

Improving Moderate Physical Activity (PA)

How to provide all children with at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day, including outdoor activity when possible

Use the following questions and the corresponding "Action Steps" to identify new ways to improve physical activity. The **ALL** symbols are tips and suggestions for everyone, no matter how you answer the question. Items in bolded caps with the word "SEE" in front refer to OSNAP resources to help you meet your goals.

Questions

Action Steps

Are there at least 30 minutes of physical activity scheduled into each day?

- NO** → Speak to whoever makes the schedule to see if at least 30 minutes can be scheduled for all groups of children every day. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**
- NO** → Divide the PA time into smaller blocks. For example, do two 15-minute PA periods, or even shorter blocks during homework time. Be sure that you make time for transitions so students get the full 30 minutes of being active. **SEE: ENERGIZERS, BALANCING PRIORITIES TIP SHEET**
- YES** → Make sure a schedule including 30 minutes of PA every day is posted. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**
- YES** → Train staff on making active and efficient transitions from one activity (e.g. snack) to the next (e.g. outdoor free play).
- ALL** → Seek out community partners with special skills to lead activity classes like hip-hop and kickboxing. This can give staff a break and get kids excited about something new!

Do all children participate?

- NO** → Make sure that the schedule gives every group of children 30 minutes of PA every day. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**
- YES** → Use the Food & Fun Afterschool curriculum to teach healthy behaviors through physically active lessons.
- ALL** → Offer structured play with PA stations that kids can choose from. Allowing kids to make their own choices can spur participation. **SEE: EXAMPLE - FOOD & FUN UNIT 10 OBSTACLE COURSE**
- ALL** → Prohibit withholding of gym or other active play time as a form of punishment. Come up with alternative consequences for children who misbehave. **SEE: ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO WITHHOLDING RECESS**
- ALL** → Avoid elimination games (like dodge ball and Simon says) which may discourage kids from participating and limit the amount of PA everyone gets. **SEE: PLAYWORKS**

Do you have outdoor space for physical activity?

- NO** → Consult a map for green space that may be nearby. Find a park. Take a walk or jog around the block or campus. **SEE: JOINT USE OF DISTRICT AND CITY RECREATION FACILITIES**
- YES** → Offer PA at the start of your program, before it gets too dark or cold. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

Do you have indoor space for physical activity?

- NO** → Convert cafeteria or classroom areas into space for PA. Develop relationships with school administration or anyone else that may be able to provide additional space. **SEE: JOINT USE AGREEMENT: OPENING INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SCHOOL FACILITIES FOR USE DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS**
- YES** → Make sure that you continue to have guaranteed access by signing an MOU or Joint Use Agreement with others who use the space. **SEE: JOINT USE AGREEMENT: OPENING INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SCHOOL FACILITIES FOR USE DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS**
- ALL** → There are a lot of exercises that take up minimal space; even a classroom can become a dance or aerobics studio. **SEE: ENERGIZERS - CLASSROOM-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Do staff join in the activities with children?

- NO** → Teach staff about their importance as role models. **SEE: STAFF ENGAGEMENT TIP SHEET**
- YES** → Formalize this great practice by creating a policy that outlines your expectations for how staff with participate in PA. **SEE: POLICY WRITING GUIDE**

Do you have a policy about offering 30 minutes of PA every day to all children?

- NO** → Create a policy stating that all children should receive 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA every day. Communicate this policy to staff and families, and put the policy in appropriate places, like handbooks. **SEE: POLICY WRITING GUIDE, SAMPLE LETTERS**
- YES** → Make sure that your policies are communicated to families and staff. **SEE: SAMPLE LETTERS**