

Improving Vigorous Physical Activity (PA)

How to provide all children with at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least three times a week

Use the following questions and the corresponding “action steps” to identify new ways to improve vigorous physical activity. The **ALL** symbols are tips and suggestions for everyone, no matter how you answer the question. Items in bolded caps with the word “**SEE**” in front refer to OSNAP resources to help you meet your goals.

Questions

Action Steps

Are there at least 20 minutes of physical activity scheduled into each day?

NO

→ Speak to whoever designs the schedule to see if at least 20 minutes can be scheduled three times a week for all groups of children. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

NO

→ Divide the PA time into smaller blocks. For example, do two 10-minute activity bursts that get kids breathing hard. **SEE: ENERGIZERS - CLASSROOM-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

YES

→ Modify current favorite games to include more running, jumping or other high-intensity actions. **SEE: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIP SHEET**

YES

→ Make sure the schedule that includes 20 minutes of PA is posted.

ALL

→ Play outside as often as possible—free play outdoors is a great way to get kids moving vigorously.

ALL

→ Make sure that your staff knows what it means to be “vigorously active”—kids should be breathing hard and sweating. Running, jumping (e.g., jumping rope or jumping jacks), and dancing all gets hearts pumping fast! **SEE: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIP SHEET, FOOD & FUN UNIT 9**

ALL

→ Seek out community partners with special skills to lead activity classes like hip-hop and kickboxing. This can give staff a break and get kids excited about something new!

Do all children participate?

NO

→ Make sure that the schedule gives every group of children 20 minutes of vigorous PA at least three times a week. **SEE: SAMPLE SCHEDULE**

NO

→ Offer structured physical activity stations that kids can choose from. **SEE: FOOD & FUN UNIT 9**

YES

→ Use the Food & Fun Afterschool curriculum to teach healthy behaviors through physically active lessons. **SEE: FOOD & FUN**

ALL

→ Offer structured play with PA stations that kids can choose from. Allowing kids to make their own choices can spur participation. **SEE: EXAMPLE - FOOD & FUN UNIT 10 OBSTACLE COURSE**

ALL

→ Prohibit withholding of gym or other active play time as a form of punishment. Come up with alternative consequences for children who misbehave. **SEE: ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS TO WITHHOLDING RECESS**

ALL

→ Avoid elimination games (like dodge ball and Simon says) which may discourage kids from participating and limit the amount of PA everyone gets.

Do you have a policy about offering 20 minutes of vigorous PA to all children at least three times a week?

NO

→ Create a policy stating that all children should receive 20 minutes of vigorous PA at least three times a week. Communicate this policy to staff and families, and put the policy in appropriate places, like handbooks. **SEE: POLICY WRITING GUIDE, SAMPLE LETTERS**

YES

→ Make sure that your policies are communicated to families and staff. **SEE: SAMLE LETTERS**