



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.



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- 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.**



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- 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.

Cross-References		
Subject	Category	Standard Number
Access to drinking water.	Safety and Environmental Health	8
Technology use for enrichment.	Programming and Activities	7
Obtaining information from parents about the special health conditions or other special needs of youth.	Special Needs/The Whole Child	4
Basic components of high quality professional development that apply to all program areas.	Administration	8