



Promoting Physical Activity and Nutrition in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policymakers

Promoting Health and Physical Activity in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policymakers, a forthcoming publication from the Child Care Bureau's Afterschool Investments Project, will highlight creative strategies being implemented in communities throughout the country to promote healthy lifestyles for children and youth in afterschool settings. This strategy brief outlines the important role that afterschool programs can play in efforts to prevent childhood obesity and includes ideas for incorporating nutrition and physical activity into afterschool **programming**, strategies for **financing** these efforts, and examples of **policies** that can support and encourage the afterschool community's endeavors to steer children toward healthy choices.

Regardless of structure, location, and resources, **all afterschool programs have opportunities to incorporate elements into their program that encourage children and youth to be healthy.** Afterschool programs across the country are:

- Pioneering a number of innovative physical activities to help children achieve the level of activity they need
- Developing creative ideas for giving children the skills and information they need in order to build healthy and nutritious eating habits
- Involving parents in activities designed to promote good dietary and exercise habits in order to reinforce healthy behaviors at home

While afterschool providers have a variety of opportunities to incorporate health, nutrition, and physical activity into their programs, **policymakers also have a number of opportunities to guide and encourage their efforts.** Supportive policies can help afterschool providers by:

- Educating them about health, physical activity, and nutrition and encouraging efforts to incorporate these principles into their programs
- Facilitating their access to federal food and nutrition meal programs
- Informing them of promising practices in the afterschool wellness field
- Involving them in relevant policy discussions

Identifying relevant funding sources and **developing creative financing strategies to support and sustain this work is critical for making progress toward healthier outcomes for children and youth.** Currently, few funding streams exist that specifically target obesity prevention. Rather, health, physical activity, and nutrition are often tied to other initiatives such as cancer or diabetes prevention, school lunch programs, food stamps, and afterschool programs. Afterschool programs seeking funds to support physical activity and nutrition efforts will need to employ a variety of funding strategies including:

- Building public-private partnerships
- Blending funding streams
- Coordinating programming efforts
- Creating or tapping into existing funding streams
- Building a pot of flexible dollars
- Integrating low-cost activities

Visit the Afterschool Investments Project Web site, <http://nccic.org/afterschool>, for ***Promoting Health and Physical Activity in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policymakers*** later this year.