YMCA’S HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Y is one of the nation’s largest providers of childcare and afterschool programs. Now we want to be the healthiest.

COMMITMENT TO OUR NATION’S YOUTH

The Y is expanding its longtime commitment to children and youth by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards that will be disseminated through early childhood and afterschool programs nationwide. The standards we are adopting will build a healthier future for our nation’s children by providing healthy environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Specifically they will:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs;
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options;
- Limit the amount of screen time (watching TV, playing video games, using computers);
- Encourage breastfeeding of infants in our care; and
- Commit Ys to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.

The standards are based in part on years of research supported by collaborations with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Healthy Out of School Time Coalition (HOST) and the National Institute for Out of School Time (NIOST). Through these collaborations, as well as the experience of Ys across the nation, the Y has learned the most effective ways to create healthy environments in out-of-school time settings.

Additionally, the Institute of Medicine’s Early Childhood Obesity Prevention policies, the National Afterschool Association’s “Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out of School Time Programs” and the Let’s Move Child Care Standards played a significant role the guidelines.

Y-USA made the commitment in November 2011 to the Partnership for a Healthier America -- a two-year-old nonprofit group dedicated to working with the private sector to ensure the health of our nation’s youth by solving the childhood obesity crisis. It was created in conjunction with, but independent from, Let’s Move, First Lady Michelle Obama’s campaign to reduce childhood obesity.
DELIVERING ON THE COMITTMENT

To help YMCAs implement the healthy eating and activity standards, YMCA of the USA will do the following:

- Leverage the Y’s existing national training system for child care and afterschool program staff to develop, test and implement new trainings to educate staff about the new health-promoting standards and practices.
- Provide financial incentives through a microgrant program to local YMCAs to support their implementation of these standards.
- Advocate for the adoption of healthy standards by other providers in hundreds of local communities, and through our network of State Alliances.
- Leverage Y-USA’s preferred vendor program in order to minimize barriers to implementation. Through the preferred vendor program, Y-USA will strengthen partnerships with, and recognize companies that will help advance our efforts by providing healthful products and services to early childhood and afterschool programs. Some of those vendors are: BSN Sports, S&S Worldwide and Food Source Plus.

Y-USA is committed to reporting on its progress and will submit annual monitoring data to Partnership for a Healthier America and YMCAs through 2015; when we hope to have 85 percent of all Ys in compliance. Multiple methods will be used to learn whether or not Ys are implementing the standards. Ys will self-report on an annual basis whether or not they have adopted the standards. To validate this self-report, Y-USA will work with an independent evaluator – the Altarum Institute – who will verify that the adopted policies and practices are indeed in place.

Y-USA will further support Y programs by establishing a recognition program. Recognition will be given in a public way that will allow Ys to showcase the fact that have adopted standards and practices that will help prevent childhood obesity.

The official implementation of the commitment will begin on July 1, 2012. Information about the standards, training opportunities, preferred vendor program and microgrants to aid in implementation, and evaluation will be posted to Exchange https://yexchange.org on a regular basis. If you have questions, please contact Jackie Thurnau, Children & Youth Project Manager, at jackie.thurnau@ymca.net or 312-419-3833.
The YMCA’s Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards for Early Childhood and Afterschool Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Early Childhood Program</th>
<th>Afterschool Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Education</strong></td>
<td>• Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of 4x year. Healthy Family Home could be used for this purpose.</td>
<td>• Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of 3x year. Healthy Family Home could be used for this purpose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Physical Activity**        | • Provide opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day while children are in care for a full-day program and 30 minutes for half-day program.  
  • Provide daily outdoor time for physical activity when possible.  
  For infants:  
  • Provide daily opportunities for infants to move freely under adult supervision to explore their indoor and outdoor environments;  
  • Engage with infants on the ground each day to optimize adult–infant interactions; and  
  • Provide daily “tummy time” (time in the prone position) for infants less than six months of age. | • Provide children and youth with at least 30 minutes of physical activity per morning or afterschool program (60 minutes total per day if both morning and afterschool sessions are offered. Days when children are cared for all day (e.g. Teacher Planning/Institute Day, Holidays) should also provide 60 minutes of activity throughout the day. This time can be divided between morning and afternoon sessions, and can be broken down into smaller increments). Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (that increase heart rate and make you breathe hard), as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities  
  • Play will take place outdoors whenever possible. |
| **Screen Time**              | • Limit screen time, including television, cell phone, or digital media, for preschoolers (aged two–five) to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half-day programs or less than one hour per day for those in full-day programs.  
  • Eliminate screen time for children under two years old. | • Do not permit access to television or movies, and limit digital device time to less than one hour per day to allow for other activities.  
  • Digital device use is limited to homework or programs that actively engage children in activity. |
| **Food**                     | • Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal and/or snack.  
  • Eat meals and/or snacks family-style when possible (“family style” means children serve themselves from common bowls and pitchers with limited help from adults).  
  • Prohibit fried foods. This includes prohibiting fried salty snacks such as | \textbf{FOR PROGRAMS THAT SERVE FOOD}  
  • Serve fruits and/or vegetables at all meals and snacks.  
  • Serve meals and/or snacks family style (“family style” means children serve themselves from common bowls and pitchers with limited help from adults).  
  • Prohibit foods that are deep fried, pan fried, or flash fried unless a healthy oil |
potato or corn chips and prohibiting foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried French fries that are then baked).

(unsaturated or polyunsaturated oils such as olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, or vegetable oil) is used in the frying process. This includes prohibiting fried salty snacks such as potato or corn chips regardless of type of oil used in cooking.

**Beverages**

- Ensure that safe drinking water will be available and accessible to the children at all time.
- Prohibit serving beverages with added sugars.
- For children two and older, serve low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk, and limit fruit juice to no more than one 4-6 ounce 100% juice per day.
- Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snack and/or meal times.
- Prohibit beverages with added sugars
- Emphasize healthy beverages including low or nonfat milk. 100% fruit juice should be limited to one 6-8 oz. serving per day.

**Infant Feeding**

- Adults who work with infants and their families should promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continuation of breastfeeding in conjunction with complementary foods for 1 year or more.

These standards, when implemented fully throughout the Y, will be the basis on which the Y’s commitment to being one of the largest and healthiest providers of early childhood education and afterschool programming in the nation is recognized.

These standards have been expanded and revised as of 11/30/12 to align with the Commitment that was made to first lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America and updated for clarity on 2/26/2013. The difference between these standards and previous versions are relatively small. Previous versions of the Y’s Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards for Afterschool Programs have been augmented by adding parallel Early Childhood Education HEPA Standards, and new standards related to parent education and sugar-sweetened beverages.