



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

## The YMCA's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards for Early Learning and Afterschool Programs

Standard	Early Learning	Out-of-School-Time
<b>Parent Engagement</b>	Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of once a quarter (four times per year).	Engage parents/care givers using informational materials and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of once a quarter while in session (three times per year).
<b>Physical Activity</b>	<p>Provide opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day while children are in care for a full-day program and 30 minutes for half-day day program (morning and afternoon programs are each considered half-day programs). This time can be broken down into smaller increments. Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (that increase heart rate and make you breathe hard), as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities.</p> <p>Active play will take place outdoors whenever possible.</p> <p>For infants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide daily opportunities for infants to move freely under adult supervision to explore their indoor and outdoor environments;</li> <li>• Engage with infants on the ground each day to optimize adult-infant interactions;</li> <li>• Provide daily “tummy time” (time in the prone position) for infants less than six months of age.</li> </ul> <p>Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by participating in physical activities with the children.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day while children are in care for a full-day program and 30 minutes for half-day day program (morning and afternoon programs are each considered half-day programs).</p> <p>This time can be broken down into smaller increments. Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (that increase heart rate and make you breathe hard), as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities.</p> <p>Active play will take place outdoors whenever possible.</p> <p>Y staff will model active living related to physical activity by participating in physical activities with the children.</p>
<b>Screen Time</b>	<p>Eliminate screen time (television, cell phone, or digital device) for children under two years old.</p> <p>For children over two, screen time (television, movies, cell phone, video games, computer or other digital device) is limited to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half-day programs or less than one hour per day for</p>	<p>Eliminate screen time (television, cell phone, or digital device) for children under two years old.</p> <p>For children over two, screen time (television, movies, cell phone, video game, computer or other digital device) is limited to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half-day programs or less than one hour per day for those in full-day</p>

	those in full-day programs. When screen time is offered it must not include marketing of unhealthy foods.	programs. When screen time is offered it must not include marketing of unhealthy foods.
<b>Food</b>	<p>Children serve themselves (“family style”) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff sit with children during snack and meals time.</p> <p>Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned in its own juice) at every meal and snack.</p> <p>Do not provide any fried foods or foods which contain trans-fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list). Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties/tenders/nuggets, tater tots, etc.).</p> <p>When providing grains, all grain foods are whole grains, determined by the first word listed in the ingredient listed contains the word “whole” (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).</p> <p>Provide foods free of sugar as one of the first three ingredients (e.g., sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in “ose,” syrups such as high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.) or no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.</p> <p>Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during meal and snack times (if possible), and avoiding consumption of foods or beverages during program time that are inconsistent with the HEPA standards.</p>	<p>Children serve themselves (“family style”) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff sit with children during snack and meals time.</p> <p>Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried or canned in its own juice) at every meal and snack.</p> <p>Do not provide any fried foods or foods which contain trans-fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list). Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties/tenders/nuggets, tater tots, etc.).</p> <p>When providing grains, all grain foods are whole grains, determined by the first word listed in the ingredient listed contains the word “whole” (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).</p> <p>Provide foods free of sugar as one of the first three ingredients (e.g., sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in “ose,” syrups such as high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.) or no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.</p> <p>Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during meal and snack times (if possible), and avoiding consumption of foods or beverages during program time that are inconsistent with the HEPA standards.</p>
<b>Beverages</b>	<p>Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snack and meal times.</p> <p>Provide only water and unflavored low (1%) or nonfat milk (for children two or older) family style.</p>	<p>Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snack and meal times.</p> <p>Provide only water and unflavored low (1%) or nonfat milk (for children two or older) family style.</p>
<b>Infant Feeding</b>	<p>Adults who work with infants and their families should promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continuation of breastfeeding in conjunction with complementary foods for 1 year or more.</p>	

For more information or questions related to the YMCA Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards please contact Lauren Marciszyn, Technical Advisor, Healthy Living for Early Learning & Afterschool Programs via email at [Lauren.Marciszyn@ymca.net](mailto:Lauren.Marciszyn@ymca.net) or by phone at 312.419.8845.