

# Food & Fun After School ~ 2nd Edition ~

A nutrition and physical activity curriculum designed to help children develop healthy habits during out-of-school time.

## About Guide

# Food & Fun

## After School 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition<sup>©</sup>

**Created by the Harvard Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity in collaboration with YMCA of the USA**

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**Food and Fun After School 1<sup>st</sup> Edition**  
**Created by the Harvard Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity in collaboration with YMCA of the USA**

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Food & Fun materials were designed based on qualitative research conducted through a national partnership with YMCA of the USA, America's largest provider of school age childcare services. As part of the YMCA's Activate America initiative, the Harvard Prevention Research Center was a partner in a pilot organizational change project (The Gulick Youth/Family Collaborative) in which a sample of YMCA childcare programs participated in a structured process to achieve higher program standards in nutrition, physical activity, and parent connectedness. All Food & Fun 1<sup>st</sup> Edition curriculum materials were field tested in local YMCA child care settings for acceptability, feasibility, and ease of use. Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition lesson extensions, tips sheets, assessment guides, Recipe Packet, and Snack Sense guide were reviewed by YMCA staff.

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# About Food & Fun After School

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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# About the Curriculum

After school and other out-of-school time programs like vacation or summer camps offer a wonderful setting for teaching children positive health behaviors. Schools and community organizations are looking for more creative ways to help children and families develop healthy eating and physical activity habits.

The goal of **Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** is to assist program staff in providing healthier environments to children during out-of-school time. The curriculum is designed to incorporate lessons and activities about healthy eating and physical activity into regular after school program schedules. **Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** includes 11 teaching units that encourage healthy behaviors through active play, literacy and math skills development, creative learning, and hands-on snack time activities. . With over 70 activities to choose from and a user-friendly layout for each lesson, Food & Fun makes it simple to promote healthy eating and physical activity in your program every day!

Additional resources available in Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition are:

**Nutrition and Physical Activity Environmental Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs-** The aim of the Environmental Standards for Nutrition and Physical Activity are to help program leaders create healthier out-of-school environments for children by achieving 7 simple standards.

**Snack Sense-** A menu planning tool to provide fun, healthy, and budget-friendly snacks for children in after-school and out-of-school time programs.

**Parent Materials-** Handouts, parent engagement ideas, newsletter articles, and email messages to distribute to parents that reinforce nutrition and physical activity messages from each unit.

**Tip Sheets-** Tips for program staff on how to create healthier out-of-school time environments.

**Food and Fun Web Resources-** A list of websites on nutrition and physical activity.

All curriculum materials, including program tools and web resources are available for free download on the Harvard Prevention Research Center website, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/ymca/resources.html>.

# About the Unit Themes

Ten topic units offer a variety of games, learning activities, and recipes for after school settings. While some units reinforce others, each unit can stand alone. Use all ten units over the course of a school year, or use only a few. Some unit themes connect to a national month or other special events, as noted, which allows you to find other resources to support the messages in the units. Check out the *Food & Fun Web Resources* in each unit for some great places to start. Unit 11 is an opportunity to review the key messages from Food & Fun, play a popular game or activity from a previous unit, and make your favorite recipes again. Try it out half way through Food & Fun, or when you have finished all of the units.

The curriculum and program tools were created by the Harvard Prevention Research Center at the Harvard School of Public Health USA for educational use in after school programs for children from kindergarten through fifth grade.

<u>Unit (Month)</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Theme</u>
<b>Unit 1 (September)</b>	<b>Take a Bite!</b>	<b>Fruits and vegetables</b> <b>National 5-a-day Month</b>
<b>Unit 2 (October)</b>	<b>Get Moving</b>	<b>Physical Activity</b>
<b>Unit 3 (November)</b>	<b>Be Sugar Smart</b>	<b>Sugar-Sweetened Drinks</b>
<b>Unit 4 (December)</b>	<b>Go For Good Fat</b>	<b>Healthy and Unhealthy Fats</b>
<b>Unit 5 (January)</b>	<b>Go for Whole Grains</b>	<b>Whole Grains</b> <b>National Oatmeal Month</b>
<b>Unit 6 (February)</b>	<b>Super Snacks</b>	<b>Healthy Snacking</b>
<b>Unit 7 (March)</b>	<b>Mix it Up</b>	<b>Fruits and Vegetables</b> <b>National Nutrition Month</b>
<b>Unit 8 (April)</b>	<b>Tune Out the TV</b>	<b>Reduce TV viewing</b> <b>TV Turn Off Week (3<sup>rd</sup> week)</b>
<b>Unit 9 (May)</b>	<b>Play Hard</b>	<b>Physical Activity</b> <b>National Physical Fitness and Sports Month</b>
<b>Unit 10 (June)</b>	<b>Be Active, Stay Cool</b>	<b>Keeping Hydrated</b>
<b>Unit 11 (Anytime!)</b>	<b>Food &amp; Fun Finale!</b>	<b>Food &amp; Fun Review</b>

# How to Navigate Each Unit

Each of the 11 units is set up the same way and everything you need to conduct an activity (instructions, worksheets, recipes, etc.) is found within the unit. Most activities require common after school materials, such as construction paper, crayons or other craft items, and physical education equipment such as balls. Still, you may need to gather some material from outside sources, such as old magazines or empty water bottles. You may need to purchase special ingredients for the recipes.

Here's what you will find in each unit:

## **Behavior Goal**

Each unit lists a simple goal for children to achieve through the unit's activities.

## **Key Messages**

These are the sound bites for the unit theme. A great way to inform children of the new theme is to copy the key messages onto colorful paper for display in your program – post on a bulletin board, on the walls, or at your check-out area. Visual displays not only help the children identify with the new theme, but it reminds parents of your healthy program goals! Program staff should review the key messages and use them when they present the various activities. For instance, when serving snack the leader may remind children that “Fruits and vegetables make great snacks that are healthy for your body!” (a key message from Unit 1). There are many opportunities to infuse these key concepts throughout a program day or week. *All* staff should be familiar with them, even if they are not in charge of leading the **Food & Fun** activities.

## **Key Information for Program Staff**

This important background information provides staff leaders with the “why” behind each unit. It also offers tips for presenting the activities, or things to keep in mind when discussing nutrition or physical activity concepts with children.

## Activity Options for Children



1. **Arts and Crafts** involve coloring, cutting and pasting, or other creative projects. These activities allow leaders to introduce children to the various food or fitness concepts in a fun way.



2. **Active Games** get children running and moving while learning about the key messages of the unit. Relay-type races with modifications are one common way to integrate learning with movement. These activities are designed to involve all children in a way that eliminates individual competition. Modifications are provided for most games.



3. **Other Group Games or Activities** can be used in circle time or small groups to reinforce the learning concepts of the unit. Some of these activities are geared towards older children (upper elementary, 3rd – 5th grade) who have writing skills and/or the ability to understand more complex information.



4. **Suggested Books** can be used to complement the unit activities. You may make books available in a reading center, or read to the group during circle time. Instead of purchasing books, borrow them from your local library for free!



5. **Snack Time** is a great time to introduce new foods to children! Recipes are provided as the best hands-on way to involve children in snack preparation. Most recipes include commonly found ingredients and simple preparation methods, though some do involve cooking or advance preparation by adults (such as chopping vegetables). Programs can introduce families to healthy foods by preparing extras to serve during pick up, and by distributing the recipes.

***New to Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition:*** Check out the lessons extensions that suggest ways to adapt lessons to the lives and needs of the children you serve. They can help you connect more with families, make lessons more age appropriate, and add variety to old favorites!

## Connect with Parents

It is crucial to involve and inform families about the steps that your program is making to positively influence the health of their children. To help you reach out to parents and other caregivers, each unit lists key messages for parents which support the unit objectives. Like the key messages for children, these may be printed onto colorful paper to display at the check-out area or on a parent board. They are also included in the Parent Communication newsletters and email messages. **Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition** suggests ways to connect with parents, and provides materials for communicating with parents that are available in English and Spanish:

1. **Parent Engagement Activities-** Suggestions for how to engage parents in the messages being taught in each unit. Experiment and be creative; come up with your own ideas or modify the suggested activities for each unit!
2. **Newsletter articles-** Available to cut and paste into your current program newsletter or as a stand-alone 1 page bulletin. These articles are available so you can send information about healthy eating or physical activity home each month. Available in English and Spanish.
3. **Email messages-** Get around the challenge of notices left in children's backpacks by sending parents a simple message via email. These messages specifically address the unit key messages and activities while offering simple tips to involve families in the promotion of healthy foods and fitness behaviors. Available in English and Spanish.
4. **Parent handouts-** Provided for each unit topic of Food & Fun. These colorful sheets are another easy way to get health messages home to families. Available in English and Spanish.
5. **Parent handbook-** The handbook *Food, Fun & Family* provides information for parents about how to help develop healthy eating, physical activity, and television habits at home. It also includes additional resources like information sheets and recipes. Available in English and Spanish.

## Resources

For more information about the topic of the month, each unit lists a number of websites. Some units also include sources for materials that compliment the activities. You may also reinforce unit lessons by using the curriculum's tip sheets.

All parent communications and resources are available on the Harvard Prevention Center's website, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/ymca/resources.html>.

## **Activity Instructions**

Instructions are provided for each activity or game and include information on the materials and advance preparation required, objectives of the game (if applicable), and instructions on how to conduct the activity or play the game. There are also lesson extensions to adapt the game for different age groups or space limitations.

## **Recipes and Taste Tests**

Preparing and trying new foods with children is a great way to get them excited and interested in healthy foods. Children who help with meal or snack preparation are more likely to try their own creations! Use the **Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Recipe and Taste Test Packet** to find recipes to try in the program and share with families. Recipes are designed to complement the unit themes. The recipes are classified by level of kitchen equipment requirements so you can easily determine if you have the resources to make the snack at your after school program. For example, for Level 1 there is no cooking required, Level 2 is basic equipment (i.e. sink, fridge, microwave, blender, and/or toaster); and Level 3 requires a full kitchen (i.e., basic equipment plus stove). Each recipe lists the supplies needed along with the ingredients and instructions. Taste tests provide another fun and simple way of introducing children to new foods. Select foods that are easy to prepare and keep in mind that children can taste one new food or recipe, or compare similar foods (like “green vegetables” or “whole grain breads”). A taste test rating sheet, along with simple guidelines and ideas, are provided in each nutrition unit.

Remember to keep safety and sanitation in mind by washing hands and cleaning surfaces before handling food. Always keep sharp tools out of the hands of children.

## **Worksheets**

Worksheets used in the learning activities are found at the end of the unit, along with any other supportive printouts that may be needed for a game or activity.

# Environmental Standards for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Out-of-School Time Programs

The aim of the Environmental Standards for Nutrition and Physical Activity are to help program leaders create healthier out-of-school environments for children by achieving 7 simple standards. These Environmental Standards are based on current scientific evidence about healthy eating and physical activity. These standards have been developed for part-day settings like sport programs and after school programs, but can easily be modified for full day programs like summer camps.

- ★ Do not serve sugar-sweetened beverages.
- ★ Serve water every day.
- ★ Serve a fruit and/or vegetable at every meal and snack.
- ★ Do not serve foods with trans fat.
- ★ When serving grains (like bread, crackers, and cereals), serve whole grains.
- ★ Eliminate broadcast and cable TV or movies. Limit computer time to less than 1 hour each day.
- ★ Provide all children with at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity every day. Offer 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least 3 days per week.

Details on these guidelines and strategies for implementing them are outlined in the document **Nutrition and Physical Activity Environmental Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs** available in Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition or from the Prevention Research Center's website, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/ymca/resources.html>.

## Tips on how to implement Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition and the Environmental Standards at your out-of-school time program

Adopting the Environmental Standards successfully requires a well-planned process that involves time and participation of many stakeholders. Assess your environment to determine areas where your program needs most improvement.

So where do you start? Try out the **Food & Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Planning and Tracking Tools**. These short, user-friendly self assessment tools help staff track implementation of Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition and the Environmental Standards. They are designed to support staff in making healthy changes, and are not intended as extra required paper work.

The 4 assessment tools to help programs “plan and track” are:

- Environmental Standards Self-Assessment
- Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Planning and Tracking Tool
- Parent Engagement Planning and Tracking Tool
- Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Observation Tool

For more information and other ideas on how to implement the Environmental Standards, see **Food& Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Tip Sheets**. For each Environmental Standard, there is a corresponding Tip Sheet that includes barriers to program change and practical strategies to overcome them, YMCA success stories, and extra education and resources.

When preparing for changes, involve program staff, children, and their families to plan how to proceed in a way that is appropriate for your setting. You may need to invest time early with getting buy-in, but healthy changes are often well received by everyone in the end.

Self assessment guides and tip sheets are also available on the Harvard Prevention Center’s website, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/ymca/resources.html>.

## Tips for Food and Fun success

**Food and Fun** activities, lessons, and recipes offer an integrated approach towards meeting the various Environmental Standards, listed above.

Here are some tips for success as you begin to work with the materials and make changes in program practices:

- **Power up your snack offerings**—Introduce healthier choices while removing unhealthy options from the menu. Check out *Snack Sense* for ideas on how to incorporate the Environmental Standards for Healthy Eating into your regular snack time routine at a low price. The *Tip Sheets* are another great resource for ideas on how to provide healthy snacks in afterschool time.
- **Get children involved**—Ask children to help prepare for snack time and help at clean-up. For example, children can put snacks and pitchers of water with cups on the snack tables. You can also involve children through cooking special snacks and taste-testing. For a list of snack recipes and taste test ideas, check out the *Food and Fun 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Recipe and Taste Test Packet*. Check with your program’s regulations first to be sure that no restrictions apply.
- **Get children moving**— Schedule, schedule, schedule! Make physical activity a priority by scheduling at least 30 minutes at the same time every day. Plan activities that keep kids moving! The *Tip Sheets* “Everyone Participates!” and “Physical Activity!” is a great resource for ideas on how to engage all staff and children in physical activity and how to offer physical activity every day.
- **Offer a variety of choices** – Whether it’s an active game or new snack, children

like to have some control over what they do. Involve children in selecting games, snacks, or learning activities. After presenting something new, ask them to vote on whether or not they liked it enough to do again, or if they have other ideas on how to play the game.

- **Designate a space for food and fitness information**--Any corner can work! Display key messages from the unit along with art work created by the children. You can add books that have nutrition or activity themes in the food and fitness area. Most units suggest books which complement the theme.
- **Ban the junk**--Keep soda or unhealthy snack machines off limits to children during program time, and discourage staff from using them also.
- **Water!** – Serve water as the primary beverage every day. Serve tap water in pitchers on the snack table with cups. Jazz up the water with slices of fruit!
- **Engage staff as role models**—We all know that children model what they see. It's extremely important that staff participate in healthy snack time and physical activity games during afterschool program hours. Staff should not bring soda, fast food, or other unhealthy snacks into the program even for personal use. Staff will project a positive attitude about eating well and being active when they participate in snack and active time with children. For more tips on staff participation, see the *Tip Sheet* "Everyone Participates!".
- **Keep parents informed**-- As you use the Food & Fun After School materials, let parents know what's happening. When parents pick up their child, talk to them about the activities their child participated in and the key health lessons they learned from the unit. Use the tools provided in the *Parent Materials* section to reinforce the lessons learned at after school, and to provide tips for healthy habits at home.

## Tips for talking with kids about nutrition & physical activity

As the adult in charge, what you say, and the language that you use, is very important for communicating positive messages about healthy eating and physical activity to children.

- Focus on the importance of nutrition and physical activity for **feeling good and staying healthy**. Avoid connecting eating well and staying active to losing weight or being slim. For example, do not use statements like, “drinking water will keep you from becoming overweight.” Water is good for everyone, not just those who want to lose weight.
- Talk about how eating well and being physically active is fun, makes you feel good, and give you energy! Share stories about eating healthy and being active. Avoid discussions that focus on losing weight.
- Do not talk about dieting—for yourself or for children. If parents bring up a concern about a child’s weight, advise them to speak with their pediatrician.
- If a child asks you a question about nutrition that you do not know the answer to, avoid answering with your best guess. Simply say that you don’t know, and that you will help to find the answer. Follow through by referring to the web resources in Food & Fun that are separated by topic area. If the child is old enough to use the internet, you can recommend one of these websites so that he or she can look for the answer.
- This curriculum is focused on positive healthy messages about nutrition and physical activity, but it is always possible that discrimination issue may arise. For more information on how to address check out the weight bias resources from the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. They have tools designed especially for kids, parents, and educators.  
([www.yaleruddcenter.org/what\\_we\\_do.aspx?id=10](http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/what_we_do.aspx?id=10))