New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool
Section II: The Standards

Healthy Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity

The program supports healthy youth behavior and choices in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

**Nutrition:**

1. **The program considers nutritional value when selecting food to serve to youth.**
   a. The program serves food and beverages in amounts and types that promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease, based on currently accepted standards of childhood nutrition.
   b. The program considers the nutritional value of the food options when choosing food vendors.
   
   *Note: See the resource section for current nutrition standards according to the USDA.*

2. **The program considers multi-cultural beliefs when selecting food to serve to youth.**
   a. The program is sensitive to the culture of program youth when choosing food to serve.
   b. The program introduces participants to food from around the world.

3. **If the program offers nutrition education to the youth, it is of high quality.**
   a. The nutrition curriculum is evidence-based or based on the best available research.
   b. The nutrition curriculum is hands-on and activity-based.

4. **The program environment supports healthy eating.**
   a. The vending machines include nutritional options (for example, fruit cups) or a system for promoting healthy choices (for example, displaying wrappers with nutrition information or using a color-coded system to highlight healthy options).
   b. If the program makes use of food company sponsors or advertisements to defray program funding costs, the nutritional value of the food the company sells must be a consideration.
   c. Program facility and storage space is adequate to support healthy food options.
   d. Staff model healthy eating in front of youth.

5. **Professional development around nutrition issues is appropriate and high quality.**
   a. Staff are trained in general nutrition issues as well as trained to conduct nutrition programming for the youth.
   b. Professional development around nutrition issues follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4, and goes beyond only providing reading material to staff.
   c. All staff working with food or with youth around food are taught about nutrition issues.
6. The program follows a principle of balance when approaching food issues. The program balances nutritional offerings, financial need, and youth preferences when deciding what foods to serve youth and to provide as a healthy, nutritional example, in the program environment.

7. School-based programs act as partners to host schools with nutrition guidelines. School-based programs respect the nutrition guidelines of the host school. For example, if the host school does not allow a particular food on-site for nutrition reasons, the afterschool program respects this and communicates it to families.

Physical Activity:

1. The program provides enough time for physical activity. The program offers at least 30 minutes of physical activity during the afterschool session.

2. The program offers a variety of types of physical activity day to day and within each day.
   a. Physical activity offerings include both youth-directed and staff-directed play and activities.
   b. Offerings include competitive as well as non-competitive activities.
   c. Offerings include high-intensity as well as moderate intensity physical activities.
   d. Offerings take into account what the individual youth in the program find interesting or fun.
   e. The program offers a variety of different equipment for youth to use for physical activities.

3. The program limits the use of screens for youth activities.
   a. Screen use is limited other than use of computers or mobile technology for homework or specific enrichment activities.
   b. If the program uses video games that include physical activity, the use is intentional and carefully monitored to ensure the game truly promotes physical activity.

4. Professional development around physical activity programming is appropriate and high quality.
   a. Staff learn about different types of physical activities.
   b. Staff learn to lead activities, facilitate a game, and coach youth.
   c. Professional development around physical activity follows the guidelines for appropriate and high quality professional development outlined in the Administration section, standard #4.

5. The program environment supports a physically active lifestyle for youth.
Healthy Behavior: Nutrition and Physical Activity

a. Staff encourage and work to help youth to enjoy and participate in a variety of physical activities.
b. Program infrastructure and equipment support physical activity options.

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