

Active Living Research

Using Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity
and Create Active Communities

FACT SHEET

January 2013

Increasing Physical Activity in Out-of-School Time Programs

The fact sheet includes guidance on how organizations can increase the amount of physical activity children and youth get in their afterschool and other out-of-school time programs. It includes information on how to objectively measure whether their program participants are being active enough by using pedometers, a simple and affordable device.

National Afterschool Association Recommendations for Physical Activity in Out-Of-School Time Programs

- The National Afterschool Association (NAA) has current, evidence-based, and practical recommendations for physical activity programs that take place outside of school time.
- These recommendations support the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) 2008 guidelines for activity patterns shown to promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease.
- Below is an overview of the recommendations. For complete information about each one, and for a list of best practices for achieving them, visit:
http://www.niost.org/pdf/host/Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Standards.pdf

Programs Should:

- Strive for at least 30 minutes of physical activity (or 2,550 steps) to contribute towards the overall goal of 60 minutes (full-day programs should allocate an entire 60 minutes for physical activity, with goal of participants accumulating 5,100 steps);
- Support opportunities for staff to learn physical activity leadership using effective training models and evidence-based content;
- Provide a supportive social environment, including positive relationships, that encourages children to enjoy and participate in physical activity;
- Have management and budgeting practices that support physical activity;
- Provide the proper physical environment (equipment and other resources) that supports the physical activity recommendations.

Using Pedometers to Assess Children's Physical Activity Levels

- Pedometers are a simple and affordable way to monitor physical activity levels by objectively counting and recording the number of steps a person takes within a defined period of time.
- You can assess whether children and adolescents in your programs are meeting national guidelines for out-of-school time physical activity by using pedometers.
- As noted above, before-school or after-school programs should strive to provide participants with achieving at least 2,550 steps, while full-day programs should strive for at least 5,100 steps.
- For more information and guidance on using pedometers, please contact us at alr@ucsd.edu or 619-260-5534.