

## **Recommended National Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out-of-School Time Programs**

**Overview.** This document provides up to date, evidence- based, practical Quality Standards for providing children with healthy food, beverages and physical activity in out-of-school time (OST). The charge to this project, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, was to recommend healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) standards that foster the best possible nutrition and physical activity outcomes for children in grades K-12 attending OST programs. We hope that sites, programs, licensing boards and even national programs will aspire to achieve, emulate and disseminate this list. We are submitting to these Standards to the National Afterschool Association for endorsement at their next board meeting. During an economic and health crisis in which concerns about nutrition, physical activity and chronic disease are paramount, it is incumbent on every program that serves US children to help promote access to health promoting lifestyles.

**What is “Evidence-based”?** The standards are evidence based, meaning that published findings support the standard. Following each standard are best practices that put the standard into action. These reflect scientific literature and/or reflect HOST consensus on practical methods of operationalizing the standard based on experience.

Two caveats are notable:

First, **achieving these standards requires more than an executive decision.** While many of the standards are easily adopted and cost little or nothing, some of the standards are harder than others to put into place, and many will require planning, retraining, and even rebudgeting. Programs should set themselves on a path to accomplish them over time. Programs should also seek help with this process, and accordingly these guidelines are not meant to stand alone. Instead, we have begun identifying supports for improving healthy eating and physical activity. Supporting documents will include cycle menus, cycles for physical activity options, curricula, and quality improvement toolkits.

Second, **some standards may depart from current regulations that OST programs are required to comply with.** It is not our intent to put programs in conflict with regulations; the NAA standards are voluntary. Programs need to comply with current regulations stipulated through licensing or federal nutrition programs they participate in. Further, as regulations evolve, particularly within the Child Nutrition Act of 2010, we may adjust some of the language in this document to promote congruence and reduce conflict.