

# PROVIDE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL




## Overview

Physical activity conducted before and after school provides opportunities for young people to increase their daily amount of physical activity, practice skills learned in physical education, be more prepared for learning, and try new and safe activities that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

Physical activity before and after school can include<sup>1</sup>:

- Play (self-chosen, may have no objective other than for enjoyment),
- Walking or biking to and from school,
- Physical activity clubs (e.g., dance club, snowshoe club),
- Intramural programs (sports organized by the school or community in which any child can participate),
- Interscholastic sports (competitive sports between schools), and
- Physical activity in before-school, after-school, and community-based extended day programs.

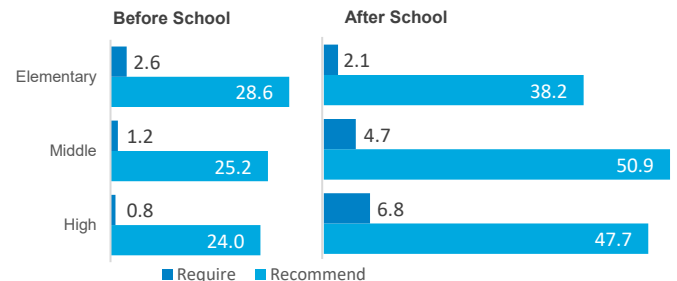
When young people engage in physical activity before and after school, benefits can include:

- 
- Improved mental and emotional well-being<sup>2</sup>
  - Improved physical health (e.g., bone health)<sup>3</sup>
  - Improved grades and test scores
  - Increased ability to identify activities they enjoy and might engage in long-term

## What's happening nationally?

Few districts *require* schools to provide physical activity opportunities before and after school, but more districts *recommend* providing these types of activities, especially after school.

**% of districts with requirements and recommendations related to physical activity before and after school<sup>4</sup>**



Joint use agreements can help promote physical activity, but only **38% of districts have a formal written joint use agreement** that applies to community member or community group use of school facilities for before or after school programs for school-aged children.<sup>4</sup>

According to a parent survey<sup>5</sup>:



**80%** of parents want afterschool programs to provide opportunities for physical activity.

Lastly, only:



**30%** of districts provided funding for professional development or offered professional development to physical education teachers on establishing walking or biking to school programs.<sup>\*4</sup>

*\*During the two years before the study.*

# What are ways to improve physical activity before and after school?

## Practical standards for physical activity before and after school

The National AfterSchool Association sets voluntary standards for out of school time programs, both before and after school. Below are sample strategies for improving physical activity before and after school<sup>6</sup>:

### Content and quality

- Dedicate 30 minutes to physical activity and provide moderate to vigorous activity (e.g., jumping rope, playing a game of basketball, running) for at least 50% of that time.
- Offer activities that are adaptable, accessible, and inclusive of young people with all abilities, including physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities.
- Include time for unstructured play and integrate physical activity breaks between or within learning activities.

### Staff training

- Staff participate in training or professional development on physical activity (and how to adapt it to include all young people) at least once per year.

### Social support

- Young people can select, organize, and lead physical activities.
- Staff does not use or withhold physical activity as punishment.
- Families and communities are engaged to advise and support physical activity in the program, in the community, and at home.

### Program support

- Ensure access to indoor and outdoor physical activity space through formal or informal shared facility use agreements.
- Staff participate in physical activity and model a physically active lifestyle.

### Environmental support

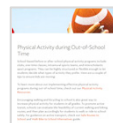
- Provide adequate types and amounts of equipment for games, activities, and sports.

For more standards and information, refer to the [National AfterSchool Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards](#)

## Additional resources



[Healthy Out-of-School Time Roadmaps \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)



[Physical Activity during Out-of-School Time \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)



[Ideas for Parents: Physical Activity Before and After School \(CDC\)](#)



[Before- and After-School Physical Activity and Intramural Sport Programs \(SHAPE America\)](#)



As the nation works to prevent the spread of COVID-19, access to physical education and physical activity have been greatly limited due to school, park, and playground closures. Given the benefits of physical activity, it is even more important to continue to find ways to provide physical activity opportunities for all.

- [Planning for the Next Normal at School – Chapter 4 \(Kaiser Permanente\)](#)
- [Staying Physically Healthy & Active During COVID-19 \(Boys and Girls Club\)](#)
- [How to be Active While Social Distancing \(CDC\)](#)

## SOURCES:

- <sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Increasing Physical Education and Physical Activity: A Framework for Schools; 2019.](#)
- <sup>2</sup> A Kandola, G Ashdown-Franks, J Hendrikse, CM Sabiston, B Stubbs. [Physical activity and depression: towards understanding the antidepressant mechanisms of physical activity.](#) *Neurosci Biobehav Rev*, 107 (2019), pp. 525-539.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition.](#) Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2018.
- <sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [School Health Policies and Practices Study 2016.](#)
- <sup>5</sup> Afterschool Alliance. [Kids on the Move: Afterschool Programs Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.](#)
- <sup>6</sup> National AfterSchool Association. [Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards 2.0.](#)



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Springboard to Active Schools is an initiative of the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and Health Resources in Action (HRiA) through Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 (NU1ADP003094) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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