Policies and Standards for Promoting Physical Activity in After-School Programs

Active Living Research Webinar
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Role of Afterschool Programs (ASPs) in promoting Physical Activity
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- **What is an ASPs**
  - Community-based programs
  - Immediately after the regular school day (typically 3-6pm)
  - Located in: a school setting or take place in a community organization outside the school environment (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, faith organization),
  - Available daily throughout the academic year (Monday through Friday)
  - Provide a combination of scheduled activities
    - Snack, homework assistance/tutoring, enrichment activities (e.g., arts and crafts, music), and opportunities for children to be physically active

- **Afterschool Alliance America After 3PM survey**
  - “... a program that a child regularly attends that provides supervised enriching environment in the hours after the school day ends. These programs are usually offered in schools or centers and are different from individual activities, such as sports, special lessons, or hobby clubs.”

- ASPs focused on a single activity (e.g., academic tutoring, music lessons) or are designed specifically to promote physical activity such as clubs (e.g., Girls on the Run) or sports teams (e.g., intra- and inter-murals) are not considered within this definition

Role of Afterschool Programs in promoting physical activity

- **8.4 million** children attend ASPs
- **8.1 hours/week**

- **Avg. length of ASP 3 hours/day**
- **Majority allocate 25% to 50%** for PA
  (~45 to 90 minutes for PA/day)


Role of Afterschool Programs in promoting physical activity

- 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans
- Children (6-17yrs)
- At least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each day (breathe hard and sweat – more than walking)
- ASPs contribute to achieving this recommendation
Policies targeting Physical Activity in ASPs
Policies for Physical Activity

• Formal statement that defines:
  • Priorities for action, goals, and/or strategies, as well as accountabilities of involved actors
    • Formal rules
    • Codes
    • Standards
    • Regulations
    • Guidelines
    • Benchmarks

NC • 20% of daily program time for MVPA
   *Traditional/enrichment/academic-focused program

KS/MO • Outline competences for staff related to PA promotion
   Role models healthy behaviors, Evaluates effectiveness of PA opportunities

CA • All Children engage in minimum 30 minutes MVPA/d in ASP
    Up to 60 minutes MVPA/d low active kids

NAA • At least 20% or 30min of ASP schedule to PA opportunities
      • Provide PA children engage in MVPA at least 50% of PA time

OH • 20% of daily program time for MVPA
     *Traditional/enrichment/academic-focused program
Policies for Physical Activity
Clarity and Specificity

• What is the Physical Activity Policy targeting?

  • Schedule Time
    • How much time of the overall ASP is allocated to physical activity opportunities (indoor/outdoor, free-play and organized)

  • Children’s accumulated time
    • Amount of time children are actually active (Time spent moving)
Policies for Physical Activity
Clarity and Specificity

Allocated Time ≠ Accumulated Time

Schedule 30 minutes for PA

Children will not be physically active for 30 minutes
Policies for Physical Activity
Clarity and Specificity

• ASP of Dreams…
• “If you provide it, they will be active”

• CA guidelines
  • Only guideline to address allocated vs. accumulated
    • 30min MVPA/d (accumulate)
    • Schedule at least 45 to 60min (allocate)
Policies for Physical Activity
Clarity and Specificity

• 1:2 ratio minimum
  • 30 minutes of MVPA
  • 60 minutes of scheduled PA time

• We recommend
  • Schedule at least 60 minutes of high quality physical activity opportunities to achieve 30 minutes of MVPA (CA guideline)
Measuring/Monitoring Children’s Physical Activity in ASPs
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• Not easy to do
  • Researchers
    • Sophisticated, accurate, expensive, requires extensive technical knowledge
  • Practitioners
    • Few low-cost, **accurate** options

• Essential - **accountability**
### Common Physical Activity Measurement Options

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<th>Measure</th>
<th>Accuracy of MVPA</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Technical Expertise</th>
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Measuring/Monitoring Children’s Physical Activity in ASPs

• Physical Activity vs. Fitness

• Policies target Physical Activity
  • Minutes scheduled (allocated)
  • Minutes accumulated (children)
  • PA is a Behavior

• Fitness
  • Muscular Strength, Aerobic, Body Composition
  • Outcome from a behavior
  • Genetic
Physical Activity Levels of Children in ASPs
Physical Activity Levels in ASPs

some but not enough

- Limited information on children’s physical activity in ASPs
- Even fewer on # kids meeting policy goals
Percentage of Girls and Boys meet existing PA policies in ASPs (Accelerometer measured PA)

National Afterschool Association (NAA)
Provides physical activities in which students are moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of the physical activity time
(Based on the total amount of time allocated in an afterschool programs’ schedule for physical activity opportunities)

North Carolina
20% of daily program time for moderate-to-vigorous physical activity
(Interpreted as children spend 20% of time in attendance in MVPA – for example attending 60 minutes, child would need to accumulate 12min MVPA)

California
Provide a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous during the afterschool program
(Interpreted as children accumulate 30 to 60mins of MVPA)

*Estimates based on 2,394 daily observations on 649 children (5-12yrs) attending 18 afterschool programs. Children had to attend the afterschool program a minimum of 60 minutes to be included in the estimates. Children wore ActiGraph accelerometers up to 4 consecutive days – estimates use the Evenson et al., (2008) cutpoints.
Abbreviations: CA = California, MVPA = Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity; NAA = National Afterschool Association; NC = North Carolina; PA = Physical Activity.
Percentage of Girls and Boys meeting 4600 Steps/d guideline
(Equivalent to CA 30min MVPA)

We recommend 75% (3/4 children)

Based on current practice – children would need to spend 3.4hrs/d at an ASP to reach 4600 steps/d


Future Direction for Afterschool Programs and Physical Activity
Future Directions

- Understanding ASPs and Policy
- High Quality Staff Training
- Updating Evidence-based Curricula
- Monitoring Compliance
- Accountability
- Other Outside-of-School Programs (OST)
Future Directions

► Understanding ASPs and Policy

• Very little is known about this setting

• Existing policies largely “best guesses”
  • No evidence from ASPs were used to inform PA guidelines
  • Reasonable Expectations

• Research studies to increase PA
  • Primarily conducted in ASPs developed and run by researchers


How we think policy works

Policy → Increased Child Physical Activity
How policy “actually” works

Policies need to be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound)
Allocated Time
Accumulated Time

Outside Organizational Partnerships (e.g., Universities)

Changes in Routine Practice
(Considerations for differences among ASPs in human and physical resources)

Ongoing Compliance/Oversight • Technical Assistance

Note: MVPA = Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity; ASP = afterschool program
Future Directions

► High Quality Staff Training

• Survey of 39 ASPs
  • 8 received PA training from Qualified Person
  • Most conducted by “in-house” personnel

• Existing PA Trainings
  • Fail to develop core-competencies for promoting PA
  • Focus on playing specific games
  • Using pre-packaged materials


Here at the Y, we’re committed to making sure all children receive equal opportunity to be physically active every day. To accomplish this, we train all of our staff on the LET US Play principles of removing lines, eliminating elimination, reducing team sizes, getting staff and kids involved, and thinking about the space, equipment, and rules we use during activity time.
Future Directions

► Updating “Evidence-Based” Curricula

• Pre-packaged, Commercialized PA Curricula
  • Do not have strong body of empirical research to support effectiveness at increasing PA

• Recent studies indicate most popular commercialized curricula do not increase PA above routine practice


Future Directions

► Monitoring Compliance

• **ASP leaders/staff**
  - Routinely measure children's PA
    - Pedometers
  - “What gets measured gets done”

• **Cannot rely on self-report**
  - Inaccurate – always doing better than reality
    - SC Statewide survey

• **Partner with local university**
  - Technical support to measure PA
Future Directions

► Accountability

• Without oversight and compliance
  • Widespread changes will not occur

• Incentives for high performers

• Licensing and Accreditation
  • SMART Policy integration

• STAR ratings for ASPs
  • Analogous to childcare ratings
Future Directions

► Other Outside-of-School Programs

• Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards (NAA, YMCA of USA)
  • Afterschool Programs and…
  • Summer Day Camps (SDCs)

• Little is know about SDCs
  • Unique setting, unique challenges
  • Cannot take policies for ASPs and apply to SDCs (requires modification)

• What we do know…
  • Little PA occurs – many children sedentary

Conclusion

• Greater clarity in policy language
  • Specific, measureable child-level goals
  • Allocated and Accumulated

• More information on typical PA levels of children attending ASPs
  • Basis for setting PA policy goals

• Additional work developing and evaluating strategies to help ASPs meet PA goals

• Devise incentive/compliance system to get ASPs “on board” with adopting and meeting PA goals
Thank you

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