



After-School Programs

Healthy Eating and Active Living Guidelines

Ottawa Public Health

2016



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Introduction

After-school programs are an important setting for promoting both healthy eating and active living to children and youth. The After-School Programs Healthy Eating and Active Living Guidelines were developed to provide information and tools for staff and volunteers to help support positive practices so that children and youth can practice and learn about healthy living behaviours.

These guidelines describe the minimum standards for after-school programs to follow when choosing snacks and including physical activity in their programs. These guidelines are based on recommendations from [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#), [Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines](#), [PPM 150: School Food and Beverage Policy](#), [Ottawa Public Health's Child Care Healthy Eating Active Living Guidelines](#), and [Canada's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines](#). These guidelines also complement Ontario's [No Time to Wait: The Healthy Kids Strategy](#) which focuses on changing food environments and creating healthy communities in order to reduce childhood obesity.

Rationale for the Guidelines

Unhealthy eating habits and low levels of physical activity among children and youth have been linked to health concerns including obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, poor emotional health, and reduced social well-being. Health behaviours such as eating patterns and physical activity levels that are established in childhood and adolescence often transfer into adulthood. The after-school period has been linked to sedentary behaviours and the consumption of high-calorie, nutrient-poor foods for children and youth.

A survey of parent and caregiver perceptions of after-school programs done by the Canadian Active After School Partnership (CAASP) found that about half of parents and caregivers thought healthy snacks and physical activity were very important to their decision about where to place their child after school. Additionally, nine in ten parents and caregivers said that it was very important for their children to understand healthy eating and that their children's physical activity was very important for them.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, poverty and low-income are strongly linked to poor health. After-school programs have an important role to play in providing healthy food and opportunities for physical activity for children and youth who are living in Ottawa, especially those in low-income neighbourhoods. These children and youth may not have access to healthy food and/or safe spaces to engage in physical activity in their homes or neighbourhoods.

Considering the health behaviours of children and youth during the period after-school, parent's/caregiver's perceived importance of healthy eating and physical activity for their children, and the relationship between income and health, there is a strong need for healthy eating and active living guidelines in after-school programs. These guidelines are available for use in all Ottawa after-school programs.



Healthy Eating

The *Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS)* collects health related information for the Canadian population. Results from the 2004 CCHS found that:

- Three out of five children and youth ate fruit and vegetables less than five times a day.
- One in five children and three in ten youth ate more calories than their body needed.
- One in three children and youth ate after-school snacks, about half of which were low in nutrients and high in calories
- Children and youth received approximately one fifth of their daily intake of calories from beverages alone.
- One in three youth ate at a fast food outlet the day before responding to the survey.

Active Living

ParticipACTION is an excellent source of physical activity information in Canada. Every year, *The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* collects information about physical activity in Canada. The following are highlights from the 2015 *ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth*:

- One in ten of children and youth five to seventeen years old meet the Canadian recommendations for 60 minutes of physical activity each day.
- One quarter of five to seventeen year olds meet the guideline of two hours or less screen time per day.
- Children and youth receive a D-grade in both overall physical activity and sedentary behaviours.

Physical literacy is the development of basic movement skills that help children do well in physical activities. These include walking, running, jumping, skipping, throwing, kicking, and catching. If a child is not given the opportunity to develop these skills, it decreases the likelihood he or she will participate in physical activities. It is also important to note that active play in nature and outdoors, with its risks, is necessary for healthy child development.



Eating and drinking healthy foods and beverages:

- √ Provides fuel for optimal growth and brain development
- √ Provides nutrients for strong bones, teeth and muscles
- √ Improves performance at school
- √ Decreases the risk of chronic diseases

Being active for 2 or 3 hours per week:

- √ Improves performance at school
- √ Improves self-esteem
- √ Contributes to social skills
- √ Decreases the risk of chronic diseases

A Note about Weight

Although weight is a risk factor for several chronic diseases, it is important to remember that it is only one indicator of health. Ottawa Public Health recognizes that everyone can improve their health and reduce their risk of disease and injury by engaging in healthier behaviours, regardless of weight loss. We believe that a healthy behaviours approach – as opposed to a weight-centered approach – helps individuals to make healthier choices while supporting mental and physical well-being. People who feel good about themselves and their bodies are more likely to have healthy self-esteem, adopt healthy attitudes and live a healthier life.

Note: Throughout this document, the term children also refers to youth.



Healthy Eating Guidelines

Goal: After-school programs support healthy eating and make the healthy choice the easy choice by providing a variety of nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods and beverages.

What is a Healthy Snack?

Whenever possible, prepare and/or offer snacks using wholesome and fresh foods. Limit processed and pre-packaged foods that are high in added sugar, salt or fat.

Use *Canada's Food Guide* to make a well-balanced snack:

- ❑ Include food from at least two food groups from [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- ❑ Include at least one food from the [Vegetables and Fruit](#) food group.
- ❑ Tap water should always be available and accessible. Encourage reusable water bottles.

Make Healthy Food and Beverage Choices:

- ❑ Follow the Healthy Food and Beverage List on the following pages for more detail on choosing healthy food and beverages.
- ❑ Compare the Nutrition Facts table and Ingredient List on food labels to make healthy food choices. See Eat Right Ontario's [Nutrition Labelling video series](#) for more information.

Serve Safe Snacks

- ❑ Establish and promote a proper hand washing routine before and after snacks for staff, parents, and children.
- ❑ After-school program staff and volunteers should receive regular updates on food safety.
- ❑ Respect the individual needs of children such as food allergies, intolerances and religious/cultural reasons.



Food Group	Choose:	Instead of:
<p>Vegetables and Fruit</p> <p>Choose local and seasonal vegetables and fruit, whenever possible.</p> <p>Serve dark green and orange vegetables and fruit often.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit √ Canned fruit in water or juice √ Canned vegetables, rinsed and drained √ No sugar added fruit sauce or purée, e.g. applesauce √ Dried fruits as part of other foods e.g. cereal & dried fruit mix √ No sodium added and low sodium canned tomatoes or tomato based sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × All juices and fruit flavoured drinks, e.g. 100% fruit or vegetable juice with or without added sugar, fruit beverage × Canned fruit in syrup × Deep fried or battered vegetables, e.g. French fries × Dried fruit on its own × Fruit leathers or gummies × Sweetened applesauce or fruit purées × Canned or processed vegetables and fruit with added fat, sugar, salt, and artificial sweeteners
<p>Grain Products</p> <p>Offer grain products with 'whole grain' as the first ingredient often.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ All whole grains: whole grain wheat, whole grain corn meal, whole oat or oatmeal, brown or wild rice, rye, barley, quinoa, bulgur, millet, spelt, amaranth √ Whole wheat and other whole grain bread, buns, bagels, pita, naan, pasta, etc. √ Crackers, pita chips, flatbreads : fibre ≥2 g, fat ≤ 3g, sodium ≤150 mg per serving and where whole grain is the first ingredient √ Cereals and grain-based snacks such as granola bars: sugar ≤6 g, fibre ≥2g, fat ≤ 3g, sodium ≤150mg per serving and where whole grain is the first ingredient √ Plain popcorn √ Baked goods prepared on site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × White bread, buns, bagels, pita, naan, pasta, etc. × Commercial bakery items such as pies, pastries, croissants, and other baked goods that are high in fat and/or sugar × Flavoured pre-packaged or instant rice and pasta × Cookies and granola bars coated with candy-like ingredients (chocolate, yogurt, caramel, chocolate chips, marshmallow or other)



Food Group	Choose:	Instead of:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Cereals and grain-based snacks such as granola bars: sugar >6g, fibre <2g, fat >3g, sodium >150mg per serving and where whole grain is not the first ingredient × Crackers: fat >3g, fibre <2 g, sodium >150mg per serving and where whole grain is not the first ingredient
Milk and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Plain skim, 1%, 2%, or 3.25% cow's milk √ Unsweetened fortified soy beverage √ Hard and soft, non-processed cheese made from pasteurized milk (e.g., cheddar, mozzarella, parmesan, monterey jack, havarti, gouda, swiss, feta, ricotta, cottage cheese) √ Cheese strings, cheese curds √ Plain or flavored yogurt, soy yogurt and kefir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Any unfortified milk, e.g. rice milk, almond milk, potato milk × Flavored milk e.g. chocolate, strawberry × Hot chocolate × Milkshakes × Table cream , coffee cream, whipping cream, non-dairy whipped cream toppings × All processed cheese products, e.g. processed cheese slices or cream cheese type spreads × Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk (e.g., brie, camembert, and blue-veined cheese like roquefort and gorgonzola) × Ice cream and frozen yogurt × Instant or pre-packaged puddings × Yogurt or any milk products with artificial sweetener



Food Group	Choose:	Instead of:
<p>Meat and Alternatives</p> <p>Note: Some centres have a nut free policy where nuts and nut butters cannot be served</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Eggs √ Hummus √ Nuts and nut butters, e.g. peanut butter √ Nut-free spread made with seeds or legumes, e.g. pea butter, soy butter, tahini √ Fish low in mercury, e.g. canned light tuna, packed in water √ Roasted unsalted soy nuts or other legumes √ Legumes: canned, drained and rinsed, or home cooked √ Lean or extra lean meat and poultry, e.g. beef, lamb, pork √ Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Breaded or coated fried chicken or other meat or meat alternative (store-bought) × Canned baked beans, e.g. pork and beans × Deli meats, e.g. turkey, roast beef, ham, bologna, salami, macaroni and cheese loaf, sausage, wieners, pepperoni sticks × Nuts or seeds coated with candy, chocolate, sugar and/or yogurt
<p>Beverages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Tap water √ Flavoured tap water (slices of lemon, lime, orange, basil, berries) √ Milk or fortified soy beverage (see Milk and Alternatives section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Soft drinks/pop × All juices and fruit flavoured drinks, e.g. 100% fruit or vegetable juice with or without added sugar, fruit beverage, cocktails, punch, or other beverages ending with “ade” × Flavoured water sweetened with sugar or sweeteners



Food Group	Choose:	Instead of:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Caffeinated beverages e.g. coffee and tea × Sports drinks × Energy drinks × Slushie-type drinks
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Candy, chocolate, and chocolate bars × Chips, cheezies, and other salty snacks × Energy bars × Gummy –like candies × Licorice × Gum × Popsicle or Freezie type frozen treats × Hard or hydrogenated margarine, shortening, lard



Active Living Guidelines

Goal: After-school programs support physical literacy development by providing a variety of opportunities for children to be active and reduce their time being sedentary.

Active Play

- Offer at least 30 minutes of active time during after-school programming.
- Offer opportunities for children to practice different fundamental movement skills.
- Remind children to drink tap water when they are thirsty.
- Take children outside to play and connect with nature.
- Be sure children with special needs have the support and equipment needed to take part in physical activity.

Sedentary Behaviour

- Provide opportunities for children to stand up and move every hour to reduce time being sedentary.
- Avoid leisure screen time (i.e. screen time that is not related to homework).



Creating a Positive Environment

Goal: After-school programs are to create an environment that supports mental and physical well being.

Eat Well

- ❑ Offer and encourage children to sample a variety of new healthy foods.
- ❑ If possible, involve children in some aspects of snack time such as planning, preparation, cooking and clean-up.
- ❑ Support children to listen to their hunger cues. Encourage them to eat when they're hungry and stop when they're full.
- ❑ Don't use food as a reward or punishment for behaviour.
- ❑ Celebrate without food or if food or beverages are served, offer healthy choices.
- ❑ Avoid distractions like screens (phones, TV, tablets), games, or books during snack time.
- ❑ Give all children enough time for snacks. Do not rush them or skip a snack time to move on to the next program activity. Make it a social event for the children and youth.

Be Active

- ❑ Promote age appropriate physical activity while considering children's likes and abilities.
- ❑ Enhance learning, socialization and physical activity opportunities by having children participate in activities outdoors, surrounded by nature.
- ❑ Avoid using physical activity as a reward or punishment for behaviour.

Feel Good

- ❑ Focus on the strengths and abilities of children to build their self-esteem.
- ❑ Accept that healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes through your attitude, language and comments about your own or a child's body.
- ❑ Be a healthy role model. Children watch and learn.
- ❑ Focus on health and healthy behaviours, not diet and weight.



Sample Weekly Snack Menu

Day	Food	Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives
Monday	Carrot and celery sticks Hummus	✓			✓
Tuesday	Orange slices Homemade muffin	✓	✓		
Wednesday	Mixed vegetables Whole grain toast Scrambled eggs	✓	✓		✓
Thursday	Cucumber Whole grain crackers Cheese	✓	✓	✓	
Friday	Apple Yogurt	✓		✓	

Checklist:

- Snacks include food from at least 2 food groups in Canada's Food Guide
- Snacks include at least one vegetable or fruit
- Tap water is always available and accessible



Sample Weekly Activity Schedule

Day	Activity	Walking & Running	Jumping & Skipping	Throwing & Catching	Kicking
Monday	Game: Tag	✓			
Tuesday	Game: Hopscotch		✓		
Wednesday	Game: Dodge ball			✓	
Thursday	Game: Soccer				✓
Friday	Game: Skip rope		✓		

Checklist:

- Offer at least 30 minutes of active time during after-school programming
- Weekly activities focus on different fundamental movement skills
- Tap water is always available and accessible



Weekly Snack Menu Template

Day	Food	Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives
Monday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Checklist:

- Snacks include food from at least 2 food groups in Canada's Food Guide
- Snacks include at least one vegetable or fruit
- Tap water is always available and accessible



Weekly Activity Schedule Template

Day	Activity	Walking & Running	Jumping & Skipping	Throwing & Catching	Kicking
Monday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuesday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wednesday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thursday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friday		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Checklist:

- Offer at least 30 minutes of active time during after-school programming
- Weekly activities focus on different fundamental movement skills
- Tap water is always available and accessible



Additional Nutrition and Physical Activity Resources

Ottawa Public Health

- I Love to Cook and Play Program Manual 2016
- Eat Well. Be Active. Feel Good. Guide for Professionals to Use Common Messages to Support Health.
- A Guide to Choosing Whole Grains
- Snacking and Dental Health
- A Guide to Eating Fish for Women, Children and Families
- Ottawa's health is in your hands
- Certified Food Handler Training
- Healthy Food Choices: Buying Groceries on a Budget
- Everybody's Food Budget Book
- Childcare Physical Activity Resources

Health Canada

- Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide
- Translated versions of Canada's Food Guide
- Using Nutrition Facts Table % DV

Eat Right Ontario

- Nutrition Label Reading Videos
- Food Choices When Money is Tight
- Food Allergies and Intolerances
- Food Handlers' Storage Guide

Food Allergy Canada: Think FAST poster

Raising our Healthy Kids Videos

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology:

Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines

Ontario Physical Health Education Association

Activity Resources

High Five

Recreation and Sport

Canadian Sports for life

Physical Literacy Resources

Active for Life

Physical Literacy Resources



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