Hay**, Healthy Out-of-School Time Manager, Sacramento County, Alliance for a Healthier Generation

**Mary Hoshiko Haughey**, Vice President, YMCA of Silicon Valley

**Katherine Hawksworth**, California Project LEAN

**Jonnalee Henderson**, Policy Analyst, California Department of Food and Agriculture

**Arnell Hinkle**, MPH, RD, Executive Director, CANFIT

**Lena Hoffman**, FowlerHoffman, LLC

**Beryl Johnson**, Consultant for After School Programs

**Kelly Kirk**, Coordinator, ASAPconnect, Santa Clara COE

**Lisa Larsen**, Northern CA Territory Manager, Dairy Council of California

**Kathy Jean (KJ) Lavoie**, Governmental Relations Director – California, Boys and Girls Clubs of America

**Jan Lewis**, MA, RD, Chair, California Action for Healthy Kids

**Jessica Lime**, MEd, former Health Educator, PHI

**Helen Magnuson**, RD, MPH, Health and Nutrition Education Consultant

**Damian Maldonado**, Afterschool Consultant, Visions to Results, Former Afterschool Region 10 Lead

**Mary Marks**, PhD, School Health Education Consultant, CDE



## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP CONTINUED

**Mariah Martin**, Program Director, Physical Activity, California After School Resource Center

**Debra Mason**, Recreation Supervisor, Mt. Diablo CARES

**Shannon McPhedran**, Director of Operations, Boys and Girls Clubs of America

**Julie McClure**, Director, CalSERVES

**Kellee McQuinn**, Founder, KidTribe

**Alexandria Medina**, Deputy Director, Alternatives in Action

**Melissa Meng**, former Coordinator, *Children's Power Play! Campaign, Network—Gold Rush Region*

**Rita Mitchell**, Education Consultant, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, University of California, Davis

**Ramona Mosley**, Program Director, Health Education Council

**Kristen Mowers**, Healthy Behaviors Coordinator, CalSERVES

**Lloyd Nadal**, Children & Youth Program Manager, PHI

**Yvonne Nicholson**, Nutrition, Family & Consumer Sciences Advisor/Program Supervisor, UC Cooperative Extension

**Deanna Niebuhr**, Director of Health Programs, Partnership for Children and Youth

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

**Ruth Obel-Jorgensen**, Executive Director, California School-Age Consortium

**Shené Onye**, DrPH, ACSM-HFS, Executive Director, California Healthy Kids and After School Resource Centers

**Rosa Palomino**, Nutrition Coordinator, Mt. Diablo CARES

**Stephanie Papas**, School Health Education Consultant, Coordinator of Team California Healthy Kids Initiative, CDE

**Mike Papin**, Chief, CalFresh Policy Bureau, California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

**Rhonda Patterson**, Program Coach, Sacramento START

**Frank Pisi**, Director, California AfterSchool Network, UC Davis School of Education

**Sheilagh Polk**, Director of Communications, Coaching Corps

**Terri Porter**, After School Coordinator, Mt. Diablo CARES

**Andee Press-Dawson**, Executive Director, California Afterschool Network

**Jennifer Puthoff**, Director of Childcare & After School Programs, YMCA of Silicon Valley

**Tia Quinn**, Out-of-School Time Consultant, Executive Director, BOOST Collaborative

**Kathy Rabun**, Vice President for Health, California State PTA

**Heather Reed**, MA, RD, Nutrition Education Consultant, CDE

**Tammy Reese**, Fitness/Nutrition Activity Consultant, Woodcraft Rangers

**Stephanie Roberts**, Director of Development, Mt. Diablo Unified School District

**David Saunders**, Director, Mission Delivery, American Cancer Society

**Cindy Schneider**, MPA, RD, Education Programs Consultant, After School Programs Office, CDE

**Valerie Scruggs**, Director of Cultural Health Initiatives, American Heart Association

**Kathy Streng**, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, CDPH

**Deborah Tamannaie**, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Consultant, Nutrition Services Division, CDE

**Don Taylor**, EdD, Administrator, After School Division, CDE

**Marlena Uhrik**, EdD, Education Programs Consultant, CDE

**Judy Vang**, former PHI

**Chris Webb-Curtis**, Chief, Food Stamp Branch, CDSS

**Dianne Wilson-Graham**, Executive Director, California Center for Physical Education

## STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY GROUP CONTINUED

**Mara Wold**, After School Lead, Region 5,  
Monterey COE

**Gloria Woodlock**, Education Consultant,  
Afterschool Programs Office, CDE

**Peter Wright**, Policy & Programs Officer,  
California School Boards Association

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The Guide's Primary Author:  
**Andria Fletcher**, Ph.D.,  
Chief Afterschool Consultant

Co-Editors of this Second Edition:  
**Janet Walden**, President and CEO, and  
**Kathy B. Lewis**, Vice President and COO

Editorial Support:

**Bruno Marchesi**, Healthy Behaviors Initiative  
Project Manager

**Nancy Gelbard**, Health/Nutrition Consultant –  
resources, research and references

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for the first edition

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administrative text preparation support

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## About the Author

Dr. Andria J. Fletcher is Chief Afterschool Consultant for the Center for Collaborative Solutions and a nationally recognized expert in afterschool program, policy and leadership development. She has championed the Healthy Behaviors Initiative since its inception, designing and leading HBI learning communities and supporting the development of HBI Learning Centers across California.

As the founding Director of Sacramento START, Andi initiated the program in 1995. Within three years she doubled its attendance and quadrupled its funding. 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 led to \$550 million in state funding.

Andi has been a keynote speaker and workshop presenter at hundreds of 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* (2005). She also 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). She recently appeared on Huffington Post Live in a segment on Children too Hungry to Learn.

Andi has received widespread recognition for her work, including the BOOST Out-of-School Time Innovations Pioneer Award, the Who's Who National Education Consultant of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Awards, and a 2013 President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition's Community Leadership Award (one of 34 national recipients). 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 Division focuses on building high quality, sustainable afterschool programs and partnerships with a particular emphasis on our Healthy Behaviors Initiative, now in its tenth year. 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, please visit [www.CCSCenter.org](http://www.CCSCenter.org).

## About Funding

This material has been produced in part with funding from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in California as CalFresh, through NEOPB. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious food for better health. For CalFresh information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information, visit [www.CaChampionsForChange.net](http://www.CaChampionsForChange.net).

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## Introduction to the Guide

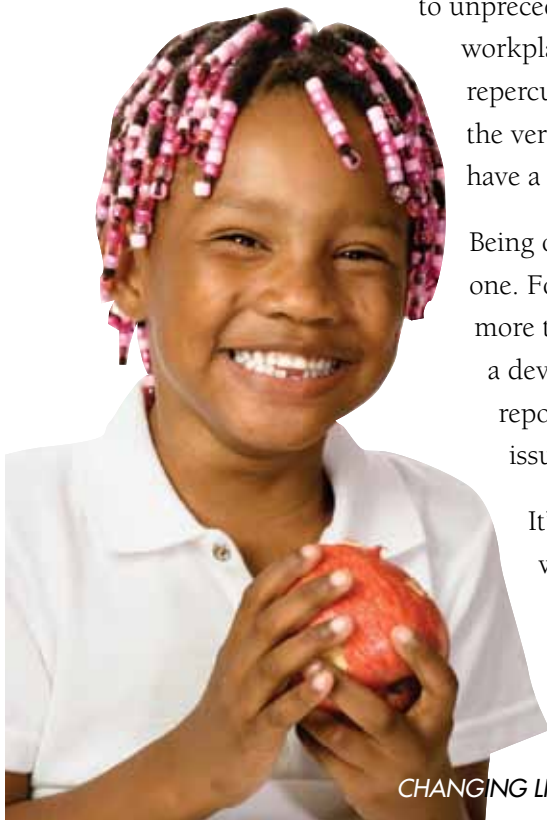
If your program is like the hundreds of others we've worked with, it's already making a difference. It's keeping students safe during the hours they're most at risk, providing them with opportunities and experiences that would not otherwise be available and helping them strengthen their academic and social skills. Now it's time to move to the next level — to go beyond changing lives to saving lives!

We know that far too many children have poor eating habits, spend much more time in front of the television and playing video games than exercising and that childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions.<sup>1</sup> Although obesity rates among children of educated parents have fallen, the trend continues to rise among those whose parents are less wealthy and less well-educated — the students who are most likely to attend your program. The Surgeon General's Call to Action tells us that "Our nation's young people are, in large measure, inactive, unfit and increasingly overweight".<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> If this pattern continues, one in every three children is likely to develop type 2 diabetes in his or her lifetime, and for children of color the chances increase to one in two.<sup>4</sup> This, and other health issues, will lead to unprecedented rates of premature disability and death; diminished workplace productivity and loss of income; serious financial repercussions for families, healthcare providers and our society; and the very real possibility that this will be the first generation that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.<sup>5</sup>

Being overweight is a challenging problem, and it's not the only one. Food insecurity, or not having enough healthy food to eat, is more than just a contributing factor to childhood obesity, it's also a devastating reality. Half of teachers who were surveyed in 2013 reported that hungry students in their classrooms was a serious issue.<sup>6</sup>

It's up to all of us to find ways to reverse these trends, and we can! Children and young people who are surrounded by positive influences and supportive environments — that include physical activity and access to healthy food — are much more likely to develop healthy lifestyles. And those



**There is a huge difference between teaching them about the importance of good nutrition and exercise and getting them to change their preferences, attitudes and behaviors.**

who acquire the knowledge, motivation and practice they need to make wise decisions about their eating habits and physical activity are much more likely to become healthy as kids and stay healthy as adults. Over the course of the last several years, and with the support of hundreds of public and private partners, we've proven that afterschool programs are uniquely well-positioned to be part of the urgently needed solution. This Guide will provide you with a step-by-step approach to developing the exemplary practices that will make this happen!

### **DEVELOPING EXEMPLARY PRACTICES**

Helping students develop healthy lifestyles and make smart choices isn't easy — and it's critical if we want them to be happy, healthy and successful in school and in life. There's a huge difference between teaching them about

the importance of good nutrition and exercise and getting them to change their preferences, attitudes and behaviors. When the influence of their friends and families and easy access to the media, local advertising, fast food restaurants and corner markets are as strong as they are, it's not enough to add activities to your program and hope for the best. What does work is surrounding students with positive **environments**, creating **systems** that support their efforts, and adopting and advocating for **policies** that improve their chances of being successful.

Each of the chapters in this Guide focuses on a specific practice and is designed to provide you with the tools you'll need to do this intentionally and effectively. Taken together, they will position your program to make an even greater difference in the lives of children and their families and your school and community by providing you with insights and approaches that will strengthen your ability to:

- 1) Approach your work with vision, purpose and intentionality;
- 2) Embed your work with youth development principles and practices;
- 3) Create exciting learning experiences and supportive environments;
- 4) Build strong partnerships with families, schools and your community;
- 5) Improve food security; and
- 6) Secure sustainable funding to support your efforts.

These practices have helped forge hundreds of authentic partnerships with schools and civic, nonprofit and business organizations and elected officials. They have resulted in the establishment of healthy environments that surround children with positive influences. And, they have led to significant changes in public policy. Although they are drawn from experiences in afterschool programs in California, they are replicable in programs throughout the nation. The practices:

- Confirm that policies, systems and environments matter, because they expand or limit the capacity of children and young people to improve their eating habits, increase their physical activity, and improve their food security.<sup>7</sup>
- Draw on the most recent research-based and experiential evidence, curricula and resources;
- Support Common Core state standards<sup>8</sup> and project-based learning by helping students acquire and master a whole range of critical thinking, communication, problem solving, decision- making and collaboration skills; and
- Reinforce Learning in Afterschool and Summer principles<sup>9</sup> and those found in *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*<sup>10</sup> by building on successful youth development strategies, which include ensuring that learning is active, collaborative and meaningful and that it supports the acquisition and mastery of skills and expands students' horizons by using the surrounding community as a classroom.

## USING THIS GUIDE

This Guide is written for program directors, members of leadership teams, site directors and partners with afterschool programs. Each of the practices is examined in terms of not just what it means but, more importantly, why it matters and how it can be embedded into, expand upon and deepen the work you're already doing. Examples from the Learning Centers, including their successes and the challenges they had to overcome, are provided throughout.

Ultimately, the pace at which your program moves ahead will depend in large part on the extent to which you are able to integrate the practices into a cohesive whole. We strongly recommend that you read through the Guide in its entirety first and then focus on each Practice sequentially. Taking time to see the big picture before beginning to work on specific practices will make a huge difference in getting you and your team off to a great start. As you do this, you will undoubtedly come across examples or ideas that you will want to use right away. Jot them down and try them out — and remember that it's important to be strategic, intentional and collaborative in everything you do!





Progress Indicators, included at the end of each Practice, are designed to help you and your staff and partners assess where your program and/or sites are at any given point in time as you move from starting out in this process to reaching exemplary levels. They will help you set priorities, establish goals, create action plans, and measure and manage the changes that are occurring in real time and over time. We suggest that you begin by establishing baselines for the indicators in each chapter and then revisit them with your colleagues every two to three months.

Like the programs we've worked with, you're likely to experience a lot of successes, and you may encounter a number of obstacles. Celebrate what's working and move boldly ahead! When you run into challenges, be creative and persistent. If you would like help from our team, contact us at [www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org](http://www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org), or call or visit one of the Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers (regularly updated information is provided on our web site [www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org](http://www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org)).





# Practice #1

## Approach your work with VISION, PURPOSE AND INTENTIONALITY



### 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 development of your staff
- 5 Embed physical activity, nutrition & food security in your program activities and approaches
- 6 Establish strong connections in your community
- 7 Measure and manage outcomes

“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!*



### PRACTICE #1:

## Approach Your Work with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality

Children and young people are strongly influenced by the people, policies, systems and environments that surround them. Their choices are expanded, or narrowed, depending on their ages and the opportunities available to them, the circumstances that impact their daily lives and the decisions others make, most of which are beyond their control. Understanding this will help you become more intentional in how you approach your work. And, it will increase your awareness of why it's so important to surround children with the support they need to make and maintain healthy choices.

Although poor eating habits cut across all socioeconomic groups, low-income families are the most impacted. Many of the students in your program face serious challenges that make it very difficult for them to improve their eating patterns and get more exercise. Their families would much rather have lots of healthy food available to their children, but having limited financial resources often means sacrificing the *quality* of food for *quantity*.<sup>11</sup> 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 fresh fruits and vegetables.

Many students live in food deserts, leaving their families little choice but to shop at nearby corner markets rather than supermarkets that have healthier choices and lower prices, but are miles away from their homes. Others have easy access to the concentration of fast food chains which are disproportionately located in their neighborhoods.<sup>12</sup>

It's not uncommon for children and their families to consume large quantities of food when it's available to compensate for times when it's not, with the consequence that their bodies respond to periods of hunger by storing fat, which in turn contributes to the likelihood of becoming overweight.<sup>13</sup>

These challenges are compounded by the fact that while children would love to participate in sports leagues, and take dance, martial arts, swimming or tennis lessons, these activities are either unaffordable or simply unavailable to low-income families. Even bicycle riding and walking can be out of reach because of the dangers that exist in their local parks and on the streets. Walking and biking to school presents additional challenges. In many communities, it is hard for children and their families to find safe places to play and exercise, and barriers to recreational opportunities are particularly pronounced in lower-income neighborhoods. The alternative for these children is sitting alone in front of the television, playing



video games, texting or hanging out with their friends eating high calorie, unhealthy food and drinking sodas.

Schools once played an important role in equalizing at least some of these disparities and made it easier for children to adopt healthier lifestyles by providing health and nutrition courses and requiring students to take physical education classes. With the recent focus on high stakes testing, most schools now 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 high poverty neighborhoods. Despite the fact that studies show that increased physical activity and improved nutrition lead to better student academic performance,<sup>14</sup> it may well be left up to you to fill the void.

Fortunately, you can, if you look beyond what you're doing to the impact you're capable of having! Your program has the potential to help students overcome many of the obstacles that keep them from improving their eating habits, increasing their physical activity and having more nutritious food available for them to eat. It's all about becoming more intentional in how you approach your work, and it starts by understanding that no matter what it says in your job description, your real work is about creating a powerful vision of what could be and bringing that vision into reality.

## 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 a sense of purpose that offers them, and others, a way to go beyond what they're doing to creating the future they imagine. You're in a unique position to lead this process.

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 an unwavering commitment to continually improving what they do and how they go about doing it. They've learned how to be strategic, collaborative and intentional. Following their lead can make all the difference in how far and how fast you'll go as you take your program to the next level.

**Step 1: Start with a vision, not just a vision statement.** Unlike a vision statement, a meaningful vision is created over time, not overnight. In a simple, emotionally captivating way, it tells you where you're going, and why. It comes from your heart, not your head. It ignites your passion. It motivates you to do your best. And, it reminds you of what you really stand for and why it matters.

What if, instead of being too hungry to learn, students had enough healthy food to eat every day? What if their families had healthier foods in greater quantities regularly available to them and knew how to prepare healthier meals? What if schools added salad bars and other healthy



options in their lunchtime offering, and communities planted gardens and made fresh fruits and vegetables readily available at little or no cost to local residents? What if children and young people really understood how regular physical activity can make their lives so much better? All of this, and much more, can happen. It all starts with a powerful vision of what could be!

**It all starts with a powerful vision of what could be!**

**Step 2: Keep your vision 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. Keep it simple. Unlike vision statements that are often way too long, meaningful visions capture the essence of what you want to have happen. Keep your vision simple. Distill it down to a few memorable words. Think of it as a tag line that encapsulates much more.

*Sacramento START* has done this in just six words: *Healthy, fit and ready to learn!*

The program's leadership team and staff know that this means that the most important thing they can do is to surround kids with positive influences and support systems that include everything from improving their own eating habits and increasing their physical activity levels to modeling positive attitudes and behavior for students, to ensuring that students are excited and engaged in appropriately challenging activities and projects, to developing authentic partnerships with families and schools, to creating strong connections with community organizations, businesses, local health departments and public officials. By using an abbreviated statement that represents all of this, they help everyone begin to embrace the same vision in an easy, effective way.

*CalSERVES'* vision is captured in only three words: Passion, Power, Potential! The program is a place where students discover their passions, express their power and achieve their potential in every aspect of their lives, from adopting healthy lifestyles to mastering new skills.

**Step 3: 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 better and becoming more physically fit!*

**Step 4: Share your vision and shape the future.** 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, but deeply caring about creating a better future for the youngsters in your program is contagious, and it will accelerate the process. Keep in mind that programs don't make things happen, people do. 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. You can facilitate the process by doing three things right away:

- 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. Mt. Diablo CARES' vision is Changing children's lives. It's something everyone can relate to. It's broad enough to include everyone. 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.
- 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 your vision is important, your staff will lose interest, doubt your sincerity or become cynical. Be 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) **Learn to talk about your vision in just a few words.** Deeply caring about creating a better future for the youngsters in your program is contagious — if you can express yourself well! Set aside time to think about how you can convey your messages in ways that will capture the attention and engage the emotions of the people who with for and with you. Use an elevator speech approach and it will pay huge dividends.<sup>14</sup>

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

**Step 5: Use real examples to motivate people to embrace your vision.** Reinforce your vision with real-life examples of changes as they happen. If you and your staff are already personally committed to good eating habits and physically active lifestyles, great! If not, it's important to make whatever



changes are needed to align them with your vision. Help your staff make connections between their own health and the well-being of the students they're working with. 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.

When a Site Director in **Sacramento START** stopped drinking super-sized sodas and replaced them with water and became more physically active, she not only lost weight, she was able to go from taking nine pills a day for type 2 diabetes to only one a day. This kind of experience sends a powerful message. It impacts students, and it strengthens everyone's motivation to create a better future.

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 story about a youngster who asks his parents to stop going to fast food restaurants and to eat healthier food can have a huge influence. A story about a staff member who changed her diet and is reaching her ideal weight is meaningful and inspirational. Be sure to share changes that you have documented in surveys, as the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has done. Seventy-two percent of parents reported that the Y is helping their families lead a more balanced and healthy lifestyle, ninety-three percent believe their child is more physically active and seventy-nine percent believe their child is eating more fresh fruits and vegetables because of their child's participation in YMCA after school. These kinds of results provide powerful proof of the impact of your vision.

As all of the Healthy Behaviors programs learned, not everyone will come on board right away, but they will if you make it easier for them from the beginning. It's a good idea to start this process even before new staff are hired. Make sure that job applicants are aware of your vision and are committed to healthy lifestyles. More and more programs are moving in this direction, and it's making a difference.

## II. SET CLEAR, ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Once you have a vision, bringing it into reality begins with setting goals that are meaningful and achievable. Just the act of identifying these will make a huge difference in how intentional you'll become and how quickly you and your program move ahead.



**Step 1: Limit the number of goals you set.** 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 get 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.

**Step 2: Engage your staff and partners 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 involving your staff and partners in the process 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?

**Step 3: Be sure your goals are concrete, meaningful and achievable.** Not all goals are equal. Some are specific enough to be measured, others are not. Some will make a huge difference if they are reached. Some won't matter much. Some will be easily achievable. Others will encounter obstacle after obstacle and never be met. It's important not just to identify goals, but to assess them. Ask yourself and your team tough, probing questions before you make any final decisions.

- Is your goal concrete enough to be understood by everyone who is responsible for working toward its achievement?
- Will it really make a difference if it is achieved?
- Are there barriers in the way that might make it difficult or impossible to achieve?
- Do you have the ability to measure the impact so you can demonstrate your progress and share your results?
- Do you have the human and financial resources you'll need to accomplish it?

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. As a result, 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. Although the goal of one hundred percent wasn't reached, eight out of every ten students improved significantly — and it mattered! They used these data to improve their strategies for the following year and came even closer to reaching their desired goal.



*Mt. Diablo CARES* set a goal of increasing the amount of healthy food available to students and their families. Although they didn't specify the exact amount, over the next year they brought in and distributed almost 144 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables through their partnership with a local food bank! This became the target number for subsequent years.

These examples are representative of meaningful and achievable goals — and of what you can do if you put your mind and your resources toward reaching them. Follow their lead, be sure your goals are aligned with and support your vision, and the sky's the limit to what you can accomplish.

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

**Step 4: 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. Post them in prominent places where they can be easily seen.

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. 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 and identifying who is responsible for their implementation, getting advice from others, and paying close attention to your progress as you move forward.

**Step 1: Do your homework.** Even if you haven't been to a specific destination, some awareness of what may lie ahead makes it easier for you to anticipate what might happen and help you 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. They focused on specific strategies, including two that 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,<sup>16</sup> and
- 2) They made information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly food stamps), WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children), food banks 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.<sup>17</sup>

**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, all of the programs we've worked with now have gardens at their sites. For some, this was a relatively straightforward process. For others, it was more difficult. If this is a goal you decide on, be sure you take several things into account in advance. Be sure the school principal and the district are really on board and are willing to designate land space, and, if not, whether container gardening may be a better alternative. Find out whether local stores may be willing to donate materials and seeds and whether there is easy access to water. Consider how your garden will be taken care of during the summer months if you don't have a summer program. And, decide how the fruits and vegetables that will be grown will be used once they're harvested. To the extent possible, develop your strategies based on realities — and know what these are before you finalize your action plan!

- *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.
- 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.

**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.

- *THINK Together, Kids Campus and Woodcraft Rangers* all 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. The return on a relatively small investment has paid real dividends.
- The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* applied to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program in order to secure federal reimbursement for snacks. That \$1.1 million annual reimbursement has freed up funds to strengthen other parts of their program.



It's not uncommon for programs to spend 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 straightforward 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 specific curricula that staff can use. If they're aligned with state standards in physical education or nutrition and physical activity, which they should be, much of what you want students to learn will be addressed. Following a curriculum will make things a lot easier than asking staff to try to come up with creative ideas on their own.

Giving more experienced or specialized staff members the latitude to draw on their own creativity to reinforce or deepen the curricula lessons 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.

**Step 5: Include community partners in your planning and implementation.** If your goal is for students to have a broader range of opportunities to be physically active, it can be very beneficial to partner with community organizations and businesses. Tennis, golf, karate, dance, Zumba 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, and resources are secured through local partnerships. If this is a strategy you're considering, it can work very well by creating new community partnerships or taking advantage of those that already exist — and making sure everyone knows what their roles, responsibilities and expectations are.

- ***Fitness 4 Life*** employed a former cycling champion to teach children to ride bicycles purchased from a local business, partnered with the local YMCA to provide swimming lessons and had high school students work with younger children in 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** negotiated 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.

It can also be beneficial to partner with parks and recreation departments. This can take the form of a shared use agreement between your program and local government entities that have recreational facilities.

If your goal is for students to eat more fruits and vegetables, consider starting a community garden, or in-ground gardens as Woodcraft Rangers has, or raised garden beds 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, as it has for **Mt. Diablo CARES**.<sup>18</sup> 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.

**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.

**Keeping your action plan simple will help you and your staff work smarter, not harder.**

#### **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 behaviors, like opting for water over sodas, being actively involved in physical activities with students or rewarding students with things other than candy, cookies or gift certificates for fast food can be challenging.<sup>19</sup>

Staff development is the process through which changes can take place and pay 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 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 a combination of training and ongoing 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 positive outcomes for children and families and their communities. You can do the same thing and have similar results!

**Step 2: Provide high quality training.**<sup>20</sup> 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.
- *Paramount STAR* focuses on providing hands-on training and emphasizes content approaches that can be immediately applied in work environments.
- *LA's BEST* provides ongoing training and coaching to its staff through its BEST Fit program.
- The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* and *Fresno FRESH* work with health divisions within their respective county offices of education and health departments to provide some of their training.
- *A World Fit For Kids!* provides extensive training for its team that is relevant to the individual in creating awareness and growth for themselves first. This helps them to share with students through a combination of information, modeling and mentoring.

All of the 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 three 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) Invest in your staff's personal development. Help your staff find ways to bring what they learn into their own lives. Listening to a presentation about the importance of healthy eating and having half your plate filled with fruits and vegetables at every meal 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 having fruits and vegetables and other healthy snacks when your staff arrives in the afternoon. It won't cost your program much, and it can make a real difference! Encourage your staff to form walking and running clubs, and find other ways to be more active both in and outside of your program.



**Step 3: Make coaching central to your staff development process.** It's easy to think that if the right training is offered, you'll get the results you want. This just 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, *THINK Together* and *LA's BEST* have 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.



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- *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 *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.

Keep in mind that every staff member is unique. They have different backgrounds, experiences, skills and confidence levels. Some are excited about change. Others aren't. Some are eager to try new things. Others want to stay in their comfort zones. It's up to you to get to know them as people and not just employees, and the better you become at doing this, the faster they'll come onboard. Spend time with them. Coach them and become their mentors. And take a real interest in them, and in their own health and well-being.

Meet people where they are and be their guide-by-the-side. Knowledge and skills aren't the only things that matter — caring counts 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 and find ways to reward their efforts. Consider following *A World Fit For Kids!* example: Each staff member is trained and coached based on their own unique needs and current awareness so they can then apply their personal skills and knowledge to teach authentically from their experience. This “start where you stand” approach builds staff buy-in and commitment to becoming healthier and to sharing their knowledge with students.

**Step 4: Use the best materials available.** Choosing the right resources is essential, both for training your staff appropriately and for ensuring that the implementation process goes well. 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 high-quality, 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.<sup>21</sup> CDE's *Nutrition Education Resource Guide* provides information on a variety of vetted nutrition education curricula and which nutrition competencies they address, making the selection process easier.<sup>22</sup> The Dairy Council of California also provides valuable free curricula, and training and advice on making its resources usable.<sup>23</sup> For physical activity, CATCH offers a physical activity (and nutrition education) curriculum,<sup>24</sup> and the SPARK After School Physical Activity Program offers research-based physical activity curricula.<sup>25</sup>

**Knowledge and skills aren't the only thing that matter - caring and confidence count in a big way!**

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 that make the difference.

## **V. EMBED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, NUTRITION & FOOD SECURITY IN YOUR PROGRAM, ACTIVITIES AND APPROACHES**

Nutrition, physical activity and food security can be embedded into your program in many different ways — and they should be. It's not enough to spend an hour or two a week teaching students about the importance of eating right or giving them time for free play. Encouraging them to acquire habits that will lead to healthy lifestyles now and when they become adults takes time, intention and repetition.

It means providing information and giving them lots of opportunities to apply what they learn in real-life settings in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them in their daily lives. It requires linking activities to outcomes and helping students develop and master new skills. And, it means providing them with opportunities to experience new things in new ways.

**Step 1: Think Differently!** You can simplify this process by thinking differently about how you approach your work, beginning with the way your programming is scheduled. For example, all of your students should be moderately to vigorously active at least 45 minutes a day in your program if not more, but it doesn't have to happen all at one time. The research is clear that shorter time periods are just as effective, and they may be more engaging and exciting to students. Many programs now begin with 10 minutes of dancing to Beyoncé's YouTube *Let's Move!* video, or *Just Dance!* or some similar activity. They have kids exercise during their transitions from one class to another. And, they insert five minutes or so of vigorous in-place physical activities into classes where students are sitting for a long time and during homework.

When it comes to learning more about nutrition, the most outstanding programs take advantage of every opportunity they have. In addition to providing more formalized educational instruction and hand-on learning experiences tied to curricula, they ask students to read the labels on the



## VISION, PURPOSE AND INTENTIONALITY

food they get during snacks and answer questions about the value and importance of their ingredients. In classes focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), such as biology or anatomy, they talk about how the body works and why healthy eating habits and exercise matter.

If you currently schedule homework early in your program, consider placing it at the end of the day. Remember that students have been sitting all day during the school hours and are anxious to move. They'll be much more ready to settle down than they would be without doing this. Even more importantly, during the winter months when it gets dark earlier, it makes sense to take advantage of daylight to allow students to be physically active outside. Read more about this in Practice 3.

If children in your program attend school at a different site and are usually transported to your program by bus or van, develop a walking and biking alternative so students automatically get some physical activity. If the school and/or school district have a Safe Routes to School program, work with the coordinator to promote and facilitate walking and biking to school.

Think creatively about what nutrition and physical activity are really all about. Don't limit yourself to specific kinds of things or established schedules — 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 your 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.
- 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!* trains school day teachers to integrate and run quality physical activity during the school day. It's a win-win for students who are more active all day long!

**Build students' skills  
for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**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 Health Education Content Standards 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.

Build students' skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most of the skills that children and young people will need to succeed in school and as adults are part of Common Core expectations.<sup>28</sup> By becoming more intentional, you and your staff can ensure that all of these are targeted in your program. It's important to give students lots of opportunities to work collaboratively in a socially-centered environment where they can strengthen their communication skills, including listening, speaking and writing; support the achievement of group goals; resolve differences in constructive ways; and learn how to depend on and be accountable to their peers.<sup>29</sup> A project-based learning format and process makes this possible, and is highly recommended. Cooking and gardening classes are perfect venues for this to take place. Approaches are described in Practice 4.



**Step 4: Build relationships with the broader education community.** 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, the PTA and others who may be at your sites supports children's health and well-being. Joining school wellness committees in developing, updating, implementing and evaluating their school wellness policies can make a real difference. You and your staff are well-positioned to influence the direction in which they proceed and to ensure that your program, and others in your districts, are an integral part of their plans and policies. (For more on Wellness Policies, see Practice 4).

- ***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.
- ***Mt. Diablo CARES*** connected with its food service manager by attending SHAPE (Shaping Health as Partners in Education) meetings. As a result, 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 Services also provides food for Harvest of the Month tastings, and the manager reviews the recipes the program is using.
- ***Sacramento START's*** relationship with food services at the district and site levels has resulted in students having hot meals provided to them every day through USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program's Meal (Supper) program.

## VI. ESTABLISH STRONG CONNECTIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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. Surrounding students with positive influences and support systems goes beyond what your staff and your children's families and schools can do, to including your community as a whole. Doing this well means building solid, sustainable partnerships with public, nonprofit and private organizations that can increase your resources and your families' access to resources, reinforce your messages and bring about positive policy changes outside your program.

**Step 1: Take time to connect with community organizations.** 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. Many of these potential partners may already come together as part of school health committees or school wellness policy committees at your sites. It's important for your program to be involved as well. There's power in numbers, and you'll want to be part of the equation!

**Step 2: Build on community interests.** Local public health departments, voluntary health agencies such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society, community foundations, healthcare providers and insurers, hospitals and clinics, and food banks and pantries are examples of community organizations with expertise and an interest in student health. Beyond this, most businesses are concerned about their current and future employees' health and well-being, not just because it impacts their bottom line but because it makes a huge difference in the vitality of their community. Others, such as city parks and recreation departments, health and fitness clubs, and professional and amateur sports teams are also potential partners.

Through its community connections, *CalSERVES* co-sponsors an annual Cesar Chavez 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. And the event strengthens their partnerships throughout the year.

One of *Mt. Diablo CARES'* top priorities 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 annually to the program. They have dramatically increased the availability of fruits and vegetables at their sites. Where CARES partnered with food services to provide additional staffing for salad bars, the amount of produce needed for school lunches doubled.

- ***Kids Campus*** connects children and their families with every possible resource by serving as a food bank distribution center, referring families to a free clinic and linking them with a multitude of other resources.
- ***Woodcraft Rangers*** joined forces with Clear Channel in its widespread campaign to increase awareness about physical fitness and the childhood obesity issue,
- ***Fresno FRESH*** established close relationships with the local media and often appears on television programs highlighting healthy habits.

**The larger environment in which your program operates matters more than you might think.**



- A local pediatrician in the Santa Clara County hospital system prescribes the *YMCA of Silicon Valley* program to overweight children and adolescent patients.
- *Monrovia VESP* regularly provides families 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.

When you work with people from all these sectors in your community, you'll be able to secure new resources, and much more! You'll be positioned to help develop local policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity. For example, new connections to community organizations and interests could provide momentum for opening up the school grounds for shared use by the community, in ways that complement your program. You'll have opportunities to join them in creating a positive environment in which children and young people can thrive. And, you'll gain access to elected officials at the local, state and federal levels. All of this matters – a lot!



### 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.

**Step 1: Assess changes in real time and over time.** There are two kinds of assessment approaches that most exemplary programs use. The first is formative, meaning that baselines are established through surveys and other instruments, and progress is measured every two or three months so that strengths can be built on and changes can be made where they are needed. Taking this approach is extremely valuable, and the Indicators provided for each Practice in this Guide are a vital resource for doing this. Staying alert to how things are going in real time accelerates forward movement, makes it possible to avoid problems that may become more serious and ensures that everyone knows what's working and what may need improvement.

The second approach is summative. It assesses what has happened over the course of a given time period, generally one academic year. Most formal evaluations fall into this category. The advantage is that they will give you a point-to-point picture of what has taken place. Most of the programs we've worked with use both approaches. Consider doing this as well.

**Step 2: Use research-based tools.** Several of the Healthy Behaviors programs use surveys developed by CDPH's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Branch that assess attitudes, knowledge and behaviors of students with regard to choosing fruits and vegetables. Many use FITNESSGRAM to measure improvements in physical fitness. *Sacramento START* designs its program to achieve specific outcomes including physical fitness. Because they do an annual formal evaluation, they know that it's working! Clearly, what they're doing is making a difference — and they have the evidence to back it up.

Several of the programs we've worked with, like *LA's BEST*, contract with outside evaluators and include survey analyses of changes in the eating habits, physical activity and fitness levels and food security of participating children and their families. If you already have an evaluator, be sure to ask him or her to include areas that focus on students' health. If you don't, just be sure to develop a tool on your own only after you become familiar with research-based approaches.

**Successful programs  
are intentional in  
what they do.**

At the end of this Practice, and in subsequent Practices, 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 Your Work 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 two to 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 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Program/Site Vision and Goals</b>         |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Staff Development</b>                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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.                |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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 Your Work with Vision, Purpose and Intentionality continued**

| INDICATORS   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills continued</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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 regularly offers suggestions and provides feedback to strengthen the activities we provide in nutrition education and physical activity.                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13   | Our staff is working on improving their own nutrition and physical activity.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>School and Community Relationships</b>              |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14   | We have established positive working relationships with the school district(s) and schools, and they share our vision.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15   | 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. |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Evaluation and Assessments</b>                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16   | We have a system in place that makes it possible for us to track our progress toward the achievement of our goals.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17   | We engage students in tracking their progress toward the achievement of their goals in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18   | 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 Approaches with YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES



“We know that to be healthy, students have to learn to eat well, exercise regularly and, most importantly, smile and have fun! We’ve learned how to be sure this happens — and it’s made a huge difference in the quality of our program and the excitement and commitment of our students and staff members!”

– Yecenia Guillen, Recreational Superintendent,  
*Success Through Academics & Recreation (STAR)*

### 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 Make it possible 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 is their commitment to the principles and practices of youth development. They 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 by ensuring that this happens for children and young people every day.

- Create an environment in which children and young people feel physically and emotionally secure.
- Be sure that all 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 make it harder for them to adopt healthy lifestyles.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for youngsters to engage in hands-on, experiential learning that allows them to work independently and collaboratively to internalize new concepts, to share new ideas and to 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 in any way.

This is a huge part of the safety equation, but not all of it. For students to thrive, they must feel emotionally as well as physically safe. 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 or disrespected. 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.<sup>34</sup>

Together, physical and emotional safety provides the foundation upon which all other youth development principles are built. No matter how well-designed or exciting the activities are that you offer, your program won't achieve the results you want without building this foundation first and then embedding it with practices that promote healthy behaviors.<sup>35</sup>

**For students to thrive, they must feel emotionally as well as physically safe.**

**Step 1: Make physical safety your top priority.** Paying attention to the physical safety of students should be your highest priority from the time students first arrive to the time they leave at the end of the day. It begins with having a structured system for signing kids in and out of your program. In addition to providing you with accurate attendance records, this system should be designed in a way that 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 also require working with schools to lock the gates during program hours to prevent strangers from coming in or students from leaving on their own. If the school district allows community use of facilities after the school day (for example, through a shared use agreement), it is important to remember to work with district and school administrators to creatively ensure student safety. If you schedule outdoor activities early in your program, this may mean asking the school to delay community access hours until your students have gone indoors. Another option would be to separate off a portion of the outdoor areas for use only by your participants.

In many programs, and especially those that are located in unsafe neighborhoods, ensuring the physical safety of participating students goes beyond the time the program ends to ensuring that children have safe passage home. This is especially important during the winter months when it can be dark as early as 4:30. This may mean having an early release policy and system in place for students who walk home, or working with parents or staff to form walking groups later on for kids and families who live nearby. Or, consider rescheduling program components to put homework assistance at the end of the day to encourage more families to pick them up when your program ends. No matter what you do, make safe passage part of your approach to physical safety.

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.<sup>36</sup>



## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**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 programs we've worked with have a zero-tolerance policy for staff behaviors that put students at risk, and yours should, too!

**One seriously injured child is one too many.**

- 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 *Paramount STAR* 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 in whatever is going on.

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. Hold everyone accountable for following them. And, train all of your staff in first-aid, and at least some in CPR, and insist that they call 911 if there is any question about the severity of an injury or illness.

**Step 3: Be alert to food safety issues and students' medical conditions.** Creating a physically safe environment also means that you and your staff must be knowledgeable about food safety — including sanitation, preparation, equipment handling, expiration dates on labels and the dangers and symptoms of food poisoning, and know how to deal with these if something goes wrong. Be careful about the equipment used in cooking and gardening classes. Have gloves available to prevent the spread of germs and ensure that they are used appropriately by staff and students. Consider having food safety training from the California Healthy Kids Resource Center or the food services division in your district.<sup>37</sup>

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 matters. So also does ensuring that you have a written protocol and your staff knows what to do if a child has an allergic reaction to the snacks or suppers your program provides or food they may get from their friends, or in taste-testing

opportunities or cooking classes. Allergic reactions can be life-threatening. Knowing what to do and acting quickly can be life-saving. Preventing them in the first place is a hallmark of a high quality program.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, many programs have witnessed a sharp 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. School nurses are excellent resources in these areas and should be brought in to provide training if at all possible. If not, give your staff time to access the physical activity web pages related to children with asthma at the California After School Resource Center (CASRC) web site and build in opportunities to discuss them.<sup>39</sup> Work with your county office of education or local health departments or other partners to train your staff on how to prevent and deal with asthma attacks and recognize its symptoms and those of type 2 diabetes and any other medical problems of the children and young people in your program.

Be sure all site staff 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. Keep these things in mind:

- Having students engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity helps them become more physically fit — if they are healthy enough to do this. Students with asthma need respect and responsiveness from staff to assist them in managing their asthma during physical activities. Failure to accommodate their needs is reckless.
- Using candy or high-sugar incentives for kids to do well runs counter to helping them develop healthy behaviors in general. Making them available to children with diabetes is irresponsible and can be life-threatening.

**Step 4: Create and maintain an emotionally safe environment.** Children feel emotionally secure when they know they are 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 programs we've worked with have seen significant improvement in attitudes and behavior by using this approach, and they've created sustainable emotionally safe environments.





## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- *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 their thoughts about how they felt and what, if anything, might work better.
- *Woodcraft Rangers'* promotes inclusivity and sensitivity to different cultures in ways that help all students feel important and respected, honoring their differences and their similarities.

Make nutrition education relevant by including foods that reflect youngsters' backgrounds and experiences. Plant a variety of chilies in your gardens. Teach children how to use chopsticks. Give them a chance to taste a variety of foods prepared using ingredients preferred in other cultures, or sample fruits and vegetables they may be less familiar with. Introduce physical activities and sports that are indigenous to the cultures of some of the students in your program but may be unfamiliar to others.



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.

**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 may 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.<sup>40</sup> Follow the lead of the 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 significant time to train their high school mentors how to deal appropriately with conflicts and disrespectful behavior of their 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.<sup>41</sup> 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 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.<sup>42</sup>

When students feel supported by and emotionally 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. Trust develops through positive, caring relationships – put this at the top of your expectations for yourself and for your staff, and it will become a hallmark of how adults relate with children!

**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.





## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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 or three 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 it is a way of life.

**Genuine caring is the basis for supportive relationships, and a culture of caring is the hallmark of a truly outstanding program.**

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 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 living in families from low-income communities often don't have enough to eat and this may mean that they sacrifice the quality of food for quantity — or that they are simply too hungry to do well!

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 or supper they get in your program may be the last meal some of them will eat until the next day.



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 — and understand that they can make a difference!

**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 with students in your program — and with you and with each other!

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.<sup>43</sup>

Acknowledge, support and reward positive attitudes and behavior, and address counter-productive or negative behavior right away. Anything, or anyone, who doesn't support the positive development of relationships can, and will, be toxic to your program and to the children you work with. Don't let this happen.



## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### III. FOCUS ON HANDS-ON, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Many students in 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. And, it's one of the most important principles of high quality programs, as defined by *Learning in Afterschool and Summer* (<http://www.learninginafterschool.org/position.htm>) Students benefit most when they're involved in projects 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, project-based sessions seem to be the appropriate amount of time for this to take place, depending on the grade levels of students. Cooperative, or collaborative, 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. Socially-centered, this approach gives them a venue for learning how to work together, support each other, resolve conflicts or disagreements in constructive ways and hold themselves and each other accountable for what happens — or doesn't happen.

For example, children in *Sacramento START* 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 to provide ongoing opportunities for students to engage with a diverse group of their peers — who may have different backgrounds, viewpoints and ideas—and it also expands their horizons. This kind of collaboration helps 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 helping students feel more empowered.** 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, is create the environments and surround them with the kinds of support that will help encourage and motivate them to move in a positive direction.

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 eager and able 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*, *CalSERVES* and *Sacramento START* offer gardening classes that 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 learning healthy snacks, from fruit smoothies to ceviche. By the end of the session, they've taken on most of the responsibility for the class.

**Creating situations in which students are eager and able to take on greater responsibility for their learning is a gift that you and your staff can give to the students in your program.**



## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **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.<sup>44</sup>

**Step 1: Systematically develop gateways for meaningful 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. It 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.<sup>45</sup>



Participation is meaningful when students have influence and ownership over what is happening and the means to measure their progress available to them. This can happen in a variety of ways, all of which are important. Make debriefings after activities a regular part of your program. These give students an opportunity to influence changes in how you do things, and when they see changes, they know that their opinions matter — and your program will improve as a result.

- 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.
- **A World Fit For Kids!** and **Afterschool All-Stars, LA** 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 students 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!

**Meeting students where they are is the starting point for setting high expectations.**

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 middle and upper elementary school students 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.
- *Monrovia's* kindergarten yoga class is a prime example of getting kids off to a great start in learning new skills, developing ways to calm themselves down and leading their peers in changing from one position to another.
- *LA's BEST* gives children at all age levels opportunities to be responsible for helping set up equipment for physical activities or cooking clubs and gardens.
- *THINK Together* offers a Walk Across America program that gives students opportunities to choose their destinations and track their progress on a map as they run laps over the course of the year. (End note: (<http://walking.about.com/cs/measure/a/webwalkingusa.htm>))
- *Paramount STAR* gives every student a chance to choose physical activities they're familiar with and lead them at least once a week.

**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.<sup>46</sup>

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.



## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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.<sup>47</sup>

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.

The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* creates a family-like support system by mixing all age groups together with the expectation that older youth will help younger children, whether exercising or participating in a cooking class.

**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.

- *LA's BEST* hosts sports activities and cheerleading competitions that include all of its 194 sites every year.
- *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 Foundation 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 Cesar Chavez 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 embedding 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!<sup>48</sup>

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, one hundred percent fruit juice and low-fat milk.





## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 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.
- Children in *Sacramento START* lead organized lunch-time physical activities during the school day and have changed the behavior of many of their peers who are not yet in the program.

**When children feel connected, they're able to develop empathy with others.**

**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 highly respected 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.

- Elementary students in *San Francisco ExCEL* are responsible for running a food pantry that serves families in need in the school community.
- 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 in their garden 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!



Using a four- to eight-week project-based approach will pay much greater dividends than having these be limited to single events or activities. No matter what idea they select, give older students primary responsibility for designing, developing and carrying projects through to completion, and evaluating what they've done afterwards. 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 move to the next level.

**Step 3: Invest in helping children co-create the future!** In the final analysis, the purpose of embedding 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 and skills, adopt the attitudes and practice the behaviors they'll need to be able to choose 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!





## INTEGRATE NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### 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 two to 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 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19   | Students are given opportunities to lead a variety of activities.   |   |   |   |   |   |

**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 & ENVIRONMENTS



### Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Get students active, 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 and Environments

**Y**our program can make a huge difference in the lives of children and young people by providing them with a healthy environment and 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 lead 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 in specific. 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 ACTIVE, EXCITED AND ENGAGED

One of the basic tenets of high quality programs, and a principle in *Learning in Afterschool and Summer*<sup>49</sup> and *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*<sup>50</sup> is making learning active. This means that students should not only be physically active, but also that all activities should stimulate their innate curiosity, be hands-on or project-based and provide learning experiences that enhance their ability to think critically, communicate effectively and work collaboratively. Doing this well supports Common Core state standards and helps students develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, both of which are essential to their success in school and in life.

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. It means finding new and creative ways to make this happen. 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. This chapter is designed to help you do this!

**Step 1: Be sensitive to students' cultural backgrounds and experiences.** Begin by ensuring that the activities you offer build on the youth development principles and practices described in the previous chapter. Create a climate of respect in which ethnic and cultural diversity is accepted and celebrated, and establish and maintain a supportive, inclusive environment. 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.





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- *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.
- *THINK Together, San Francisco ExCEL, the YMCA of Silicon Valley 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. Their socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences 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!



- Like many of its program components, *Woodcraft Rangers'* break dancing club was initiated by students, and most of the planning has been done through a student-staff partnership.
- *Sacramento START* includes its sixth grade leadership team students 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 at all grade levels.
- *CalSERVES* gives children daily opportunities to reflect on what they've learned, what worked for them and what might be improved.

- *Paramount STAR* engaged students in designing and developing its garden and lets them select the seasonally-appropriate fruits and vegetables they would like to grow.

**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, soccer and cheerleading — and balance these kinds of activities with others that they can do on their own or with one or two others, such as walking, low-impact jogging and yoga.<sup>52</sup>

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.

**Make nutrition education real for students.**

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 through their First Tee programs. Many programs partner with local YMCAs, community centers and high schools to offer swimming lessons.

**Step 4: Make nutrition education real for students.** There are many ways to make nutrition education active, exciting and engaging to students. Those that work best are based on helping them acquire the knowledge and skills described in California's Health Education Content Standards and providing hands-on experiences that allow kids to try new things and creatively apply what they're learning in real situations. The Health Education Content Standards emphasize skill development including assessing health information, demonstrating decision-making to enhance health, personal goal setting, practicing health enhancing behaviors, and promoting health — consistent with active, engaging learning. Cooking and gardening classes and trips to local supermarkets and farmers markets can help make this happen — as can opportunities for students to transform what they're learning into finished products that they and others can use.

- ***Fitness 4 Life*** regularly offers taste test opportunities for youngsters to try new fruits and vegetables, such as kiwis, mandarins, eggplants, persimmons and squash, and uses Harvest of the Month to help them learn more about the foods they are eating.
- ***A World Fit For Kids!*** provides field trips for kids to visit farmers' markets and go on grocery store tours where they compare the nutritional value of various products by reading labels and then calculate comparative costs.
- ***After-School All-Stars, LA*** students write, direct and produce videos comparing healthy and unhealthy foods and make these videos available to their peers.
- ***Woodcraft Rangers*** publishes a student-written magazine that features nutrition and presents it in a powerful, age-appropriate way that captures students' interests and provides them with new insights into the importance of healthy eating.
- All of the youngsters enrolled in ***Mt. Diablo CARES*** take nutrition education classes, and apply what they learn as they garden, prepare healthy recipes and share fruits and vegetables with their families.



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- **Club Y.E.S.** offered a unique and highly popular component called Crime Solvers Investigation (CSI) which integrates nutrition into year-long mystery solving activities.
- **YMCA of Silicon Valley** partners with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers<sup>54</sup> to provide local farm-fresh fruits and vegetables for taste-testing using Harvest of the Month. Students culminate the year with field trips to local farms.

**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!

Following the example of *A World Fit For Kids!*, an increasing number of the programs we've worked with now make their expectations clear to prospective employees during the application and interview processes. They explain their vision, highlight their goals and ensure to the extent possible that anyone who comes onboard truly understands and is committed to fully supporting their work. We've found this to be a very beneficial practice, and one that you should consider.

**Going with their strengths increases the chances that they'll be excited and engaged.**

Depending on how your program is organized, it makes a lot of sense for staff members to be 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.

Or, it may make more sense to have staff who are passionate about particular activities or areas offer those to all students over the course of the year regardless of their grade level. Pay attention to individual staff members' interests and expertise. Going with their strengths increases the chances that 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 physical activity and their health and 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 like and 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
- How clearly they see the personal benefits of participating.

**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. 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 a 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 you'll offer, be intentional about what you do. For example, if you now 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 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. The more consistent the activities are, the better.



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**Step 2: Focus on ensuring that students are moderately to vigorously active each day.** No matter what physical activities you offer, the most important thing to keep in mind is that all students should be moving at a moderate to vigorous rate for at least 60 minutes each day, and afterschool can contribute a large portion of this time.<sup>56</sup> It's important to offer physical activities that are exciting to students, and more important to ensure that every child is really active.

In most programs, other than those that have already learned this lesson, this simply isn't the case. It's all too common for some kids to be moving, and others to be standing still, sitting down or moving only intermittently. In many instances, the average amount of time individual students sustain the recommended pace is about four minutes of every half hour, well below what is needed.<sup>57</sup>

**Embed physical activity into everything you do.**

An easy way to informally assess this is by using a stopwatch to count the actual number of minutes a randomly selected child or young person is moderately to vigorously active. You'll probably be surprised at how little it may be! *San Francisco ExCEL* used the SOFIT assessment tool, which tracked randomly selected children, to determine how active their students were during their physical activity time and provided immediate feedback to their site staff to increase the percentage of time spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity.<sup>58</sup>

Changing this requires becoming more intentional. For example, *LA's BEST* overcame the challenge of kids waiting in line for their turn at kickball by having them pass balls to each other over their heads and through their legs and by requiring students in the field to do jumping jacks while they were waiting for the next player to come up to the plate. *Paramount STAR* and *Sacramento START* break their 60 minutes of physical activity into 15-minute segments focusing on student-led circuit training and other activities.

Many of the programs we've worked with begin each day with 10 minutes of vigorous dance steps to Beyoncé's Let's Move! Video,<sup>59</sup> followed by organized activities and regular Instant Recess breaks during other program components including homework.<sup>60</sup> Several use transitions as opportunities for exercise by having students hop, skip, jump or actively move in other ways. Several end the day with parent-student Zumba classes. All of these approaches work. The important thing is to be sure that all kids are moving moderately to vigorously at least 45 minutes a day in your program!

To the extent possible, embed physical activity into everything you do, even if for brief periods of time! Students will be invigorated, they'll concentrate better when they return to other more sedentary activities, they'll behave better and they'll learn more!

**Step 3: 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 and video games and friends

and family is strong, and the messages they send are compelling. The food and beverage industry spends approximately \$2 billion a year to influence them — and it works. The typical child sees approximately 12-16 food-related commercials a day with almost all of them for unhealthy foods and beverages.<sup>61</sup>

Your program already dramatically reduces the screen time hours available to kids 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. 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. Be real and be relevant!

- **Kids Campus** helps students track what they eat, how much exercise they get and how they feel by providing them with journals and pedometers — and they have built into their program, walking groups that take them from their school to the off-campus site over a mile away every day.
- 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.
- **Like Monrovia VESP**, use every opportunity to reinforce what students are learning and share their knowledge. Have your staff ask children questions about the nutritional value of their snacks and suppers while they're eating them.



**Step 4: 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.



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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 *MyPlate*,<sup>62</sup> 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 5: Use incentives appropriately.** A lot of programs give out tokens or points to students 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.<sup>63</sup> 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 all 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 is not a good choice. 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. The programs we've worked with that do provide incentives now link these to healthy behaviors by offering them choices of hula hoops, jump ropes and other sports equipment and additional fresh fruits and vegetables to take home to their families.

Like *Kids Campus*, almost all Healthy Behaviors programs include Clever Crazes components in their schedules which enable kids to learn more about healthy eating and become more physically active in order to reach higher levels that are rewarded by the organization with Nike shoes and gift cards at Wal-Mart, Target and other stores.<sup>64</sup> In addition:

- 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 program-wide cheerleading, sports and dance competitions, *LA's BEST* and *After School All-Stars, LA* ensure that they'll be motivated to practice every day.

- By letting students prepare healthy snacks for parent and family nights and other special events, **THINK Together** offers an appropriate incentive for them to come up with creative, healthy recipes 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 Common Core state standards and frameworks.** Academic standards are great resources for strengthening students' skills in a variety of critical areas. Common Core identifies what students should know and be able to do at specific grade levels.<sup>65</sup> 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. It's also important to align activities with California's *Physical Education Framework*, *Physical Education Model Content Standards*, *Health Framework* and *Health Education Content Standards*, *Nutrition Education Competencies*, and *After School Physical Activity Guidelines*, or those standards that are available in your own state.<sup>66</sup> The Nutrition Education Competencies, together with identified curricula that teach them, are laid out in a user-friendly fashion in the *Nutrition Education Resource Guide*.<sup>67</sup> The leadership team of **A World Fit For Kids!** was trained on the Common Core state standards and 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. It's made a huge difference in program quality and student outcomes.

Make these standards come alive through a variety of offerings! In addition to providing the more typical dances 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





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introductory understanding of movement concepts and building their skills in performing a variety of motor skills. And students enjoy learning and leading these dances — a lot!

Cooking clubs are obvious choices for helping students meet *California's Health Education Content Standards*, and Common Core Math and Next Generation Science Standards<sup>68</sup> 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 math and nutrition literacy skills by learning to read labels on prepared foods and assess such things as types of grains, sugar, fat and salt content compared to what they should consume on a daily basis.

Gardening projects create a healthy nutrition environment, and if they are appropriately designed and delivered can be used to reinforce nutrition education and introduce students to fundamental patterns in nature— a basic science standard, and provide opportunities for youngsters to reinforce and strengthen their language arts, mathematics and other skills at the same time.<sup>69</sup>

**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.<sup>70</sup> CASRC and the San Diego County Office of Education's web site featuring physical activities for afterschool programs also offer excellent resources.<sup>71</sup> The *Nutrition Education Resource Guide* is full of high quality nutrition education curricula that are linked to the nutrition competencies.<sup>72</sup> CDPH's *NEOP* web site offers vetted resources, healthy recipes and recipes tailored to various ethnic tastes.<sup>73</sup> See also our Resource List in this Guide.

*A World Fit For Kids!* provides their own Mentors in Motion<sup>SM</sup> training based on several of these resources 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.<sup>74</sup> 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. They provide a sound basis for programming and 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: Support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills.** In addition to targeting specific content areas, Common Core also focuses on the need for students to learn how to think critically; work collaboratively; and communicate, solve problems and make decisions effectively. These



are all skills that are essential for students to acquire and to master at age-appropriate levels — and your program can go a long way toward making sure that this happens. One of the most important, and valuable, ways of doing this is to use project-based learning as your primary approach. Even at a basic level, this will make a huge difference!

The key elements of project-based learning include organizing students into small groups to work together on projects for four to eight weeks, and completing the project with a culminating event. In keeping with youth development principles and practices, this approach is student-centered rather than adult-driven, and it's inherently collaborative. It gives children and young people ongoing opportunities to learn how to communicate with each other effectively, to carry their work through to completion and to be acknowledged for what they have accomplished — all of which are critical to their social and cognitive development.

For example, in many programs multi-cultural cooking classes provide an opportunity for students to choose the country or region they are most interested in; research the foods that are grown and consumed there; find recipes that are appealing and healthy; prepare snacks with the appropriate ingredients each week; and plan, prepare and serve a meal for their peers and staff at the end of the session.

This approach can also be used to expand children's opportunities to develop their physical skills and increase their knowledge by having them work together to learn more about the sports they are interested in, practice these and write and publish a short handbook on the topic that might highlight specific stars in these fields.

**Step 4: 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' behaviors and attitudes, and influence their eating patterns and physical activity levels.<sup>76</sup> These eight components are nutrition services, health services, health education (which includes nutrition 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:

- Develop relationships, work with local health departments and community health organizations, and get to know school health personnel, including nurses, counselors, physical educators, health educators and nutrition services staff, as *Kids Campus* has.





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- Participate as a member of the local school wellness committee. This enables you to build alliances with others who are charged with the health and physical well-being of your students. If possible, go one step further, as *Sacramento START* has, by having a Site Director become chair of the school wellness committee!
- If Healthy Start, health clinics or family resource centers are 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. Doing this will provide a whole range of benefits to your program and to students and their families.

**Select outcomes that are specific and realistic.**

- 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 *LA's BEST* and *Woodcraft Rangers* have, 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 local health departments 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.
- Work with districts, county offices of education and local health agencies to provide training. The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* partners with the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department and works closely with their leadership team and staff to bring resources to their program (and other programs) on a regular basis.
- 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, and that they offer everyone an opportunity for physical activity. Consider a zero-tolerance approach to allowing unhealthy food and drinks in your program, as nearly all of the programs we've worked with have.
- Work with districts to expand opportunities for physical activity outside of the school day. Two popular options are Safe Routes to School programs (which encourage walking and biking to school) and shared use agreements (which allow community access to school facilities).

### 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.<sup>76</sup> 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 — something that can be measured through student, parent and staff surveys.
- 2) Pay attention to grant requirements. Be sure the outcomes you want are well-matched with the interests of your stakeholders and funders.
- 3) Identify indicators that will accurately measure changes and capture the impact your program is having on students in the areas you've selected.

The **YMCA of Silicon Valley** uses SPARK Personal Best assessments in aerobic capacity, upper body strength, abdominal strength, endurance and flexibility. They make certain that each student understands why these tests are taking place and how they relate to their own individual goals.

It makes sense to follow this example. If you are unable to conduct your own SPARK or FITNESSGRAM™ testing, you may want to use other measures of physical activity that are available through CDPH's NEOP Branch.<sup>77</sup>

- 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 NEOP Branch's 2010-11 impact evaluation protocol recommends that at least 50 students complete their pre- and post-test process.<sup>78</sup>

**Step 2: Track individual students' progress.** Changes in food choices and physical fitness can be assessed through student, staff and parent 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



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continually improve the quality of your program and the outcomes for children and young people.

In a stunning example of how to do this well, each student in *A World Fit For Kids!* is 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 children and young people learn how to assess their own fitness and monitor improvement toward reaching their goals. Setting personal goals, monitoring their progress and achieving their desired results 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?

Several of the programs we've worked with have used a variety of approaches, 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 for FITNESSGRAM, 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 eighty-one 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.
- Students in *LA's BEST* are drinking more water and making better decisions about the food they eat at home as well as during the program.

**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 CDPH's NEOP Branch, is one of these.<sup>79</sup> It will lend credibility to the results. In addition, Module E of the California Healthy Kids Survey<sup>80</sup> includes questions related to students' eating habits and levels of physical activity.

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, CDPH's NEOP Branch piloted the use of their on-line Geographic Information System (GIS) and Communities of Excellence in Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention (CX<sup>3</sup>) 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 or afterschool site.

**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 sometimes 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 skeptics or cynics.

Concrete successes, 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 with hundreds of pounds of fruits and vegetables being delivered weekly to each of their sites. Celebrate when you have the first food bank or farmers' market delivery! If only half of the kids who never participated in physical activities after a month or so of beginning to implement this practice join in enthusiastically, count it as a win!



## LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ENVIRONMENTS

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, school staff and community partners. Highlight your successes in a newsletter. Recognize, appreciate and publicize every accomplishment along the way—it matters more than you might think!

Publicize your successes to your staff, principal, parents, 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. Practice 6 provides additional information on publicizing and marketing your accomplishments as a strategy for securing new funding.

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

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every two to 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 |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</b> |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 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 and uses research-based, behavior-focused nutrition education and approaches.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | Our staff is knowledgeable about and uses research-based, behavior-focused physical activities and approaches.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5  | The curricula our staff use and approaches they take are exciting and meaningful to students and incorporate their interests, choices and preferences. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6  | Our staff is aware of cultural differences, preferences and styles of students in our program.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7  | Our staff offers activities that are culturally relevant and reflect the different interests of children in our program.                               |   |   |   |   |   |

*continued next page*



## LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ENVIRONMENTS

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

| INDICATORS   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b><i>Student Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</i></b>                              |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | Students actively participate in ways that strengthen their physical, cognitive and social skills.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | Students are continually exposed to new ideas and experiences that motivate them to adopt healthy lifestyles and acquire life-long skills.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10   | Students are moderately to vigorously active for at least 45 minutes every day in our program.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11   | Students have a variety of opportunities to practice making healthy food choices.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b><i>Partnerships with Schools, Parents and Community-Based Organizations</i></b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12   | Our nutrition approaches are aligned with the Health Framework, the eight components of coordinated school health, the Health Education Content Standards and the Nutrition Competencies.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13   | Our physical activity approaches are aligned with the Physical Education Framework, the After School Physical Activity Guidelines, the eight components of coordinated school health, and the Physical Education Model Content Standards. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14   | We engage community partners in developing and implementing nutrition and physical activity in our program.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b><i>Evaluation and Assessments</i></b>   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15   | We consistently link activities and projects with specific desired outcomes in nutrition.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16   | We consistently link activities and projects with specific desired outcomes in physical activity.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17   | We have tools in place to measure and manage progress toward achieving our program's goals and individual student goals.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18   | We regularly assess changes in the attitudes and behavior of staff and students as they relate to nutrition.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19   | 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.
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5. We're clearly outstanding in this area, and everyone would agree.





# Practice #4

## Commit to **PARTNERING** with **FAMILIES, SCHOOLS** and **YOUR COMMUNITY**



### Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Involve parents and family members
- 2 Develop close relationships with schools
- 3 Provide off-site learning experiences
- 4 Promote community service
- 5 Create strong community partnerships
- 6 Be proactive in your community

“The community is an important partner in the work of promoting health and wellness. The more voices in a child’s life engaged in supporting positive health choices, the more impact we can have collectively. There are vital community resources to tap into including business leaders, community organization resources, teachers, parents, and students themselves. Together, we can change health outcomes for the better in the lives of our community’s most vulnerable youth.”

– Julie McClure, Director, Napa County Office of Education Community Program



**PRACTICE #4:**

## Commit to Partnering with Families, Schools and Your Community

Reach out beyond your immediate environment! Use your surrounding community as a classroom and expand the opportunities and experiences available to your students. Connect with the families of youngsters who attend your program, work closely with the schools where your sites are located and engage your community. Children and young people are the prime beneficiaries of community engagement, but not the only ones. When parents, schools and local organizations 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 you'll be able to make an even bigger difference in the environment in which children and their families live!

### I. INVOLVE 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. Involving parents and family members in your program's afterschool and summer activities can help inspire them to make the kinds of changes you'd like to see—and provide them with at least some of the resources they'll need to do this. Offering nutrition education classes and a variety of special events, including “family night” evening activities, are important ways to do this.

**Step 1: Include families in special events.** Invite families to special events or weekend activities when 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 all-program sports event. Aimed at reinforcing the importance of being active and staying healthy, the event was a feature story on the ABC Evening News.
- *LA's BEST* annual *Be Fit* event includes thousands of students and their families.
- Each year, *Monrovia VESP* invites the entire school community to participate in a free event that promotes their wellness and healthier living through a variety of fun activities and experiences.
- *Kid's Campus* offers weekly healthy activities for students and their families on Saturdays to keep everyone enthusiastic about physical activity and good nutrition.
- *Sacramento START* includes parents in Zumba classes at the end of the day when they come to pick their kids.
- *THINK Together* and *A World Fit For Kids!* hold Snack Shack Fridays, with parents getting samples of the snacks students have prepared in their cooking classes as well as recipes and bags of ingredients for the recipes to take home.

**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!**

**Step 2: 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.<sup>82</sup>

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.

**Step 3: Include nutrition education in parenting classes and family nights.** 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.<sup>83</sup>

Educating families on the importance of health and nutrition can improve the quality of children's lives and literally save their lives. When your program or school offers parenting classes, take advantage of the opportunity to include sessions on nutrition, physical activity



## PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

and other health-related topics. Partner with school day nutrition education teachers as well as outside organizations to offer nutrition education classes. Many offer free materials. Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* Web site has helpful tips and materials you can share with parents on nutrition AND physical activity.<sup>84</sup> The Dairy Council of California has free user-friendly



resources for parents, as do local health departments (*Children's Power Play! Campaign*), some CalFresh offices and California Project LEAN. You might also learn about free materials through your health department's County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) Committee.<sup>85</sup>

- **THINK Together** purchased mobile kitchens at 22 of its sites and uses these in eight-session parent nutrition trainings funded by Kaiser Permanente as well as during its program hours.
- **A World Fit For Kids!** partners with its elementary school parent outreach coordinator to offer nutrition classes to parents, and **CalSERVES** co-sponsors an *Eat Right When the Money's Tight* event with NEOP's *Children's Power Play! Campaign*.
- **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.
- **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.
- **ISS** partners with UC Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to provide parenting classes, and asks parents to donate healthy food for their cooking classes. Leftovers are used to fill backpacks that are sent home to the families most in need.
- **San Francisco ExCEL's** program staff works closely with school day personnel like nutrition education program coordinators to offer fun, interactive healthy family events.
- **THINK Together** offers family nights that include healthy meals and fitness activities, and provide families with nutrition education resources and recipes.

**Step 4: Set and enforce policies that promote healthy eating.**<sup>87</sup> Actions speak louder than words — and some actions count more than others. It's important to offer nutrition education classes for 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 great to send healthy recipes home to parents, but counterproductive to have them bring cupcakes for parties. Consistency matters, and getting there usually means being intentional about setting, implementing and enforcing policies.

It is also important to be consistent in the messages your program sends to children. Young children are not able to distinguish between marketing messages and other messages, and maintaining this consistency will support healthy eating by both parents and children. Parents should understand that even things such as fundraisers and educational materials may be forms of marketing that promote unhealthy foods and beverages, either directly or indirectly.

Banning unhealthy food and beverages during your program may meet with some resistance at first, but if parents understand why it is so important, they'll support your policy. It's a lot easier to do this at the beginning of the year at parent orientations than to wait until later. Be sure to establish policies that promote everyone's health and well-being, and that they're fully implemented — and highly visible. Set the example you'd like families to follow and lead the way! In many cases, we've found that students become the most proactive in enforcing these policies once they understand why they're important. When this happens, it's clear that the policies are working.

## II. 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 school districts and school boards, 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 plan in which the school day and afterschool environments support healthy eating and physical activity among all students.<sup>88</sup>

- 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 in 170 schools, ensuring that students are getting consistent messaging in nutrition and fitness education both in school and after school.
- The Site Director of one of *Sacramento START's* Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers serves as the chair of the school's wellness committee, organizes noontime physical activities and actively supports the school-site parent group.
- *SERRF* and *Monrovia VESP* partner with the instructional day in providing opportunities for all students to be involved in gardening.

**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.<sup>89</sup>

**The stronger and more positive your connections are with schools, the greater the benefits will be for students in your program.**



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.

**Step 2: Become part of and support your District's Wellness Policy and Plan.** Local school wellness policies are an important tool for promoting student health, preventing and reducing childhood obesity, and providing assurance that school meals meet the minimum federal nutrition guidelines standards. Every district that participates in the National School Lunch Program or other Child Nutrition programs is required by federal law to establish a local school wellness policy for all of the sites within its jurisdiction.

In addition, under the 2010 Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act, districts have been required to strengthen their local wellness policies and implement them! They now must add a goal for nutrition promotion, increase stakeholder involvement and notify the public (including parents) about the policy and its implementation. This has opened a door for your involvement. Take advantage of it! <sup>90</sup>

The California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative provides many resources and is an important contributor to helping districts develop and implement strong wellness policies.<sup>91</sup> The Dairy Council's wellness policy page on its web site includes most of the district policies in the state, evaluation tools and resources, which can be very helpful.<sup>92</sup>

Ask for a copy of your district or school policy and become familiar with its overall goals and objectives.<sup>93</sup> Learn how these 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. You'll discover there's a lot of common ground to build on.



If the district wellness policy does not already address afterschool programs, participate in meetings of the school wellness committee to find out how you can make that happen. Follow the examples of **Sacramento START** and the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** and lead the way in ensuring that all afterschool programs are included and that policies are consistently enforced from the time school begins until your program ends. And if your district's wellness policy isn't strong or doesn't include afterschool, develop your own written wellness policy to govern your program and share it with your school sites.

- All 94 **San Francisco ExCEL** sites are already included in the District's Wellness Policy, which is being updated and proposes to cover the sale of food and drinks on campus up until 6 p.m. This will make it easier to ensure that unhealthy foods and drinks aren't sold on campus at any time by local vendors or by Parent/Teacher Associations or schools as fundraisers.

- *CalSERVES* developed its own afterschool wellness policy that is strong, easy to understand and followed on all its sites.
- *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.

**Step 3: Advocate for policies and practices that support students' health and well-being.**

Use the relationships you develop to advocate for the things you care about and that are essential to children's health. Don't overlook the power of students in partnering with you as you do this. Middle school and high school students participating in the *YMCA of Silicon Valley's 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. *Sacramento START* is part of Team Nutrition/Nutrition in the Classroom, and trains principals, academic leads and classroom teachers on the Healthy Behaviors exemplary practices. It makes a difference!

Work with principals and food services managers to make sure that the foods and beverages available on school sites and the marketing of those foods comply with state and federal law. Be sure that the food included in snacks that are funded through the USDA nutrition programs meet the required state and federal standards. If your district hasn't already taken advantage of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program's Meal (Supper) option, encourage it to do so. If you run into obstacles or delays, consider reaching out to other districts, other meal sponsors or private providers. The California AfterSchool Network's Meal page walks you through your options.<sup>95</sup>

Keep in mind that you may have more influence than you think when it comes to the choices in foods that will be provided to students. Ask principals and teachers to provide healthier alternatives to cupcakes, candy, pizzas and sodas in classroom celebrations and at school-wide events. Support your PTA in finding ways to ensure that fundraisers are healthy rather than selling candy, cookies and other more traditional offerings. And, although it may be very challenging, try to get schools to replace unhealthy drinks with water in vending machines, including those in faculty rooms.

More and more of the programs we've worked with are finding health champions in superintendents and principals, and an increasing number of schools are looking to these programs as leaders in improving school environments, forging positive policies and creating new support systems for students, faculty and staff. Make a commitment to find a way to do this as *San Francisco ExCEL* and *Sacramento START* have.

Follow *Project SHARE's* lead by keeping principals informed about the successes you're having, and they're likely to come on board as partners much more quickly. Once the principal saw the changes that were occurring with students and their families, he went from being a naysayer to actively promoting everything the program does.

**Keep in mind that you may have more influence than you think when it comes to the choices in foods that will be provided to students.**



Work with principals and Safe Routes to School program coordinators to make sure that, when appropriate, students in afterschool programs have the opportunity to walk or bike to school. The Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership has a program called *Fire Up Your Feet* and other resources to assist you with this.<sup>98</sup> If there are issues with safe routes to and from school, you can make a difference and meet a critical school need. **Woodcraft Rangers** championed student-led efforts and formed parent advocacy groups to create bike lanes in Huntington Park and teamed up with the school and the mayor of the city to have an ordinance passed.

**Don't overlook the importance of creating opportunities for students to experience healthy eating environments.**

**Step 4: Surround children with positive, consistent messages.** Work with schools to ensure that posters and other forms of advertising displays appear throughout your campuses and reflect only healthy choices.<sup>99</sup> *Harvest of the Month* offers a variety of posters depicting fresh fruits and vegetables, and many other organizations offer free posters as well.<sup>100</sup> Students relate well to those that feature well-known athletes, as the *Got Milk?* Series does. You may also want to have students in your program create posters themselves and have a few selected for placement in hallways and other venues.

Ask your principal to have posters prominently placed in the cafeteria, the front office, faculty lounges, classrooms and hallways. Encourage schools to allow students in your program to paint murals depicting healthy activities and positive eating habits. **LA's BEST** and **Woodcraft Rangers** have done this very effectively, and you can too!

Likewise, remove advertising and marketing that undermines these healthy messages, such as food-company-sponsored educational materials or cups bearing soft drink company logos. Involve students in identifying those images and messages that are inconsistent with the positive messages you are trying to convey, and encourage them to suggest replacement messages or to participate in filling those spaces. Think broadly about your program's environment. This involves looking beyond things like posters and signs to activities like fundraisers and materials that may detract from encouraging healthy choices.

Don't overlook the importance of creating opportunities for students to experience healthy eating environments. Working with IDEO, a global design firm, the San Francisco Unified School District developed a comprehensive strategic plan for serving school meals in environments that are designed to create a positive dining experience such as eating family style or letting students sit where they want. Focusing not just on what we eat but how we eat makes dining a much more positive social experience and actually encourages eating healthier foods. San Francisco ExCEL has applied this approach to their snack time to make it more appealing in a variety of ways. Placing water containers with fruit out during snack time and not serving directly from large boxes are a couple of examples.



**Step 5. Promote the joint use of space.** Shared space is increasingly common among schools and afterschool programs. This typically includes classrooms, indoor gyms, outdoor playing fields, cafeterias and kitchens and a designated workspace for site directors and staff. This shared use of resources can be both efficient and economical, and can help integrate your program more closely into the school community. If this is not yet the case for your program, offer to help design plans that will expand the joint use of facilities beyond school hours. Work with principals, custodians and cafeteria personnel to be certain that space is adequate during afterschool hours to accommodate all students and that the cafeteria provides pleasant surroundings that reflect the value of the social aspects of eating.

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 as *Paramount STAR* has. If space is available, suggest planting an in-ground garden. If not, suggest container gardening. Don't forget that parents and students have influence and can be important allies in advocating for positive changes. If there are challenges with the garden during the summer months, enlist the support of parents and community members to take care of it, as *Project SHARE* has.

### III. PROVIDE OFF-SITE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Students are well aware of their immediate environments. They know where the fast food restaurants are 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 live in food deserts and 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 during the academic year that can increase your students' physical activity and motivate them to improve their eating habits. Summer programs can offer opportunities for full-day excursions during the week. 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. By partnering with the YMCA and a local high school, thousands of students are now safe in the water and competent swimmers. They've had an experience they love, and acquired a life-long skill.
- ***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 relevant and real through community partnerships.** As part of your 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 — all of which are essential to meeting Common Core Standards. 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 of money to spend and be sure they take any discount coupons.



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!

- *Fitness for Life*, working closely with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, takes students on outings to small local farms and brings fresh fruits and vegetables back to their programs to use in Harvest of the Month activities.
- *Kids Campus and Paramount STAR* take students on visits to a local supermarket where they practice reading labels, identify the comparative costs of different products and meet with the store manager who gives them bags of healthy foods to take home to their families.
- *Fresno FRESH* partners with local grocery stores, which offer tours that emphasize the importance of shopping the store's perimeter and include a story time in the produce section that helps youngsters learn more about how fruits and vegetables are grown.

**Help students acquire a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves.**

**Step 3: Offer dining experiences at local restaurants.** Take kids out to an early dinner at a restaurant that serves healthy food! 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 media advisory two weeks ahead of the scheduled event and follow up with a call to the reporters who cover these kinds of assignments.<sup>102</sup> 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.



**Step 4. Capitalize on local facilities.** Work with community recreation centers and fitness clubs to explore ways to use their facilities, and with county or state parks to access their sites. Your students' families may never have used these parks, and after hearing their children's enthusiasm, may take their whole family. 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 provides financial assistance to low-income families to cover up to eighty percent of the cost of membership in YMCA facilities.
- *A World Fit For Kids!* offsets costs to local fitness club memberships for its staff and high school mentors.

**Step 5: 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.
- *LA's BEST* partners with the Lakers for a program-wide basketball day.
- *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 6: Don't overlook less obvious physical activity opportunities.**

Go beyond team sports to including opportunities during both the school year and summer 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.

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 (or county'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.

*Sacramento START* partners with local recreation centers to offer tennis lessons to students, and many programs, including *Woodcraft Rangers*, partner with local public golf courses to include their students in the First Tee program.

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 7: 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'* Big Bear 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.

### IV. PROMOTE COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community engagement comes in a variety of forms. One of the most important of these is community service. Begin by finding out if the school day already has community service projects 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.

**Community service is one of the most important ways to create opportunities for community engagement.**

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. Get kids and parents involved in these kinds of projects, and others like beautification projects on your school sites and making streets more walkable in your neighborhoods. California Project LEAN has developed a variety of resources that offer teens ways to work with their school community and the media.

- As an outstanding example, elementary students at *San Francisco ExCEL* are in charge of running weekly food pantries on their school sites, teaching them the value of serving others and making a difference in the lives of hundreds of people in their neighborhoods.
- *BCOE/Central Middle* provides service through its "I am Community" Club, with students making important contributions at the local hospital and sharing what they've learned with residents at a local retirement community.

**Step 1: Link community service with project-based learning.** 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 learning objectives that link what they are doing with self-reflection, self-discovery and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills and knowledge content.<sup>104</sup>

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.<sup>105</sup> 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.

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 ExCELS*'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 Cesar Chavez Club provided materials and training, and helped 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 your 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-a-thon 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 Cesar Chavez Walk, and joined Chavez family members, elected officials, celebrities and community members at the all-day event. Youngsters also raised \$5,000 to benefit the American Cancer Society, were part of the *Relay for Life Walk-a-thon* and developed relay teams that participated in the LA Marathon with the final miles completed by all of the students.
- *Woodcraft Rangers* students regularly participate in the *Donate For Life—Jump for Life* program.

As both these programs have, encourage your staff to participate as well.

**Health fairs bring people in your community together.**

**Step 3: Co-sponsor community 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. They're a lot of fun — and they can help you build long-term partnerships with community organizations.

You may want to start out by participating in an established health fair rather than beginning one yourself. Many local 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 online. 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.



Local 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 local health department can make Harvest of the Month and other materials available. Your county department of social services will provide information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program and called CalFresh in California). The Dairy Council of California also offers free resources<sup>106</sup> as do the American Heart Association and many others.

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.<sup>107</sup> 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 10,000 children and their families have participated in **CalSERVES'** Cesar Chavez Day health fair events which have been filmed and aired by Telemundo Television and attended by 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.
- Thousands of families join **LA's BEST** each year for their Health Festival at the Home Depot Center.
- **Fitness 4 Life** partners with the United Way of Santa Cruz's Go for Health! Campaign.

## V. CREATE STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

With the childhood obesity crisis on everyone's mind, there are all kinds of possibilities for you to collaborate in interesting and rewarding ways that result in long-term, authentic partnerships. 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.



## PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

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 Kaiser Permanente 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!

Begin by developing a list of potential partners. The easiest way to do this is to start with your local health department. The California Department of Public Health's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch funds local health departments in California to conduct nutrition education and promote physical activity for SNAP participants and other low-income Californians (known as SNAP-Ed). Many local health

departments, including those in a number of other states, subcontract or partner with local education agencies to improve the health of families through schools and afterschool programs. Their goals include improving healthy eating, decreasing consumption of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages, increasing physical activity and increasing access to healthy food among low income families. Their target population is the population you serve, and they can leverage the afterschool funding you have, while you can do the same thing. They can partner with afterschool/summer programs and your schools in a variety of ways.<sup>108</sup>

The First Five Commission or the school or district's wellness policy committee can also be of assistance. If your 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. To connect with your local health department's SNAP-Ed program, start with the County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) committee which brings many local partners together to address the local health department's SNAP-Ed goals—they would welcome you at the table! Getting to know the players and building relationships are great ways to start to create partnerships. Share your goals and what you have to offer.<sup>109</sup>

Local hospitals and medical centers, local health departments, rural health care districts, the Dairy Council of California, the University of California Cooperative Extension, the American Cancer Society, and medical and dental associations care greatly about improving the health of children and families. Many of these organizations have outstanding programs in health, nutrition and physical activity that are appropriate for elementary, middle and high school students.<sup>110</sup> Partner with them to provide the best possible resources to children and families in your program.

**Your community has a lot to offer, and it's up to you to take advantage of it.**

- **San Francisco ExCEL** partnered 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.
- **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.

- 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.
- **SERRF** supports its Go Far Run event and other activities with donations from local Mercy-affiliated hospitals, the Mercy Foundation and a local casino.
- Since 2003, *After-School All-Stars, LA* has been supported by El Pollo Loco, which provides food and serves over 30 special events and activities annually.
- **Sacramento START** received \$25,000 from a local 99 Cents Only store to support its Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers and receives discounts on the food it purchases for its cooking classes.
- **Fresno FRESH** worked with Save Mart and El Pollo Loco, both of which provided healthy food for special events and discount cards to family members.
- Like **THINK Together**, most programs partner with Home Depot or Lowe's to support the construction, planting and maintenance of their gardens.
- **LA's BEST** supports its local UC 4-H Cooperative Extension's "Happy Healthy Me" program with funding from Kaiser, Vons, FedEx and the American Chemistry Council.

**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, which will be discussed in Practice 6.

- Latino children in the **YMCA of Silicon Valley's** program wrote and starred in a series of public service announcements (PSAs) that were 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.
- Warner Brothers produced a high-quality PSA for **A World Fit for Kids!** that has been seen on NBC Sports and Hulu.
- Student-run TV shows were created by kids in **San Francisco ExCEL's** Cesar Chavez Service Clubs and aired on local cable television.

## VI. BE PROACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Become a champion for change! Take time to get to know members of your city council, school board and county 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 elected officials who 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 make budget decisions and determine policies that can impact afterschool programs in general and support your efforts at surrounding students with healthy support systems in specific.

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. Ways to do this are discussed in Chapter 6.

- 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.
- **LA'S BEST** has a long tradition of working closely with members of the state legislature, the Governor's Office, Congress and key federal departments, and has made a huge difference in changing statewide and national policies.
- **CalSERVES'** director is a statewide leader in engaging AmeriCorps members in afterschool, particularly in promoting healthy behaviors. She has worked with AmeriCorps leaders to increase federal funding in this area.
- **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.

- *Woodcraft Rangers* and *After-School All-Stars, LA* regularly use YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to keep students, staff, families and communities informed about the exciting activities and events their students are involved in.
- *CalSERVES* uses Facebook, Twitter, 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.
- *After-School All-Stars, LA* creates networks among potential advocates and supporters through Inspired Stars, a group 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 I Wanna Rock music event held at West Hollywood Key Club.

**Step 3: Help kids and families become champions for change.** Changing the environments in which kids live will go a long way toward helping them become healthier — and you, and they, 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 them to attend civic meetings and express their opinions.

As part of your nutrition education efforts, help students become aware of local and national 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. Have them send copies to local policy-makers.

- Older students in the *YMCA of Silicon Valley's* programs are members of the Healthy Youth Advocate Clubs. They lead activities with younger children; prepare presentations with families, schools, and communities including city councils; conduct photo voice activities on healthy living; and some clubs specialize in chronic diseases such as diabetes in the Latino community and how to prevent type 2 diabetes.

- *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. Surround children and young people with positive community influences and support systems, and lead the way in changing their lives for the better!





**INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #4:**

**Commit to Partnering with Families, Schools and Your Community**

The following indicators will help you establish a baseline and determine your progress in this practice area. Rubrics should be completed every two to 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.

|   |  | <b>INDICATORS</b> |  |  |  |  | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|---|--|-------------------|--|--|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Partnering with parents and families</b> |  |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 1   | Our leadership team and staff are committed to engaging schools, parents and guardians, and families and community members to support children and young people in our program.  |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 2   | We educate families about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.  |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 3   | We keep students and parents and guardians informed about upcoming health-related programs and community family events.  |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4   | We involve parents and guardians as contributors to nutrition and physical activity components of our program.   |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 5   | We provide families with information and resources that help them make healthy choices   |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6   | We include parents and families in events such as family nights, week-end excursions, culminating events, nutrition education classes and opportunities for physical activities. |                   |  |  |  |  |          |          |          |          |          |

*continued next page*



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

| INDICATORS                        |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Working with schools</b>       |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7                                 | Our site staff works closely with our school to provide nutrition education and physical activity support and expertise to our program.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8                                 | Our staff works closely with the school’s food service staff and/or dietitian.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9                                 | Our site staff actively participates in the implementation of our district’s wellness policy at the site level, and it includes the afterschool program.                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10                                | Our site directors serve on school wellness committees.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11                                | 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.                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Working with our community</b> |  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12                                | 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. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13                                | We utilize community resources to provide students with opportunities to learn about the importance of nutrition.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14                                | We utilize community resources to provide students with opportunities to learn about the importance of physical activity.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15                                | We regularly provide opportunities for students to be involved in off-site learning experiences that promote physical activity and sound nutrition practice.                                   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16                                | We regularly assess the impact our program is having on families, schools and our community.   |   |   |   |   |   |

**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



“Ensuring that children have enough healthy food to eat has become a high priority for us. We’re working closely with our families, schools and community partners to make this happen, and it’s making a real difference.”

– Rhonda Patterson, Sacramento START

### Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Create an environment that supports healthy eating habits
- 2 Encourage students to take advantage of school breakfast, lunch and summer meal programs
- 3 Participate in snack and supper programs
- 4 Provide families with more healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables
- 5 Keep families informed and engaged
- 6 Advocate for policies that make healthy low-cost food more available
- 7 Make food security a priority!



## STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY

### 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.<sup>111</sup> 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.<sup>112</sup>



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.<sup>113</sup> 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.<sup>114</sup> So does the snack your program offers, and the supper if you already have added it. But these still fall well below what kids need — 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 are more likely to 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.<sup>115</sup> They're likely to be more anxious, irritable, inattentive, aggressive or depressed.<sup>116</sup> And you would be, too!

Over time, unless something is done, more than a half 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.<sup>117</sup> 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.
- Encourage every student to take advantage of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, and Summer Meal Programs.
- Provide adequate, high quality snacks and/or suppers

- Work with local organizations to bring additional fruits and vegetables into your program and take them home to their families.
- Provide information to parents about ways to increase their access to more food through the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) — CalFresh in California and formerly known as the Food Stamp Program — and other resources.

**Create an environment that supports healthy eating habits.**

## **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.<sup>119</sup> 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: Create a healthy environment.** Surround students with positive messages that support healthy eating. Be intentional about everything, from influencing the choice of posters that appear in cafeterias, classrooms and the front office to including fresh fruits and vegetables in the snacks and suppers you provide to having water available to children and young people throughout the afternoon.

Display pictures of fruits and vegetables that expand their awareness of the variety that exists and introduces children and families to food they may not be familiar with. It will spark their interest and encourage them to try new things. And, it is likely to encourage children to talk with your staff and their peers about what they know and don't know and learn from them. Work with your principals to support your efforts by allowing you to have students display artwork and stories that support healthy eating in the hallways.

At the same time, be aware of exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages. While positive messages can support healthy eating, imagery, logos, and advertising that promotes unhealthy foods can undermine those messages. Research shows that signage and labeling affect children's food choices and that much of the food marketed to children in schools is unhealthy. Adopting a marketing policy that is in alignment with the nutrition requirements for the foods and beverages served in your program can impact the way children eat both in and out of school and after-school care.

Providing access to healthy foods is an important component of creating a healthy environment, and there are many ways to do it. For example, when you offer nutrition lessons, be sure you have real food available, not just pictures. It's important for them to be able to learn by doing and doing in this case involves all or most of their senses. For example, many kids have never seen pomegranates, and they're one of the most fascinating fruits. Giving them a chance to see the real



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thing, and touch, smell and taste it, matters — and it may inspire them to ask their parents to try new fruits as well.

**Step 2: Set policies that promote healthy eating.**<sup>120</sup> Be the example you'd like your staff to model, and encourage the behavior you'd like them to adopt by setting policies and promoting practices that support these. Provide healthy snacks at meetings, selecting from all food groups. Include fruits and vegetables, and replace soft drinks with water at trainings. 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.

**Be the example you'd like your staff to model.**

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. Put it in writing, hold a parent meeting, and 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: Strengthen your staff's awareness of child hunger.** 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. In California, information by county is readily available at the California Food Policy Advocates website.<sup>121</sup> And a variety of publications provide easily accessed information about child hunger and its impact.<sup>122</sup> Take advantage of these resources. 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. 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 Tribes 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 multi-dimensional 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.

## II. 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 living in families meeting income eligibility standards can qualify to receive free or reduced price meals. Share information about these programs with students, parents and guardians, and teachers. For all too many children and young people, these meals, and the snacks and/or meals provided during afterschool, are the primary source of healthy food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, that they will have on any given day.





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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). 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 information and a toll-free message line to answer your questions.<sup>124</sup>

**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/CalFresh 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/CalFresh 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. 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 Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) match that is updated monthly. They are also 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. According to California Food



Policy Advocates (CFPA), a little over one million low-income students participated in school breakfast in California in the 2010–11 school year. While that’s a slight increase over the prior year, only thirty percent of California’s low-income students participate — and many of these students are too hungry to learn. CFPA’s BreakfastFirst web site has extensive information on the benefits of breakfast, effective breakfast programs and funding resources—including grants from CDE and Action for Healthy Kids.<sup>126</sup>

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 — and so have programs by working closely with school districts. For example, *Sacramento START* began a breakfast program that is now open to the entire school population!

**The supper program offers a great way to provide your students with a healthy meal that includes fruits and vegetables.**

### III. PARTICIPATE IN SNACK AND SUPPER PROGRAMS

Children are hungry after school. Younger students may not have eaten since 11:30 and most lunch periods are now limited to 20 minutes. It’s very likely that your program already provides a snack paid for by 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).<sup>127</sup> Keep in mind that in California these snacks must meet both USDA standards and state standards.<sup>128</sup> Work with the cafeteria manager to ensure that this is happening and that foods are fresh and healthy. Be sure that foods are prepared in ways that meet the taste preferences of diverse student populations and that there is a high level of both quality and variety with all food groups (dairy, whole grains, fruits and vegetables) served each week.

**Step 1: Improve the quality of snacks.** Unless you contract with an outside vendor, which many programs do, 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. They’re entitled to the best options possible. There are many helpful resources that offer ideas for healthy snacks in afterschool programs.<sup>129</sup>



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When improvement in the snacks you offer is needed, ask if you can go over the alternatives with the food services manager 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. Even a small bag of carrots or a few apple slices can make a difference in a child's life!

- **Sacramento START** has its older students survey their younger peers about what they like and don't like about the food they receive, and has them make recommendations for changes to food services managers. Most of these recommendations have been implemented.
- **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 *Rethink Your Drink/Soda Free Summer Campaign*.
- **Fresno FRESH** and **Woodcraft Rangers** work closely with food service managers to supplement afternoon snacks with additional fruits and vegetables when they're available.
- Like most programs, snacks provided at **CalSERVES'** sites are paid for by the district through the National School Lunch Program. The difference is that the program, not the district, orders them and is reimbursed up to the maximum amount allowed per child.
- 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) and receives federal reimbursements.

**Step 2: Participate in the federally-funded Afterschool Meal Program.** The Child and Adult Care Food Program's Meal (or Supper) option offers a great way to provide your students with a healthy meal that includes fruits and vegetables. If your program is located in a low-income area where fifty percent or more of the students in the elementary, middle or high school qualify for free or reduced-price school meals, no information on children's individual household income is required.<sup>130</sup> To participate, your afterschool program must:

1. Be operated by a school, private nonprofit or for-profit, or local government agency
2. Offer educational or enrichment activities, and
3. Meet state and local health and safety standards.

As long as your program meets these requirements and is willing to comply with the rules, it can receive funding through a reimbursement process for each meal that is served. This means that as your program grows, funding increases.

The Meal program is open to students 18 and younger and is available to feed children in programs that operate after school, on weekends and school holidays during the regular school year. It can also be included at year-round schools when children are in session, even if they are off-track. And, during the summer, your program may be eligible to participate in the federally reimbursed Summer Nutrition Programs.<sup>131</sup>

The California AfterSchool Network's (CAN) Meal Page has extensive resources to help you implement the Meal program including how to apply to serve meals, options on serving meals, how to approach your food service director, webinars, fact sheets, and a database that includes school districts and their sponsors that serve meals.<sup>132</sup>

Work with your school district to take advantage of this opportunity and provide meals, and with the food service managers to arrange for them to be prepared on-site and served hot or cold to students. Some will be agreeable and make this happen. If your district decides not to participate in the program, look elsewhere! Other organizations can serve as your meal sponsor, or you can become your own sponsor and use a vendor. Check out the CAN Meal Page for guidance!

#### IV. PROVIDE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WITH MORE HEALTHY FOODS, INCLUDING FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

While there's no doubt that the snacks and meals 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 may not be 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 and suppers with additional fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods from food banks, food pantries or other local sources such as the California and National Farm to School Program,<sup>133</sup> 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 or meals will be their last food of the day.

Work with your school food service manager to arrange for the regular delivery and storage of these 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 very little cost. They've made thousands of tons of fresh fruits and vegetables available to children and their families.





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- **Fitness 4 Life** supports its organic, free, lunchtime farmers' market with the school's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grant and partners with the Farm to School Program,<sup>134</sup> the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Alba Farms and Second Harvest Food Bank of Watsonville 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.

**Poverty severely limits choices - and you can expand them!**

### **Step 2: Don't overlook the value of entering into school or district funding partnerships.**

CDPH's Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) Branch provides SNAP-Ed funding to local health departments to conduct nutrition education and promote physical activity for SNAP participants and similar low-income families. Many local health departments partner or

subcontract with local education agencies to improve the health of families through school and afterschool programs. Talk with your local health department, county office of education or school district to determine whether any funding is available to promote and support your work.

**Step 3: 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.<sup>136</sup>

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, with two acres used year-round, as well as individual gardens at each of its sites. Its Garden Academy and Master Gardeners work with students and make sure they and their families receive fresh produce throughout the year.
- **CalSERVES** worked with schools to partner in growing and composting their gardens through garden grants that were awarded by the California Department of Education's Nutrition Services Division, and has been able to secure donations for seeds and other small purchases.
- **Sacramento START** includes 12-week UC Cooperative Extension sessions in nutrition and has junior master gardeners that work with children to ensure the greatest possible produce yields, increasing the amount of food available to them and to their families.
- **Fresno FRESH** takes care of their gardens by giving students at every grade level responsibility for maintaining designated areas.
- **BCOE/Central Middle** works with the Butte County Farm Bureau and University of California Cooperative Extension to plant citrus trees and select appropriate fruits and vegetables for its garden. Lineman College took over responsibility for putting the irrigation system in, and Wal-Mart and Home Depot provided the materials, equipment and seeds.

## V. 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/CalFresh 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.

The bad news is that according to USDA, California has the worst rate of SNAP/CalFresh participation among working people in the country. In 2010, just thirty-nine percent of eligible working households in California participated in SNAP/CalFresh.<sup>137</sup> The good news is that SNAP/CalFresh benefits can make a huge difference in the lives of the children and families your program serves — if they take advantage of it!

**Step 1: Help families access critical resources.** It's more important than ever for parents and guardians of students in your program to be sure they're aware of SNAP/CalFresh and its benefits. It's up to you and your staff to make this information readily available. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) maintains an informative CalFresh web site with applications translated into fifteen languages, frequently asked questions and information for non-citizens.<sup>138</sup> CDSS also has a list of community-based organizations including food banks that provide SNAP/CalFresh outreach and can help your program get the word out!<sup>139</sup>



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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 families with children up to five years of age who are at nutritional risk, it also includes a major focus on nutrition and health education.<sup>140</sup> The more low-income families become familiar with these resources, the more likely they are to access them. If members of your staff are eligible for SNAP/CalFresh, WIC and other benefits, consider taking them on tours of community-based organizations to increase their awareness of what services may be available, including free clinics and food banks.

- **Kids Campus** spends 30 minutes interviewing the parents of each student who will be attending the program, creating a database that includes everything from family income to services already accessed to challenges families are facing, and tailors the support it provides based on these profiles.
- **Sacramento START** includes materials from the *Eat Right When the Money's Tight, Rethink Your Drink* campaigns and MyPlate in student registration packets and makes them available to parents at family nights and other special events and in resource centers where the information can be picked up at the end of the day.
- The leader of **SERFF's** Healthy Behaviors Learning Center's consortium serves as Chair of the Tehama County Health Partnership Committee and provides invaluable information about how to navigate through the challenges of working with 21 schools in 18 rural districts.
- **A World Fit For Kids!** created a snack shack and has students in cooking classes provide parents and family members with samples of healthy snacks, recipes and ingredients from the recipes for them to take home.
- **ISS** keeps its Resource Boards up to date each month and works closely with the UC Cooperative Extension Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to provide parents with additional information and classes designed to improve their eating habits.
- **BCOE/Central Middle** uses Migrant Education funding to support its summer food program to ensure that children and their families have year-round support available.

### **Step 2: Support enrollment in the Affordable Care Act and explore the possibility of working with local non-profit hospitals.**

It's very likely that a huge number of the families of students in your program qualify for subsidies under either the Affordable Care Act (ACA), commonly referred to as Obamacare, or MediCal (Medicaid in other states). It's critical that they enroll as soon as possible if they haven't already done so. You and your staff can help facilitate this process by providing information and referring parents and family members to appropriate information and enrollment sources.<sup>141</sup>

By taking advantage of free or low-cost health insurance, families benefit in two key ways: they have access to medical care, including prevention, and the possible cost savings may free up some of their income for other things including greater quantities of healthier food and

beverages. In many cases, just knowing that their children may be at risk of type 2 diabetes or other health-related issues may be enough to motivate them to change their eating habits and increase their physical activity levels.

In addition, nonprofit hospitals must meet community benefit standards that often include financial assistance for low-income patients, some of whom may be members of the families of students enrolled in your programs. In some cases, they may also contribute to community organizations such as yours. The Affordable Care Act requires hospitals to conduct a community health needs assessment and adopt an implementation strategy. Contact your local hospitals to learn more about this and whether there are opportunities for partnerships to improve the health of the children and families you serve.



**Step 3: 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 have their part-time staff or mentors who themselves receive SNAP/CalFresh benefits serve as resources for families. 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/CalFresh 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 classes, and consider including flyers in student registration packages.

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.



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- 1) Communicating exclusively in writing 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.



- Woodcraft Rangers created a simple 4x6 foot board with pockets for parent information that includes how to apply for SNAP/CalFresh, 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 4: Host frequent 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.

Invite your principal and partners in nutrition education and food distribution to participate. Provide a variety of healthy food and send recipes—and ingredients if you can get them donated from local supermarkets, farmers markets or food banks—home with families at the end of the event. Use the opportunity to expose parents to resources in their neighborhoods that they may not be familiar with and can take advantage of to strengthen their food security in a low-cost, effective way.



- 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 connection nights that emphasize both nutrition and physical activity. These nights encourage families to work as a team through fun and engaging activities that inspire developing a healthy, active life together.

**Step 5: Highlight students' progress.** 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 lifesaving. He or she 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.

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.



## STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY

- The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* sends healthy recipes home with students in their cooking and nutrition education classes and 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.
- *LA's BEST*, *Woodcraft Rangers* and *Fresno FRESH* have created their own recipe books and provide copies to all of the youngsters and their parents. As a result, more families are using healthy ingredients and using healthier preparation methods, and children are eating healthier 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.

### VI. ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT MAKE HEALTHIER, LOW-COST ALTERNATIVES MORE AVAILABLE

Far too many low-income families don't have the kinds of access to supermarkets that more affluent families take for granted. In many cases, like those whose kids attend the *SERFF* program, the closest supermarket may be six or seven miles away, or more, from their homes. And, living in a rural environment isn't the only challenge. In inner city food deserts, transportation is a compounding problem, as is the time it may take to get from one location to another or the unreliability of cars or the unavailability of public transportation. Many families work two or three jobs to make ends meet, and the hours they're free to shop for groceries may be when supermarkets aren't open.

Access is a serious issue, and so also is cost. Ironically, students who attend *Fresno FRESH* live in California's Central Valley where a significant amount of the fruits and vegetables that feed millions of Americans and residents of other countries are grown, and yet they can't afford to buy these themselves. The same is true for those in Tehama, where there are more cattle than people, and yet many families in *SERFF* can't afford high quality, high protein beef. Helping children and young people improve their eating habits when their families don't have easy access to affordable healthy foods isn't easy — and your program can make a difference!

**Step 1: Promote changes in corner markets and convenience stores.** In rural areas and inner cities, corner markets and convenience stores are disproportionately located in low-income neighborhoods and often close to schools. Although many have at least some healthy offerings, most of what is available and attractive to students and their families is not. Although you can't change this as much as you might like, you can make a difference by talking with managers about the placement of foods and the inclusion of some fresh fruits and vegetables. Just as 99 Cent Only stores now offer a greater quantity and healthier selection, it's important for others to follow suit. Be sure to let them know that you will refer families to their stores in return for positive changes they make.

**Step 2: Work to change vendor policies.** In many areas, vendors selling ice cream, chips, candy and other unhealthy 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.

- 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.

**Step 3: Help families make healthier choices about where they eat.** Just as corner markets are prevalent in high poverty communities, so are fast food restaurants. Although it's a step in the right direction for many of these businesses to post the calorie content and to offer more salads and some fruits, there are still huge issues. For example, a salad with Ranch dressing may actually be higher in calories than a double cheese burger. The sodium in most meals exceeds the total amount children and young people should have for the entire day. And, a bottle of water is likely to cost more than a supersized soda.

Helping families make healthier decisions often means encouraging them to eat at home, to prepare meals in more nutritious ways and to fill half of their plates with fruits and vegetables. This is a tall order for many families, but one your program can influence by providing recipes and sending food home with students. It also can make a real difference if you encourage them to participate in nutrition education workshops and provide them with resources such as *Eat Right When the Money's Tight*.

## V. 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 and meals 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/CalFresh 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!



## STRENGTHEN FOOD SECURITY

### 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 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Program Environment</b>                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 1  | Our program serves healthy snacks   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 2  | We encourage all students to participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 3  | Our program participates in the federally funded meal (supper) program.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 4  | Foods offered in our program are healthful and comply with state and federal laws and requirements for schools.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 5  | Our staff creates and maintains an environment that is free from marketing of products that do not align with our goal to create a healthy program.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 6  | Students have opportunities to take fresh vegetables and fruits home.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7  | Our leadership team, staff and partners understand what food security means, and our staff is knowledgeable about the ways in which food insecurity negatively impacts children and young people's lives and their risk of obesity. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | Our staff is familiar with the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, SNAP/CalFresh, the WIC Program and other programs that provide food resources to low-income families.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | Our staff is knowledgeable about local food resources such as food banks, pantries and farmers' markets.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10   | We work with students to help them overcome barriers that may discourage them from participating in the school breakfast and lunch programs.  |   |   |   |   |   |

*continued next page*

**INDICATORS FOR PRACTICE #5: Strengthen Food Security continued**

| INDICATORS  |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Staff Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills continued</b>                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11  | 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.       |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Partnerships with Schools, Parents and Community-Based Organizations</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12  | We work with our school district’s food service staff (or our snack/meal sponsor) to improve the quality, quantity and variety of snacks/suppers for students in our program. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13  | We have a system in place to regularly inform parents and guardians about the availability of federal food assistance programs they may be eligible for.                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14  | We routinely make information about food sources available to families of children enrolled in our program.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15  | We use a variety of approaches to educate parents about the importance of good nutrition.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 16  | We regularly hold special events that include healthy meals, which include fruits and vegetables, for children, young people and their families.                              |   |   |   |   |   |
| 17  | We keep parents informed about the progress their children are making in choosing healthy foods.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 18  | We support children and families’ enrollment in health insurance through the Affordable Care Act and Medi-Cal.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 19  | We work with local organizations to provide additional fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods to our students and their families.                                      |   |   |   |   |   |
| 20  | We work to bring about policy changes in our community that increase access to healthy foods for children and families.   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 21  | We regularly assess the impact our program is having on the food security of our students and their families.   |   |   |   |   |   |

**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 Haughey, Vice President,  
YMCA of Silicon Valley

#### Step-by-step to success...

- 1 Intrigue funders, don’t just inform them
- 2 Build a balanced, diversified and sustainable funding base
- 3 Focus on the impact you’ve had and are capable of having
- 4 Summarize your findings in an executive summary
- 5 Find a champion and develop a guiding team
- 6 Spread the word and co-create the future



### PRACTICE #6:

## Secure Adequate and Sustainable Funding

No matter where your program is in 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 Practice will take a hard look at how to go about ensuring its long-term financial vitality and viability.

Securing adequate, sustainable funding 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.

### I. INTRIGUE FUNDERS, DON'T JUST INFORM THEM

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 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.

**Tell folks about the difference your program is making and they'll want to learn more.**

**Step 1: 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, your program 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, local health departments and private foundations to invest in afterschool programs.<sup>142</sup> Make your program one of those they choose. Think differently, and you'll position your program to stand out from the competition!

**Step 2: 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!

## II. BUILD A BALANCED, DIVERSIFIED AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING BASE

Take time to determine the total amount of revenue you already have at your disposal and the amount you'll need to accomplish your goals and ensure that your program achieves a high level of quality that has a positive and lasting impact on students, their families and your community!

Keep in mind that funding that's well-balanced and diversified is sustainable. Set your sights on securing revenue from a variety of public and private 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.





## ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

### Don't overlook the value of in-kind donations.

**Step 1: Identify potential funding sources.** Take advantage of every opportunity to secure state, federal and local funding. Follow the lead of the Healthy Behaviors programs we've worked with. Over the last eight years, they've brought in more than \$35 million in funding to support their efforts in changing children's eating habits, increasing their physical activity and improving their food security. They've done this by building diverse portfolios that include a combination of large state and federal grants, and investments from foundations, city and county governments, local school districts and health departments, and corporations and small businesses. Regularly check in with the Finance Project web site to see what new opportunities this outstanding organization may be recommending.<sup>143</sup>

- The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* has received almost \$8 million over the last six years through a combination of funding from the Centers for Disease Control, a Carol M. White PEP Grant, the Wal-Mart Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and reimbursements from the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Option.
- Although *Kids Campus* is a single-site program, it has secured more than \$300,000 in foundation funding just in the past year.
- *Sacramento START* has brought in more than \$500,000 to support its healthy behaviors efforts over the last several years.

Don't overlook the value of in-kind donations. Although they won't support your operating costs, they will provide important opportunities for students that otherwise could be very expensive or simply unaffordable.

- In addition to its state and federal funding, *CalSERVES* has generated revenue and in-kind donations from several businesses, including Costco, Target, Wal-Mart and Starbucks, which provide gift cards and free materials.
- *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.
- Many programs, including *Sacramento START*, have received hundreds of free tickets to sports events for children and their families.

**Step 2: Partner with school districts.** Investing in your program at the local level is fiscally prudent, politically attractive and socially responsible. By leveraging their investments, school districts can realize a return on their money that often exceeds the cost of doing business in other ways.<sup>144</sup>

The short-term value is in revenue generation and cost savings. The long-term value is in increasing the number of children and young people who do better in school and become healthy, productive adults and contributing members of their communities. In combination, these are powerful incentives for funding your program. Use these arguments to make your case.

- ***A World Fit For Kids!*** partnered with the Los Angeles County Office of Education to provide training to more than 5,000 high school students in its nationally-acclaimed approaches to increasing and improving physical activity.
- ***Sacramento START*** and ***Paramount STAR*** are administered by their cities and have exceptionally positive partnerships with the school districts they serve, securing millions of dollars in annual funding for their programs.

In California, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) provides an exceptional opportunity to work with school districts to secure funding for your program. Eight funding priorities have been established, six of which are likely to already be addressed by your program and will be strengthened as you develop the practices in this Guide. These include: school climate, pupil achievement, pupil engagement, parental involvement, pupil subject area outcomes and common core implementation.<sup>145</sup>

To implement LCFF funding, school districts must create a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for three years beginning SFY 2014–15 and update it annually. Each school district must engage parents, educators, employees and the community to establish their plans for meeting the priorities identified above. The plans must describe the school district's overall vision for students, annual goals and specific actions the district will take to achieve the vision and goals. They must also demonstrate how the district's budget will help achieve the goals, and assess each year how well the strategies in the plan were able to improve outcomes.

It's important to be part of this process. Funds can be used to strengthen program quality, enable you to serve more students and/or extend your program into the summer months to address summer learning loss and summer weight gain as well as reduce staff turnover.<sup>146</sup> This is especially important if your program doesn't have state or federal supplemental funding that can be used in the summer. The return on the investment for school districts is estimated at \$9–\$13 for every dollar.

**Step 3: Draw on local health department funding.** During the years that the *Network for a Healthy California* (now Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention [NEOP] Branch) provided direct support to local public entities to conduct nutrition education and promote physical activity for SNAP/food stamp eligible and low-income Californians through its Local Incentive Award (LIA) Program, it funded local education agencies that provide nutrition and physical education in order to enhance existing efforts. Several Healthy Behaviors programs received support through that channel.

Under changes in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the NEOP Branch shifted a large proportion of its funding to local health departments (LHDs). As this happened, many school districts and afterschool programs lost funding, but there are important opportunities to re-engage.



## ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

New funding allocations include three priority areas: 1) increased access to and consumption of healthy foods; 2) decreased consumption of less healthy foods and beverages, and increased consumption of water; and 3) increased physical activity opportunities throughout the day. If fifty percent or more of your school population is participating in the free and reduced price lunch program, the school site is considered to have an eligible target population.

Although LHDs are not required to partner with schools/afterschool programs, it's clear that your program can provide them access to their target populations and provide a platform for meeting their priorities. The Center for Collaborative Solutions (which is responsible for the Healthy Behaviors Initiative under SNAP-Ed or NEOP funding) has been and will continue to be involved in sharing with LHDs about why working with afterschool/summer programs is important as part of a school-based strategy with examples from the Healthy Behaviors Learning Center programs and the changes they've made to address childhood obesity. (For more information about how and why to partner under SNAP-Ed with your local health department, visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/neop> and review the *Afterschool Guide to the SNAP-Ed Program* prepared by the Center for Collaborative Solutions.)

Whether you are already doing something positive in nutrition education, physical activity and food security or are interested in increasing your ability to address childhood obesity, there are opportunities now to connect with your local health department's work to address the obesity epidemic. Work that you can do together will help build your relationship as well as start down a mutually beneficial path.

You may compete for a contract or partner with your local health department in order to be the recipient of LHD programmatic support, such as training or materials. *Sacramento START* was able to secure \$100,000 a year for three years in LHD funding through a partnership with the Health Education Council, and *Fitness for Life* and *Mt. Diablo CARES* received funding through direct grants (\$60,000 and \$88,000 respectively).

**Step 4: Develop strong relationships with city and county governments.** Cities sometimes have specific allocations that may be available through their general fund or special local taxes or through money that becomes available through cable television and other excess profit resources. Counties have used both general and designated funding streams to invest, as have rural healthcare districts, and federal stimulus dollars also have been an important source. A more comprehensive list of potential resources is provided in the Resources section of this Guide and will help you get started.

**Step 5: Apply for private foundation grant funding.** Although most grants are typically limited to one to three years in duration, they are an important part of your portfolio and critical in the process of moving toward balanced, diversified and sustainable funding. Many of the programs we've worked with have received hundreds of thousands of dollars from these sources. To obtain a list of potential funders, contact the Healthy Behaviors Learning Centers, and they'll be more than willing to share their information with you.

### III. DETERMINE THE FINANCIAL IMPACT YOU'VE ALREADY HAD IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Your program isn't the answer to all the problems that contribute to poverty, or to poor eating habits, sedentary lifestyles and food insecurity, 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 one thousand percent or more. 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.

The most convincing case you can make to potential funders is that your program has already had a huge impact on your community. Over the years it's been in existence, it is very likely that it's brought millions of dollars into high poverty neighborhoods, supported the goals of school districts and local governments, generated significant cost savings and improved the lives of thousands of children and their families. Very few other organizations have as comprehensive an impact or as wide a reach. This matters a lot, and it's up to you to make the case.



**Step 1: Calculate the dollar amount of the revenue you've generated since your program began.** 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.

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 your program has received 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers funding at ten sites for five years, this is likely to amount to as much as \$5 million or more. If your program is located in California and you've been awarded ongoing After School Education and Safety (ASES) grants, the figure has probably increased by \$5 to \$10 million, depending on whether it supports elementary or middle school programs. Add any private foundation, city, county or other monies you've received, and the bottom line may well be above \$15 million.



## ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

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 twenty, that's a four hundred 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.

**Identify the cost savings to school districts and to your city.**

- Over a ten-year period, *Club Y.E.S.* 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 — eighty percent of whom lived below the federal poverty level.
- The *YMCA of Silicon Valley* has increased program services from ten afterschool sites to fifty-six and has a positive impact on the lives of more than 5,700 children and young people every day.

**Step 3: Identify the cost savings to school districts.** 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 significantly.

Attendance during the school day increases. Disciplinary actions are reduced, and grade retention drops.<sup>150</sup> 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.<sup>151</sup>

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 regular access to healthy 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.<sup>152</sup> 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 4: Determine 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. It increases stress in families which affects their health, and it reduces the money available to them, increasing food insecurity.

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

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 can 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



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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 \$50 million in childcare expenses over the last ten years, making it possible for thousands of low-income parents to find work and stay in their jobs.
- Over a three-year period, the **YMCA of Silicon Valley** has saved more than \$76 million in childcare-related costs for 5,000 families.
- **LA's BEST** typically saves as much as \$58 million each year for 20,000 families.

**Step 5: Don't overlook the savings you provide to your county.**<sup>153</sup> The statistics of childhood obesity are alarming – obesity rates have tripled since the 1970s, and children now have medical problems that used to be adult-only problems.<sup>154</sup> Poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles cause serious health problems and lead to social and psychological problems.<sup>155</sup> If this 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.<sup>156</sup>

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-related hospital costs for children and youth almost doubled between 2001 and 2005.<sup>157</sup>

The additional medical costs to our society for obesity in 2008 are estimated at \$147 billion — and increasing.<sup>158</sup> In California alone, the total cost for health care and lost productivity attributable to physical inactivity, obesity and overweight reached over \$41 billion in 2006.<sup>159</sup> By adopting the practices in this Guide, your program can make an even greater difference in reversing this trend.

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.<sup>160</sup> 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 local 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 cost 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 between \$50,000 and \$250,000 — or 40 to 200 times higher than what it costs for the same child or young person to attend your program for a year.<sup>161</sup> 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!

**Step 6: Align your interests with the business and foundation communities.** Among the most serious concerns expressed by business leaders, three stand out — high rates of employee absenteeism, low levels of workplace productivity, and the quality of the future workforce. The good news is that your program is making a difference in all of these areas.

Parents of students attending afterschool programs miss fewer days of work and are more productive when they're working.<sup>162</sup> 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.

**Students in your program are learning to make better choices, solve problems and more effectively become more successful in school and focus more on their future.**



### IV. 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. It's very different from a newsletter or an annual report. 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 had and is having. Written well, it will become a boiler plate for all of your fund development and grant writing.

**An executive summary doesn't describe what your program does - it powerfully and succinctly conveys the impact it's had and is having.**

**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 from the executive summaries that have been used by 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-eight percent of the parents of children in our program report that they are more productive at work during the afternoon hours. – *Paramount STAR*
- Since our program began, students are making better choices about their eating habits and are more physically active, and our communities are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. – *SERFF*

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, county health departments and local collaboratives, 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.

## V. 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.



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- 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. Point out the preponderance of fast food restaurants and convenience markets and the scarcity of supermarkets if these are characteristics of the neighborhood. Discuss the issue of the lack of safe routes to school and the dangers in local parks if these are relevant.

Prepare your staff members and students 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. 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.

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.



**Step 3: 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. It's up to you to do the research. Visit foundation websites to determine what their funding cycles are and take advantage of timing that may work in your favor.

## VI. SPREAD THE WORD AND REAP THE BENEFITS!

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 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.

**Step 1: Create a powerful, user-friendly website.** If you don't already have a great website, this is the first thing you should make happen. Almost everything else will depend upon it! Before potential funders are likely to contact you directly, they'll almost undoubtedly go to your website. If it's not up to their standards, it can be all over for you. If it is, it can inspire them to learn more.

Keep your website up to date. Add new content in ways that are exciting and intriguing to visitors. Post pictures and videos. Smart phones make this easy. Feature positive changes in the lives of children, families and the communities you work with, and identify partners you collaborate with. Highlight awards you've received and recognition you've earned. Provide links to research, events and funding opportunities that you've taken advantage of in the past, and that might be of interest to others. Make your website the go-to place!

**Step 2: Expand awareness of your program through newspapers, radio and television.** 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—and follow up afterwards. 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.
- **LA's BEST** is often featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and network television, and frequently receives national media attention for its work in helping children and their families succeed. Its annual Family Brunch features many local Hollywood stars, including Academy Award winners, and this year will be hosted by a KTLA news anchor and honor Nickelodeon for its long-time support.
- **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.



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- *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.

**Step 3: Use social media wisely to expand your reach.** It's important to use social media – and to be smart about how you do it. Not all platforms are equal when it comes to connecting with potential funders and keeping them informed about the impact your program is having. LinkedIn is great for doing this and should be on your priority list if it isn't already, both for yourself and for your organization.<sup>164</sup>

Most of the program directors and leadership team members we've worked with are on LinkedIn and so are their organizations. In addition to connecting with individuals who may be in a position to support their efforts, they also join other organizations to stay out front on what's happening in their fields and send the message that they are committed to continual quality improvement both individually and in their programs.

Facebook can be very beneficial, especially if you use it to connect with state, federal and local elected officials, community leaders, members of your collaborations or those you would like to know more about what you do and the impact your program is having — as long as you keep your posts professional and focused in ways that support your vision and work. Remember that Facebook remains attractive for folks who are in their 30s and older, but less so for those who are younger.

Google Plus, with 343 million users, is likely to be a much better choice for your organization. By using its communities and hashtags, you can draw people who have expressed interest in your field or want to learn more about what you do. Unlike all other sites, everything is indexed by their search engine, helping boot traffic to your website.

YouTube is a favorite with many of the programs we've worked with. As a medium, it offers a way to highlight what staff, children and their families are doing in your program in short video productions. Be sure you have photo releases before you post them. If they go viral, it's a huge bonus!

Instagram is a picture-sharing site that is used more and more frequently. It's great for sharing your program's culture and the accomplishments of your staff and students, and providing an inside view of the behind the scenes things that are going on that you would like to make public. If you use this site, don't forget to take advantage of user-generated content and the push

tool to other platforms including Facebook.<sup>165</sup> Be sure to keep in mind who your audience is and stay focused on the messages you want to deliver.

- *CalSERVES, LA's BEST* and *After School All-Stars, LA* regularly use YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to keep their programs out front and in people's awareness, and it's worth looking at their postings as examples of what works.

**Step 4: Present at conferences – and give your staff the opportunity to attend!** It's more important than you might think, and a better monetary investment than you might imagine, to present at national, regional and local conferences. Besides the content of what you say being informative, and hopefully inspirational, what you say will link you with more programs (and possibly potential funders) than you are likely to reach personally in other ways.

- *A World Fit For Kids!, Mt. Diablo CARES* and *After School All-Stars, LA* have led extremely well-received workshops on healthy behaviors at numerous conferences across the country with hundreds of participants attending.
- The director of *Kids Campus* recently presented at a Center for Collaborative Solutions strand at the BOOST conference and frequently speaks at local meetings and other venues.

Make a commitment to include your staff in conferences at all levels if at all possible. It will go a long way toward letting them know that they are part of something much bigger than what they doing in your program or at their sites, re-ignite their passion and provide you with an opportunity to spread the word on the wonderful work you're doing.

**Step 5: Write papers and send information for publication in national and regional journals.** If you have connections with organizations that publish articles, that's great! If not, start to make them. It will have the immediate benefit of providing you with more information about what's happening in your field, and it will start to position you for greater involvement including the potential for writing articles for them. Don't underestimate the power of publication! It enables you to reach a much larger audience, strengthen your credibility as an organization and connect with funders who are also readers.

Short of this, but still extremely valuable, is making a practice of sending updates on your program and its progress to organizations that regularly publish new insights and information through their newsletters, e-mail blasts and other channels. If they reprint them, great! If not, keep trying. It's worth the time and effort.

**Step 6: Set your sights on success and make it happen!** Most of the programs we've worked with have not only done incredible things, they've achieved numerous awards for their work. It's important for you to do your best to do this, too. It acknowledges the work you have done, rewards your efforts and broadens your recognition. It supports your credibility, advances your interests and strengthens your commitment. And, it attracts funders. Most funders, whether public or private, want to invest in what works. Whether the awards are local, state-wide or national, they make a difference!



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- Several Healthy Behaviors Programs, including *CalSERVES*, have partnered with their schools to win the California School Boards Association's Golden Bell award for outstanding achievement.
- *San Francisco ExCEL's* Learning Center was honored with the Gold Status for School Wellness by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.
- *A World Fit For Kids!* received the national Award for Promoting Physical Activity, and its CEO was recognized with the California AfterSchool Network's High School Innovator Award for her work in promoting physical activity and nutrition.
- *Mt. Diablo CARES* earned the League of California After School Providers award for Outstanding Intergovernmental Partnerships.
- One of *Sacramento START's* Learning Center schools was recognized as one of three of America's top Community Schools.

Although it may take a while to get to this level, make a commitment to doing the very best you can. Implement the practices in this Guide, talk with and learn from programs that have achieved a high level of success and make a commitment to co-create the future! Your hard work will pay off for children and their families and your community and ultimately provide you with the funding you need to continually strengthen the quality and secure the sustainability of your efforts!



**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 two or 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.

| <b>INDICATORS</b>   |   | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Generating Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Funding</b> |   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 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 an effective Executive Summary.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 4   | We have a champion and a guiding team to support fund development efforts   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 5   | We have developed strong relationships with public officials and community leaders.   |          |          |          |          |          |
| 6   | We are successful in convincing public officials and community leaders of the value of investing in our program.                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| 7   | We have secured adequate state, federal and local funding to support our program over time.   |          |          |          |          |          |

*continued next page*



## ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

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

| INDICATORS   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Generating Balanced, Diversified and Sustainable Funding</b>        |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 8  | We have developed good working relationships with public agencies, including school districts and local health departments, in our area.  |   |   |   |   |   |
| 9  | We use print, television and social media to inform and attract potential funders   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10   | 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.              |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Securing Funding for Nutrition and Physical Activity Components</b> |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 11   | We are clear about the importance of combating childhood obesity and take advantage of the financial opportunities available to support this effort.                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| 12   | 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.                          |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13   | We have a system in place to learn about private foundation grants that are available to support our efforts in strengthening the health and well-being of students in our program. |   |   |   |   |   |
| 14   | We receive adequate in-kind donations and other support to sustain and strengthen the nutrition and physical activity components in our program.                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15   | We have secured grants to support our work in nutrition and physical activity and are meeting our grants' goals and objectives.   |   |   |   |   |   |

#### 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.

## RESOURCES

### *Action for Healthy Kids*

Created in 2002 in response to 16th U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher's public call to action, Action for Healthy Kids is a public-private partnership of more than 50 organizations dedicated to promoting school health. The organization addresses the epidemic of overweight, sedentary, and undernourished youth by focusing on changes in schools to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. The resources section includes wellness policy tools, a clearinghouse, and school grant opportunities. Visit <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/index.php>.

### *Active Living Research (ALR)*

ALR is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Its primary goal is to support and share research on environmental and policy strategies that can promote daily physical activity for children and families across the United States. ALR provides credible and action-oriented research results that address the root causes of childhood obesity and physical inactivity. ALR focuses on communities, active transportation, schools, and parks and recreation. Its resources support strategies that can make the biggest impact on reversing the childhood obesity epidemic and promoting active living. Visit <http://activelivingresearch.org/>.

### *Afterschool Alliance*

Key web site. This web site lists publications on funding and sustainability 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>.

### *Alliance for a Healthier Generation (Alliance)*

Founded by the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation, the Alliance works to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and to empower kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits. The Alliance works with schools, community organizations, families, and others to transform the conditions and systems that lead to healthier children. The Alliance's Healthy Out-of-School Time (HOST) Framework focuses on improving access to healthier foods, increasing physical activity opportunities, and engaging in positive youth development. Visit <https://host.healthiergeneration.org/>.

### *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 out-of-school time practitioners, advocates, and community members with the resources and tools necessary to build high quality out-of-school time programs in California. Its web site includes a section on nutrition and physical activity, including information on resources, policy, and research. Visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org>. Visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/after-school-meal-program> for information on the CACFP Meal Program.

### ***California Association of Food Banks***

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> and the SNAP/CalFresh outreach web site at <http://www.myfoodstamps.org>.

### ***California Department of Education (CDE)***

Key web site. This web site provides links to Team California for Healthy Kids, After School Division, Nutrition Services Division, and Physical Education Program within the Curriculum and Instruction Division. Includes resource and information sections. Several key resources include the After School Physical Activity Guidelines, Nutrition Education Resource Guide For California Public Schools, and the section on Local School Wellness Policies. This site also offers an electronic notification system for all departmental grant making (including ASES and 21st CCLC RFAs) and provides links to Fitnessgram® test results through its data and statistics section web pages.

- Visit the main CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov>;
- Team California for Healthy Kids <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/tchk.asp>;
- Nutrition Services Division <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/or/nsd.asp>;
- After School Division <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/or/asd.asp>;
- Physical Education <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pe/>; and
- Physical Fitness Testing <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/>.
- To sign up for notifications of departmental grants, go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/af/>.

### ***California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Farm to Fork***

The California Farm to Fork Office is an interagency initiative working to help all Californians eat healthy, well-balanced meals. California Farm to Fork provides information and other resources to increase access to healthy, nutritious food for everyone in the state by connecting individual consumers, school districts, and others directly with California's farmers and ranchers. Visit <http://www.cafarmtofork.com/>.

### *California Department of Public Health (CDPH) – Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOPB)*

This web site provides nutrition education and obesity prevention information, a Project Directory of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education's (SNAP-Ed) projects, NEOPB Program Information, consumer information, food security information, and access to all of the NEOPB campaigns and programs, including: California Obesity Prevention Program, NEOPB Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed), School Health Connections (SHC), Champions for Change Program, Retail Program, Worksite Program, African American Campaign, Latino Campaign, Power Play! Campaign, Youth Engagement Program, Harvest of the Month Program, Physical Activity Integration Program, and Rethink Your Drink Campaign. Visit the NEOPB website at: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CPNS/Pages/default.aspx> and Champions for Change website at: <http://www.cachampionsforchange.cdph.ca.gov/en/index.php>.

### *The California Endowment*

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. The Endowment is currently investing \$1 billion in 14 communities in California to improve community health through its 10-year Building Healthy Communities plan, which will continue through 2019. Very limited funding is available for projects outside of Building Healthy Communities. 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 information about food security, related health problems and nutrition program utilization rates. Visit <http://www.CFPA.net>.

### *California Healthy Kids and After School Resource Center (The Center)*

Key web site. The Center maintains a comprehensive collection of reviewed materials on health education and policy issues for use in school and after-school programs, including sections on local school wellness policies. These resources are available for loan. In addition, they offer a variety of trainings in health-related topics and e-guides for after school programs on healthy snacks and physical activity. Visit <http://www.californiahealthykids.org/about> and <http://www.californiaafterschool.org>.

### ***California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative (Collaborative)***

This collaborative is comprised of over ten state-level agencies. It serves as a catalyst for schools and stakeholders to implement highly effective local school wellness policies in California schools and to support student health and achievement. The web site provides an extensive list of resources. Visit <http://www.teamcaliforniaforhealthykids.org/school-wellness/local-school-wellness-policy-collaborative-2/>.

### ***California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition)***

Key web site. California Project LEAN advances nutrition and physical activity policy in schools and communities in order to prevent obesity and its associated chronic diseases. Its efforts focus on youth and parent empowerment approaches, policy and environmental change strategies, and community-based solutions that improve nutrition and physical activity environments. 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 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Technical Assistance Center (TARC)***

This web site assists local communities with creating SRTS programs by providing trainings, technical assistance, and resources to implement safe and successful SRTS strategies. TARC is a program of California Active Communities, a joint Unit of the University of California San Francisco and the California Department of Public Health. The web site includes detailed information on developing and implementing a local SRTS program, a resources section that provides a tool kit and school-specific resources, and a technical assistance section. Visit <http://www.casaferoutestoschool.org/>.

### ***California School Boards Association (CSBA)***

CSBA is the nonprofit education association representing the elected officials who govern public school districts and county offices of education. CSBA works to create circumstances that allow school governance teams and school districts to address conditions of children that can be barriers to their ability to attend, learn and achieve in school, such as physical health and wellness. CSBA's resources include toolkits and policy briefs on school health, local school wellness policies, healthy eating and physical activity. Visit <http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/ConditionsOfChildren.aspx>.

### ***California Summer Meals Coalition***

The California Summer Meal Coalition is a statewide network united to combat hunger and obesity by helping California's children in need access free, healthy meals through the United States Department of Agriculture summer nutrition programs. The web site includes resources, newsletters, and webinars. <http://www.summermealcoalition.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. The foundation philosophy supports the importance of physical and emotional fitness, and the effectiveness of good nutrition. Visit <http://www.calwellness.org/>.

***CANFIT***

CANFIT is a statewide, non-profit organization that works to improve healthy eating and physical activity environments for adolescents in low income communities and communities of color. From grassroots to government, CANFIT works with community-based and youth-serving organizations to identify local solutions and support the development of culturally competent policy and practices. The web site provides information and resources on nutrition and physical activity for afterschool programs. Several key resources include 99 Ways Toolkit, Active8 Guide, the After School Snack and Meal Guide, and the Physical Activity Guidelines Matrix. 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. Grants 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 nonpartisan 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/Grant-Alerts/Education-and-Health-and-Human-Services-Grants-various-locations.aspx>.

***Centers for Disease Control (CDC)***

Key Web site. CDC is working to implement policy and environmental strategies to make healthy eating and active living accessible and affordable. They web site contains research, data, strategies, publications, and policy resources to address the childhood obesity epidemic. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/index.html> CDC has information on joint use agreements. Once on the CDC web page below, look for "School and Child Care" and click on the link for joint-use agreements. <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/CommunitiesPuttingPreventiontoWork/resources/schools.htm>.

### ***ChangeLab Solutions***

This organization provides community-based solutions for America's most common and preventable diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and asthma. ChangeLab Solutions has developed guides, sample agreements, and a variety of other resources, to assist local communities in developing joint-use agreements. Visit <http://changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/joint-use>. ChangeLab Solutions also has resources on food marketing at <http://changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/food-beverage-marketing> and safe routes to schools at <http://changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/safe-routes-schools>.

### ***Children Now***

This organization 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 Score Card. Visit <http://www.ChildrenNow.org>.

### ***Dairy Council of California***

The Dairy Council produces nutrition education programs and resources, which are free for use in California's schools. Its K-12 nutrition curriculum is aligned with California education standards and proven to influence students' healthy choices. See the Dairy Council of California Wellness Policy Directory and other school wellness policy materials. Visit <http://www.healthyeating.org/>.

### ***Federal Registry for Educational Excellence (FREE), United States Department of Education***

FREE makes it easier to find digital teaching and learning resources created and maintained by the federal government and public and private organizations. The web site has resources on health and physical education. Visit [www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject\\_id=2438res\\_feature\\_request=1](http://www.free.ed.gov/subjects.cfm?subject_id=2438res_feature_request=1). Once on the site, click on health and physical education.

### ***The Finance Project***

Key web site. The Finance Project has extensive experience and knowledge of financing strategies and sustainability planning. This web site provides access to funding sources for afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.financeproject.org/>.

### ***Food Marketing Workgroup***

The Food Marketing Workgroup (FMW) is a network of more than 190 organizations and academic experts dedicated to eliminating harmful food marketing - particularly marketing aimed at those who are most vulnerable to obesity and other nutrition-related diseases - by actively identifying, investigating, and advocating changes to marketing practices that undermine health. The FMW website has a number of resources on food marketing to children, including fact sheets, model policies, and examples of marketing. Visit <http://www.foodmarketing.org/>.



***Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)***

Key national food security web site. This national nonprofit is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC has a number of resources for after school programs, including its Afterschool Meals Guide, NSLP Afterschool Snacks, Making the Most of Child Nutrition Funding: A Guide for After School Education and Safety Grantees. Resources for summer food programs are also available. Visit <http://www.frac.org> and select Federal Food/Nutrition Programs.

***The Foundation Center***

The Foundation Center's mission is to strengthen nonprofit organizations 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>.

***Grantmakers for Education (GFE)***

GFE is the largest and most diverse network of education grantmakers dedicated to improving educational outcomes and expanding opportunities for all learners. GFE connects education funders with partners, resources and ideas for greatest impact. The Out-of-School Time network shares effective practices and forges collaborations among funders to build systemic support for the field, strengthen and deepen connections within the OST grantmaking community, and expand high-quality learning opportunities for young people. Visit <http://www.edfunders.org/engage/funder-network-ost>.

***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 trainings to non-profits and government organizations. Its trainings and publications help organizations plan solid programs, write logical, compelling grant proposals and create earned income opportunities. 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. The California State Home Page links you to the State of California Web page where you can do searches for funding opportunities. The Center provides additional information for a fee. Visit <http://www.tgci.com>.

### ***Healthy-Out-of-School-Time (HOST) Coalition.***

Founded in 2009 by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the YMCA of the USA. The HOST website has links to a wide range of resources for promoting healthy eating and active living in afterschool programs. Visit <http://www.niost.org/HOST-Program/>.

### ***Joint Use Statewide Task Force***

Established in May 2008, the Joint Use Statewide Task Force (JUST) includes organizations representing health, civil rights, community collaboratives, planners, local elected and appointed officials, park and recreation officials, school board administrators, and academic researchers interested in ensuring that all children have a safe place to play and be active within easy reach. Created and maintained by the Prevention Institute and Berkeley Media Studies, the Joint Use Web site serves as a hub of information for those interested in increasing opportunities for safe physical activity in their communities. Resources include fact sheets, advocacy and implementation tools, talking points, success stories, model templates, a California specific joint use locator to identify existing agreements in your region, and an interactive discussion board. Visit <http://www.jointuse.org/>. See also <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/strategic-alliance.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, afterschool tutoring and mentoring, and health care, with a special emphasis on intervention, prevention and direct service. Visit <http://www.jsgf.org/>.

### ***Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit***

Major community funder. Kaiser is organized into northern and southern California divisions. Kaiser's Community Health Initiatives take a prevention-driven approach to health, supporting policies and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and active living (often referred to as HEAL) in neighborhoods, schools and workplaces. Visit <http://share.kaiserpermanente.org/group/community-health-initiatives/>.

### ***Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools***

As part of the Community Health Initiative, Kaiser is partnering with leading national organizations on Thriving Schools, a national effort to improve the health of students, staff and teachers in K-12 schools by making the healthy choice the easy choice. Through a focus on healthy eating, active living and school climate, Thriving Schools seeks to intentionally align and coordinate Kaiser's resources related to schools and to work closely with partners that

have expertise in school wellness. Tools and resources on promoting healthy eating, encouraging physical activity, creating a healthy school environment, and more. Visit <http://thrivingschools.kaiserpermanente.org/>.

### ***National Center for Safe Routes to School (Center)***

The Center is comprised of professionals with expertise in transportation, public health, planning, social marketing, and promotions. The website provides information on how to build and sustain a Safe Routes to School program, including a Safe Routes Toolbox; a funding portal; a section on events and trainings and a data and evaluation section. There is also a link to connect with the state coordinators. Visit <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>.

### ***Robert Wood Johnson Foundation***

Key web site. RWJ Foundation's goal is to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by improving access to affordable healthy foods and increasing opportunities for physical activity in schools and communities across the nation. They offer research, reports, breaking news, and grant funding. Sign up for their e-newsletters. Visit <http://www.rwjf.org>.

### ***Safe Routes to School National Partnership (The National Partnership)***

The National Partnership is a network of hundreds of organizations, government agencies and professional groups working to set goals, share best practices, leverage infrastructure and program funding and advance policy change to help agencies that implement Safe Routes to School programs. The web site includes a resource center with fact sheets, publications, research, and webinars; and a section on implementing programs in local communities. Visit <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/>.

### ***School Garden Network (CSGN)***

CSGN is a collaboration of state agencies, private companies, educational institutions and non-profit organizations all dedicated to the mission of creating and sustaining gardens in every willing school in California. The Network serves as a central hub to distribute school garden resources and support throughout the state. Visit <http://www.csgn.org/>.

### ***United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)***

The USDA provides guidance and resources on implementing the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This web site focuses on the school nutrition environment and wellness resources, and helps local educational agencies find school nutrition resources as they implement their local school wellness policies. The web site includes sections on local school wellness policies, healthy school environment, sample wellness policies and best practices, research, and funding opportunities. Visit <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/school-wellness-resources>. For information on grants related to child nutrition and physical activity as well as resources to locate grants and the grant writing process, visit <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/local-wellness-policy-resources/school-nutrition-environment-and-wellness-resources/grantsfunding>.

## 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 [www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org](http://www.healthybehaviorsinitiative.org).

The listing below provides you with the names of each Healthy Behaviors Learning Center Program, together with the learning centers' districts and cities. If you want to visit one of their Learning Centers or get additional assistance in implementation of the Exemplary Practices, go to <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/Centers%20Near%20You> for Learning Center site and individual contact information.

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

***A World Fit For Kids!***

Los Angeles USD  
Los Angeles

***Butte COE After School***

Oroville City Elementary SD  
Oroville

***CalSERVES***

Bellevue Union SD  
Santa Rosa

***Fitness 4 Life***

Pajaro Valley USD  
Watsonville

***Fresno FRESH***

***(Fresno County's Recreation  
Enrichment and Scholastic Help)***

Central USD  
Fresno

***ISS (Institute for Student Success)***

Montebello USD  
Montebello

***Kids Campus Center***

El Monte City SD  
El Monte

***LA's BEST***

Los Angeles USD  
North Hollywood

***Mt. Diablo CARES***

***(Collaborative for Academics,  
Recreation, & Enrichment for  
Students)***

Mt Diablo USD  
Concord, Bay Point

***Sacramento START***

Twin Rivers USD,  
Sacramento City USD  
Sacramento

***SERRF***

***(Safe Ed & Rec for Rural Families)***

Antelope SD  
Red Bluff

***San Francisco ExCEL***

San Francisco USD  
San Francisco

***Shasta COE - Project SHARE***

Gateway USD  
Redding

***STAR***

***(Success Through Academics  
& Recreation)***

Paramount USD  
Paramount

***THINK Together***

Baldwin Park USD  
Baldwin Park

***VESP***

***(Village Extended School Program)***

Monrovia USD  
Monrovia

***Woodcraft Rangers***

Los Angeles USD  
Huntington Park

***YMCA of Silicon Valley***

Santa Clara USD  
Santa Clara

## Endnotes

- 1 Thirty-two percent of children in the U.S. aged 2-19 overweight, and 29 percent obese or severely obese. Obesity rates have tripled since the 1970s, and children now have medical problems that used to be only adult problems, including type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. London, R.A., Gurantz, O. Afterschool Program Participation, Youth Physical Fitness, and Overweight. *AJPM* 2013;4(3)S200-s207. [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(12\)00868-9/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(12)00868-9/abstract)
- 2 U.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.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44206/>
- 3 Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press; Institute of Medicine. 2013. *Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- 4 Vinicor, 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://wayback.archive-it.org/3926/20130930183857/http://archive.hhs.gov/news/press/2004pres/20040429.html>
- 5 Olshansky, S.Jay, Ph.D.; Passaro, Douglas J., M.D.; Hershow, 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.
- 6 *Hunger in Our Schools, Share Our Strength's Teachers Report 2013*, Research conducted by APCO Insight, [http://www.nokidhungry.org/pdfs/NKH\\_TeachersReport\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nokidhungry.org/pdfs/NKH_TeachersReport_2013.pdf).
- 7 "It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior so easily when so many forces in the social, cultural, and physical environment conspire against change. If successful programs are to be developed to prevent disease and improve health, attention must be given not only to the behavior of individuals, but also to the environmental context within which people live." The Institute of Medicine. 2003. *The Future of the Public's Health in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, p. 4.
- 8 For information on the Common Core standards, visit <http://www.corestandards.org/>.
- 9 Visit <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/position.htm>.
- 10 Fletcher, Andria; Center for Collaborative Solutions; Piha, Sam and Rose, Reba, Community Network for Youth Development, 2005. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Guide%20to%20Exemplary%20Practices.pdf>
- 11 Feeding America. 2007. *Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation*. <http://feedingamerica.org/sitefiles/child-economy-study.pdf>.
- 12 Building Healthy Communities Through Equitable Food Access. Judith Bell and Marion Standish. [http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/bell\\_standish.pdf](http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/bell_standish.pdf).
- 13 Mahar, 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/>
- 14 Institute of Medicine. 2013. *Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. [http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2013/EducatingtheStudentBody/EducatingTheStudentBody\\_rb.pdf](http://www.iom.edu/~media/Files/Report%20Files/2013/EducatingtheStudentBody/EducatingTheStudentBody_rb.pdf); Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC. The National Academies Press.
- 15 Visit <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>.
- 16 For more on the federally-funded free and reduced price meal programs, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nsip/national-school-lunch-program>.
- 17 For more on the federally-funded free and reduced price meal programs, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/>.
- 18 The University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardner Program is found in 45 California counties. For a link to their programs and information about resources they offer, visit <http://camastgardeners.ucanr.edu/>.
- 19 Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Healthy Eating: Role Modeling. [https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness\\_categories/healthy\\_eating/healthy\\_role\\_models/](https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness_categories/healthy_eating/healthy_role_models/).
- 20 California Department of Education, *After School Physical Activity Guidelines.2009*. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/documents/paguidelines.pdf>
- 21 To access CASRC resources, visit <http://www.californiaafterschool.org/index>. For CHKRC resources, visit <http://www.californiahealthykids.org/index>.
- 22 Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nerg.asp>.
- 23 Visit <http://www.healthyeating.org/Schools.aspx>
- 24 Visit <http://catchusa.org/ckc.htm>.
- 25 For more information on the SPARK program, go to: <http://www.sparkpe.org/afterschool/>.
- 26 PLoS One. 2011;6(10):e25733. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0025733. Epub 2011 Oct 5. Does the fractionalization of daily physical activity (sporadic vs. bouts) impact cardiometabolic risk factors in children and youth? Holman RM, Carson V, Janssen I., PubMed.gov <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21998688>.
- 27 *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>
- 28 Visit <http://www.corestandards.org/>.
- 29 The Learning in Afterschool & Summer Principles include learning that is active, collaborative, and meaningful as important elements of high quality programs. <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/position.htm>.
- 30 Institute of Medicine Report. 2013. *Evaluating Obesity Prevention Efforts: A Plan for Measuring Progress*. Washington, DC: The National Academy Press; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009. Recommended Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States: Implementation and measurement Guide. [http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community\\_strategies\\_guide.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf).

- 31 CDC Healthy Communities Program. *Building Our Understanding: Key Concepts of Evaluation. What It Is and How You Do It*. [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/eval\\_planning.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/pdf/eval_planning.pdf).
- 32 *Compendium of Surveys of Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention, Updated 2012*. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Compendium%20of%20Surveys.pdf>.
- 33 *Youth Development Guide: Engaging young people in after school programming*. Community Network for Youth Development, San Francisco, CA, 2001. <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/documents/cnyd/CNYD-Youth%20Development%20Guide.pdf>
- 34 The National School Climate Center (2014). "What is School Climate and Why is it Important" – Teacher's College, Columbia University. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/>.
- 35 Fletcher, Andria J., Ph.D., Piha, Sam, and Rose, Reba. *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*, Center for Collaborative Solutions, 2005. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Guide%20to%20Exemplary%20Practices.pdf>
- 36 *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*. September 2011, MMWR, 60(RR05);1-71 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6005a1.htm> California Department of Education, After School Physical Activity Guidelines, 2009, [http://www.californiaafterschool.org/articles/CASPA\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.californiaafterschool.org/articles/CASPA_Guidelines.pdf)
- 37 *Cook with Kids!* provides the basics around cooking classes and food safety with online training and power points available at <http://www.casrc-chkrctrainings.org/modules#42>. For food safety training, visit: <http://www.servsafe.com/ss/foodhandler/> USDA also has helpful information at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/food-safety/food-safety>
- 38 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2013. [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13\\_243135\\_A\\_Food\\_Allergy\\_Web\\_508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_A_Food_Allergy_Web_508.pdf)
- 39 Visit [http://www.californiaafterschool.org/physical\\_activity](http://www.californiaafterschool.org/physical_activity). Guideline 8 includes specific advice for students with asthma.
- 40 California Department of Education, *After School Physical Activity Guidelines*. 2009, [http://www.californiaafterschool.org/articles/CASPA\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.californiaafterschool.org/articles/CASPA_Guidelines.pdf)
- 41 Roberts, 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](http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/rd-03-02.pdf).
- 42 Fletcher, Andria J., PhD, op .cit. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Guide%20to%20Exemplary%20Practices.pdf>
- 43 California State Parent Teachers Association. *Alternatives to Food as a Reward*. <http://www.capta.org/sections/communication/downloads/communicator-2006-10/Health-AlternativesToFood.pdf> Alliance for a Healthier Generation. *Healthy Eating: Role Modeling*. [https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness\\_categories/healthy\\_eating/healthy\\_role\\_models/](https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness_categories/healthy_eating/healthy_role_models/)
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- 45 California Department of Education. *Taking Center Stage Act II*. <http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch4/mngfulprtcipation.aspx#top> Sierra Health Foundation. *Engaging Youth: A How-to-Guide for Creating Opportunities for Young People to Succeed and Lead*. 2006 [http://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/files/reach/Engaging\\_Youth\\_Report.pdf](http://www.sierrahealth.org/assets/files/reach/Engaging_Youth_Report.pdf)
- 46 WestEd. *Resilience and Youth Development*. [http://chks.wested.org/using\\_results/resilience](http://chks.wested.org/using_results/resilience)
- 47 See the California After School Resource Center (CASRC) Physical Activity e-manual at [http://www.californiaafterschool.org/physical\\_activity](http://www.californiaafterschool.org/physical_activity) See Guideline 8 for a full discussion.
- 48 National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition. <http://nas-etalliance.org/youthdev/index.htm>
- 49 <http://www.learninginafterschool.org/position.htm>
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- 58 Visit <http://activelivingresearch.org/sofit-system-observing-fitness-instruction-time>
- 59 Visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mYP4MgxDV2U>
- 60 Visit [http://www.toniyancey.com/IR\\_Home\\_4\\_-\\_old.html](http://www.toniyancey.com/IR_Home_4_-_old.html) A free Instant Recess video can be downloaded from the NEOP Branch at <http://www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net/pa/InstantRecess.html>
- 61 F as in Fat, *How Obesity Threatens America's Future*, <http://fasinfat.org/food-marketing/>
- 62 <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/videos.html>
- 63 *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/engagingandre-engagingstudents.pdf>.
- 64 Visit <http://www.clevercrazes.com/>.
- 65 For more information on Common Core, go to <http://www.corestandards.org/>.
- 66 *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/allfwks.asp>. All standards can be downloaded from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>;

**67** <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nerg.asp>

**68** Visit <http://www.nextgenscience.org/>

**69** 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>.

**70** For 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>.

**71** Access 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.

**72** Visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nerg.asp>.

**73** Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/Recipes.aspx>. In addition to a listing of recommended curricula by grade level, NEOP also provides a listing of supplemental instructional material that can be used to expand on or deepen curricula lessons. Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/pages/lioprogramguidelinesmanualappendix.aspx> items A9 and A10. Resources that have been vetted by state or national nutrition or physical activity/education organizations such as CASRC, Project LEAN, Team Nutrition, CANFIT, CDPH's NEOP, the Centers for Disease Control, as well as universities, are more reliable than those found simply by web surfing.

**74** For a description of Mentors in Motion<sup>SM</sup>, visit [www.worldfitforkids.org](http://www.worldfitforkids.org) and look under program components.

**75** Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP>.

**76** Visit <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/research.cfm>.

**77** Visit <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/Compendium%20of%20Surveys.pdf>

**78** Fourney, Andy, DrPH, *Impact Evaluation Handbook and Compendium: A Guide for Network for a Healthy California Local Incentive Awardees*. 2010–11 Edition. p. 15. Visit <https://food-hub.org/files/resources/Network-ImpactEvaluationHandbookCompendium.pdf>

**79** Fourney, Andy, DrPH., op. cit. The handbook contains a variety of nutrition and physical activity surveys. Visit <https://food-hub.org/files/resources/Network-ImpactEvaluationHandbookCompendium.pdf>, p. 155.

**80** California Healthy Kids Survey, Module E: Physical Health, accessible at [http://chks.wested.org/resources/e\\_text\\_0910.pdf](http://chks.wested.org/resources/e_text_0910.pdf).

**81** Surveys and methods are currently being finalized and once completed will be available at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/CX3Tier1MappingProcess.aspx>

**82** The California State PTA has great resources for involving parents. Visit: <http://www.capta.org/sections/programs/health.cfm>

**83** Olshansky, S.Jay, Ph.D.; Passaro, Douglas J., M.D.; Hershow, 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. <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMs043743>

**84** Go to [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).

**85** CalFresh offices are in county departments of social services. California Project LEAN parent resources, go to [www.californiaprojectlean.org](http://www.californiaprojectlean.org). To contact your CNAP Committee, contact your local health department through this link and ask for the chair of your local CNAP Committee. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/2014%20Project%20Directory.pdf>

**86** Go to <http://efnep.ucanr.edu/> to see if it's available in your county.

**87** Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academy Press. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Accelerating-Progress-in-Obesity-Prevention/Report-Brief.aspx>

**88** *School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*. September 2011, MMWR, 60(RR05);1-71. Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr0005a1.htm>.

**89** Visit the National PTA's *Healthy Lifestyles* web page for resources and grant information. <http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3177&navItemNumber=3346>

**90** In February 2014, USDA proposed a new federal rule outlining how to meet these requirements. To see this rules, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>.

**91** Visit <http://www.teamcaliforniaforhealthykids.org/school-wellness/local-school-wellness-policy-collaborative-2/>

**92** Visit <http://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Wellness.aspx>

**93** The following three sites have comprehensive resources on all aspects of local school wellness policy development and implementation. Food and Nutrition Service/ United States Department of Agriculture. Team Nutrition. Local School Wellness Policies. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>; California Department of Education. Local School Wellness Policy. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/wellness.asp>; *California Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative*. <http://www.teamcaliforniaforhealthykids.org/school-wellness/local-school-wellness-policy-collaborative-2/>

**94** Visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/nutrition-standards.htm>

**95** For a wealth of information, including fact sheets, how to get started, webinars, and CDE contacts, go to the CA AfterSchool Network's Meal Page at <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/after-school-meal-program>

**96** California Project LEAN has fact sheets on healthy fundraisers. Visit <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/doc.asp?id=169&parentid=20>.

**97** Action for Healthy Kids. Healthy Fundraisers. <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/parenttoolkit/fundraisersf4.pdf> Center for Science in the Public Interest. Sweet Deals: School Fundraisers Can Be Healthy and Profitable. [http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/sweet\\_deals\\_one-pager.pdf](http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/sweet_deals_one-pager.pdf)

**98** Visit <http://fireupyourfeet.org/>.

**99** Institute of Medicine. 2006. *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity*. Washington, D.C: National Academy of Sciences.

[http://static.publico.pt/docs/pesoemedia/lom\\_Food\\_Marketing\\_To\\_Children\\_Exec\\_Summary\\_2006.pdf](http://static.publico.pt/docs/pesoemedia/lom_Food_Marketing_To_Children_Exec_Summary_2006.pdf)

**100** Visit <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>

**101** A new web site, [www.jointuse.org](http://www.jointuse.org), helps organizations learn more about joint use agreements; California Department of Education. 2009. California After School Physical Activity Guidelines. Sacramento; CDE Press. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/documents/paguidelines.pdf>

**102** For more information and materials, view <http://www.ccscenter.org/LearningCenterResources>

**103** View <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/doc.asp?id=170> . In Youth Engagement you'll find *Playing the Policy Game Advocacy Guide and Jump Start Teens*.

**104** Visit [http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/08\\_1112\\_lsa\\_prevalence.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/08_1112_lsa_prevalence.pdf)

**105** For 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/](http://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>.

**106** Visit [www.dairycouncilofca.org](http://www.dairycouncilofca.org).

**107** Visit <http://caff.org/programs/farm-2-school/> . For resources and contacts in southern California contact [www.cafarmtoschool.org](http://www.cafarmtoschool.org).

**108** These can include providing nutrition education and physical activity expertise directly, helping schools strengthen their wellness policies, helping with assessments of where you are today and evaluating changes in outcomes, while using your expertise to achieve common goals! Your relationship with your schools is important to them by broadening the reach and impact of your mutual work.

**109** To get contact information, use the directory at this link and ask for the CNAP committee chair. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/2014%20Project%20Directory.pdf>

**110** Many of the Healthy Behaviors programs partner with the University of California Cooperative Extension [http://efnep.ucanr.edu/Youth\\_EFNEP/](http://efnep.ucanr.edu/Youth_EFNEP/) , the Dairy Council of California [www.dairycouncilofca.org/](http://www.dairycouncilofca.org/) , their local health departments *Children's Power Play!* Campaign, <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/ChildrensPowerPlayCampaign.aspx> and use Harvest of the Month <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>

**111** *Amazing Facts about Health*. Visit [http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/AmazingFacts\\_small.pdf](http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/AmazingFacts_small.pdf). p. 1.

**112** *Ibid*, p. 3

**113** Bickel, 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.

**114** Visit <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.

**115** Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Accelerating-Progress-in-Obesity-Prevention/Report-Brief.aspx>

**116** Aloimo, K.; Olson, C.; Frongillo Jr., E.A. "Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic, and Psychological Development," *Pediatrics*, July, 2001; 108 (1) 44-53. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11433053>; 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, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Hunger%3A+Its+Impact+on+Children%E2%80%99s+Health+and+Mental+Health>

**117** Narayan, 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. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14532317>

**118** As of Oct. 1, 2008, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program, known as CalFresh in California. For more information on the program, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

**119** Feeding America. 2009. *Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation*. <http://feedingamerica.org/sitefiles/child-economy-study.pdf> .

**120** Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Healthy Eating: Role Modeling; [https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness\\_categories/healthy\\_eating/healthy\\_role\\_models/](https://host.healthiergeneration.org/wellness_categories/healthy_eating/healthy_role_models/)

**121** Visit <http://cfpa.net/>

**122** See Feeding America. 2009. *Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation* for one such publication. <http://feedingamerica.org/sitefiles/child-economy-study.pdf>

**123** To learn more about this approach, see <http://www.tribes.com>.

**124** For a list of current and past sites, visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sh/sn/> and view the Summer Meal Service Sites; CDE's toll free number is 1-800-952-5609.

**125** California Department of Education. Direct Certification. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/directcert.asp>

**126** Data are from <http://www.breakfastfirst.org/pdfs/SchoolMealAnalysis-StateSummary-2010-11.pdf>. For CFPA's BreakfastFirst web site, visit: <http://www.breakfastfirst.org/> . Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) web site offers an interactive map with state breakfast data, helpful tips to increasing participation and other useful information. Visit: <http://frac.org/federal-food-nutrition-programs/school-breakfast-program/>

**127** 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/](http://www.frac.org/CA_Guide/).

**128** 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/nutritionwhat>.

**129** 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.

**130** Food Research and Action Center's website has extensive information on the CACFP Afterschool Meal Program. Visit: <http://frac.org/afterschool-meal-program-basics/> . In addition, USDA CACFP website that is directed at state administrators has additional information on the program. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/why-cacfp-important>



- 131** For information on available summer nutrition programs and helpful advice on getting started, visit the CA Summer Meal Coalition web site at <http://www.summermealcoalition.org/>
- 132** Visit <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/after-school-meal-program>
- 133** California Farm to School [www.cafarmtoschool.org](http://www.cafarmtoschool.org); National Farm to School [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)
- 134** California Farm to School op. cit.; USDA Farm to School Program [www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/);
- 135** For more information about SNAP-Ed funding and afterschool programs in California, visit the CAN NEOP web page: <http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/neop>
- 136** 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>.
- 137** Visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Reaching2010.pdf>
- 138** ; Visit: [www.calfresh.ca.gov](http://www.calfresh.ca.gov) .
- 139** For a listing of community-based organizations by county that provide outreach for CalFresh, see <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfreshoutreach/res/pdf/CFPartnersbyCountytoolkit.pdf>
- 140** For information on WIC application and eligibility requirements, call 1-888-942-9675 or go online at <http://www.wicworks.ca.gov>.
- 141** Visit <https://www.coveredca.com/>
- 142** For additional information, see Fletcher, Andria J., "Securing Sustainable Funding for Afterschool Programs: Twelve Steps to Success", 2009 <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Resources%20and%20Links/Sustainable%20Funding%202009.pdf>
- 143** Visit <http://www.financeproject.org>.
- 144** Fletcher, Andria J., PhD, op. cit. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Resources%20and%20Links/Sustainable%20Funding%202009.pdf>
- 145** ; This California School Boards Association fact sheet describes the eight funding priorities. Visit: [http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/FairFunding/~/\\_media/CSBA/Files/GovernanceResources/GovernanceBriefs/2013\\_08\\_LCFF\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_funding\\_priority.aspx](http://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/FairFunding/~/_media/CSBA/Files/GovernanceResources/GovernanceBriefs/2013_08_LCFF_Fact_Sheet_funding_priority.aspx)
- 146** The Partnership for Children and Youth has developed an excellent resource explaining LCFF and providing information about how summer programs can help districts achieve their goals. Much of the information shared about summer can also apply during the school year to afterschool programs. Visit: <http://partnerforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/LCFFLeveragingSummer.pdf> . The California Afterschool Alliance for Advocacy (CA3) has also developed an Advocacy Brief that briefly explains the LCFF and why afterschool programs deserve to be funded. <http://www.ca3advocacy.org/storage/After%20School%20Supports%20LCFF%20Priorities%20-%20FINAL.pdf> .
- 147** California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance Brief: "Support Local Afterschool Programs with Funds from the Local Control Funding Formula" citing a 2002 Rose Institute of Claremont-McKenna College study of the ASES Program. <http://www.ca3advocacy.org/support-afterschool-with-lcff/>
- 148** Fletcher, Andria J., PhD, op. cit. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Resources%20and%20Links/Sustainable%20Funding%202009.pdf>
- 149** Afterschool Alliance Fact Sheet: Afterschool Programs: Making a Difference in America's Communities by Improving Academic Achievement, Keeping Kids Safe and Helping Working Families, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Afterschool\\_Outcomes\\_2013.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Afterschool_Outcomes_2013.pdf)
- 150** *Afterschool Fosters Success in School*, 2008. [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue\\_31\\_sch\\_success.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_31_sch_success.cfm) English language learners experience multiple benefits—both academic and social; Maxwell Jolley, Julie, Ph.D., *Research Brief: English Language Learners and Out-of-School Time Programs, The Potential of OST Programs to Foster English Learner Success*. UC Davis School of Education. February 2011. [http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/soe\\_research\\_brief\\_0.pdf](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/soe_research_brief_0.pdf)
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- 152** CDC Childhood Obesity and Academic Facts [http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health\\_and\\_academics/](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/health_and_academics/) ; Children Now. Student Health is Vital to Academic Results (2011); [http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/bwlv2011\\_student\\_health\\_overview.pdf](http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/bwlv2011_student_health_overview.pdf) , Institute of Medicine. 2012.
- 153** Institute of Medicine. 2012. *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2012/Accelerating-Progress-in-Obesity-Prevention/Report-Brief.aspx>
- 154** "The statistics of childhood obesity are alarming: 32 percent of children in the U.S. aged 2-19 years have [weights heavy] enough to classify them as overweight, 17% are obese, and 12% are severely obese..." Children now have medical problems that were once thought to be characteristic of only adults, including type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. London, R.A., Gurantz, O. *Afterschool Program Participation, Youth Physical Fitness, and Overweight*. *AJPM* 2013: 4(3)S200-S207. [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(12\)00868-9/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(12)00868-9/abstract)
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- 156** Levi, J.; Segal, L.; Thomas, K.; St. Laurent, R.; Lang, A., and Rayburn, J.; *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2013*. Trust for America's Health, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Visit <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2013FasInFatReportFinal%209.9.pdf>
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- 158** Centers for Disease Control, Overweight and Obesity web page. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes/index.html>
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## ENDNOTES

**161** *California's Next After-School Challenge: Keeping High School Teens Off the Street and on the Right Track, A Report from Fight Crime, Invest in Kids*, p.45. <http://www.fightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/reports/CA-Next-After-School-Challenge.pdf>.

**162** Afterschool Alliance Fact Sheet: Afterschool Programs: Making a Difference in America's Communities by Improving Academic Achievement, Keeping Kids Safe and Helping Working Families, [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Afterschool\\_Outcomes\\_2013.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Afterschool_Outcomes_2013.pdf).

**163** Fletcher, Andria J., Ph.D., Piha, Sam, and Rose, Reba. *A Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Afterschool Programs*, Center for Collaborative Solutions, 2005. <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/Guide%20to%20Exemplary%20Practices.pdf>

**164** To find out more about LinkedIn, visit: <https://www.linkedin.com/>.

**165** Visit <http://instagram.com/#>.





# Healthy Behaviors INITIATIVE

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1337 Howe Avenue, Ste. 210

Sacramento, CA 95825

(916) 567-9911

email [ccs@ccscenter.org](mailto:ccs@ccscenter.org)

[www.HealthyBehaviorsInitiative.org](http://www.HealthyBehaviorsInitiative.org)

[www.ccscenter.org](http://www.ccscenter.org)