

Before & After School



Objective

- *Implement before- and after-school program offerings that integrate fun and engaging physical activity opportunities.*

Key Messages

Before- and after-school programs act as the missing link for many schools unable to provide children with enough physical activity during the school day, and also enhance skills taught in physical education classes.

- Opportunities for physical activity during the school day are limited in most schools, with national studies indicating that daily PE is offered in just 4% of elementary schools, 8% of middle schools and only 2% of high schools.¹

Affordable before- and after-school programs are an underutilized opportunity to influence the lifestyles of children and families to increase physical activity.²⁻⁴

- Between 1969 to 2005 the proportion of youth who walk or bike to school has decreased from 41% to less than 15%.⁵
- More than 8 million children and teens nationwide spend an average of eight hours per week in after-school programming.⁶
- After-school programs offer a safe, supportive place to engage in physical activity with adult role models and fellow youth at a time of day when youth may otherwise be sedentary.

Participation in after-school physical activity opportunities may contribute to academic success.

- Elementary school students in a daily after-school program who participated in an average of 75 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity showed improvements in both fitness level and cognitive performance.⁷
- Another study indicated a positive association between secondary students who participated in extracurricular activities (both sport and non-sport) and self-reported grades, positive academic attitudes and academic aspirations.⁸
- Participation in before-school physical activity prepares the brain for a school day of learning.





Key Strategies

- **Assess your community's strengths in providing after-school physical activity and opportunities for improvement.** Identify champions and ensure that a variety of school and community stakeholders take part in assessment and planning to increase sharing of resources and programming for expansion of physical activity opportunities.
- **Allocate adequate time to the after-school program to ensure students are able to engage in a sufficient amount of physical activity.** Make sure that before- and after-school programs dedicate at least 30 minutes to physical activity. At least 50% of time should be spent engaging in moderate to vigorous, age-appropriate, fun, outdoor physical activity.⁹
- **Promote walking and biking to school.** See Safe Routes to School section for additional information.
- **Offer a range of competitive and non-competitive physical activity opportunities before- or after-school.** Programming should meet the needs of students with a wide range of skills and physical abilities. Activities that may be enjoyed for a lifetime such as tennis, running, walking, hiking, dancing and bicycling are recommended. Involve students in the process of planning and implementation of before and after school physical activity opportunities to ensure their interests are taken into consideration. Moreover, for afterschool academic programs or school-aged care programs consider integrating afterschool energizers located in the “key resources” section below.
- **Acquire, maintain, and store equipment** that can be used to support a variety of age-appropriate physical activities, and replace equipment when needed.
- **Provide high-quality professional development training on physical activity strategies** for after-school staff that includes the use of evidence-based physical activity curriculum and alternatives to using physical activity as punishment. Adults should also strive to serve as healthy role models when working with students and participate when possible. Leading and participating in activities are both great ways to model healthy behaviors.
- **Before- and after-school program staff should be representative of the diversity of the school community.**
- **Remove or reduce transportation barriers to participating in before- and after-school activities.** Encourage students to connect with physical activity opportunities in the community through organizations such as local parks and recreation departments to promote involvement and build community awareness.
- **Develop girls-only physical activity opportunities** to welcome girls and young women to participate in an environment they're most comfortable in.¹⁰
- **Adopt and/or strengthen district before- and after-school physical activity policies.**



Sample Policy Language

“Schools support healthy lifestyles throughout the regular and extended school day, including before- and after-school programs, tutoring times, and extracurricular activities such as intramural and interscholastic sports.”

“All extended school day opportunities will include physical activity as a component of the time, and after-school opportunities will include a healthy snack that is compliant with federal nutrition standards.”



Success Stories

Farmington Area Elementary Schools, ISD 192, Farmington, MN Run Across America and Century Club

Elementary schools in the Farmington Area Public Schools have successfully implemented two strategies that provide opportunities for 4th and 5th grade students to be active before and after school: *Century Club* and *Run Across America*, both of which align with National and Minnesota Physical Education Standards. Students participating in Century Club accumulate “miles” by engaging in a variety of elective activities. Moderate physical activity that lasts at least 15 minutes is awarded one mile while vigorous activity of the same duration receives two miles. A maximum of two miles per day can be logged to encourage daily activity. In addition to incentives such as extra PE time and Century Club shirts, students are graded in class on the amount of mileage accrued each trimester. Parents and students receive a rubric that provides information about the range of activity levels and the benefits of movement and fitness. Run Across America, now in its 8th year, takes place in October after being introduced in late September. A U.S. city is selected as the destination, and a large map is posted prominently with the route marked. Each classroom has a flag which moves along the route as class members submit miles. Classrooms that arrive at the target location before November 1 are awarded an extra period of Physical Education. When landmarks or points of interest are reached, teachers integrate related information into lessons. For example, during the 200th anniversary of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Portland, Oregon was selected as the destination and teachers highlighted details about the landmark journey. Students receive a grade based on the number of miles accumulated.

Harriet Bishop Elementary School, ISD 191, Savage, MN: Dance Troupe

Over 85 students in grades K-6 participate in the student-created Dance Troupe, which is held every Friday from 3:45 – 4:30 p.m. at Harriet Bishop elementary school. The Troupe was dreamed up and is carried out by a group of 6th graders, who lead each lesson for other students. A sixth grade teacher and the school secretary supervise the students and incorporate conversations about healthy eating and healthy living. Enrollment was greater than anticipated when the program first kicked off and three groups were formed: K-1st, 2nd-3rd, and 4th-6th to facilitate instruction and ensure space to move. Students start with stretching and then get active with movement and dance routines. The students work up a sweat and have fun moving, twisting, jumping, and marching to upbeat music. Based on the program’s early fall success, it was reinstated again in the spring for another six weeks. “It is so great to see how excited students are about this Dance Troupe,” said Ms. Hinman, who supervises the students. “They have so much fun just moving around and dancing.” Ms. Hinman also serves on the district’s Smart Choices Committee and helps support other healthy eating and physical activity programs at Harriet Bishop.

Hidden Valley, ISD 191, Savage, MN: Mileage Club

Mrs. Mosey, Science Specialist, and Mr. Ceola, Physical Education teacher, lead a very popular after school club: Mileage Club. Mileage Club is a running, walking and physical activity club that helps kids get active and burn off extra energy while having a great time. Students play active inside games such as modified soccer, baseball and capture the flag. The club’s other purpose was to get kids in shape for the Hidden Valley Walk-A-Thon that raised \$600 for a new playground. The club was originally intended to be one club for all grade levels, but over 100 students showed up on the first day. “We had such a great response that we had to separate the kids into groups, 1-3 and 4-6. Students are so happy to just run and play, and it is great to see them being so active and having fun,” Mrs. Mosey said. Both clubs meet from 3:40- 4:40 p.m. after-school. Students run outside when the weather is good, and inside when it is too cold. Mrs. Mosey and Mr. Ceola have devised a fun system to keep track of how far students are running: students run laps around the gym, and for each 10 laps they get a “shoe tag”, or a little shoe-shaped token to put on their shoelace or charm bracelet. Students also play active inside games like tag and jump rope. Hidden Valley is also a Fuel Up to Play 60 school, which is a program of the NFL and the National Dairy Council, and Mileage Club students log their hours online. Fuel up to Play 60 provided a \$150 stipend for the Mileage Club the first year. By the next school year, Hidden Valley imbedded this running club into their Burnsville Area Learning Center (BALC) program which provides support to students who need extra help in math and reading after-school five days a week. Every Friday BALC participants engage in running activities. This helps sustain the program since BALC coordinators are paid for their time by the district and participants receive free busing home. Children who are not part of the BALC program are welcome to participate in Mileage Club Fridays to expand its reach!



Resources for Implementation

- **Before and After School Physical Activity: A Strategy of the Active Schools Minnesota Initiative:**
<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/Nutr/PhyActiv/053515>

Planning tools:

- **National After-school Association Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out-Of-School Time Programs:** http://www.niost.org/images/HEPAStandards_-_JH_edits.pdf
- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation Out-of-School Time Framework:**
https://alliance.amm.clockwork.net/_asset/pqkqhk/HOSTFramework.pdf
- **Waivers and Releases: Managing Liability Risk for Youth Recreational Activities in Minnesota:**
<http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-WaiversReleases-2011.pdf>
- **North Carolina Intramural Sports Handbook:** <http://www.fitkidsnc.com/resourcesforintramurals.pdf>

Physical activity ideas:

- **EmpowerME4life:** an 8-session engaging healthy living course for kids ages 8-12 years old that teaches healthy eating and physical activity knowledge and skills: https://www.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/nkt7sr/em4Life_2013_03.pdf
- **Playworks® Playbook:** active games for youth K-8th grade: http://www.playworks.org/files/Playbook_final_09-10.pdf
- **JAMmin' Minutes®:** a brief activity breaks to integrate into before or after school activities:
<http://www.jamschoolprogram.com>
- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation Indoor Fitness Breaks:** great for teens:
<http://www.tpchd.org/files/library/1a8ab7d400d49b12.pdf>
- **Indoor Fitness Trail Guide:** create your own indoor fitness trail using these printable posters:
http://studentwellness.spps.org/uploads/fitness_trail.pdf
- **Build Our Kids Success (BOKS):** a free 40-minute session before-school physical activity program for elementary school students: <http://www.bokskids.org/>
- **GO FAR (Go Out For A Run) Program:** www.gofarclub.org/get-involved/start-a-club

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Smart Choices is a partnership of the Dakota County Public Health Department and school districts in Dakota County committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice by creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity before, during and after school.

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