



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CHOICES WITHIN LIMITS

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards

In response to a call by First Lady Michelle Obama and the Partnership for a Healthier America, the Y has expanded its longtime commitment to supporting healthy living by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. Based, in part, on years of research with key partners, the HEPA standards will build a healthier future for our nation's children by creating environments rich in opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.

Standard	Early Learning	Afterschool
Beverages	Water is accessible and available to children at all times, including at the table during snacks and meals. Provide only water and unflavored low-fat (1%) or nonfat milk (for children 2 or older), family style.	
Family Engagement	Engage parents and caregivers using informational materials and activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of once every three months (a minimum of three to four times per year).	
Food	Children serve themselves (<i>family style</i>) all food and beverages from common bowls and pitchers with limited help. Staff sit with children during snacks and meals. Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in their own juice) at every meal and snack. Do not provide any fried foods. Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips, in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried french fries that are then baked, chicken patties, chicken tenders, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, Tater Tots®, etc.). Do not provide any foods that contain trans fat (listed as partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredients). Offer only whole grains, as determined by confirming that the first item listed in the ingredients contains the word <i>whole</i> (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice). Provide foods that don't list sugar (e.g., sugar; invert sugar; brown sugar; words ending in -ose; and syrups like high fructose corn syrup, honey, etc.) as one of the first three ingredients or that contain no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.	

Standard	Early Learning	Afterschool
Food (cont.)	Y staff will model healthy eating behaviors at all times. This includes consuming the same foods and beverages as children during meals and snacks (if possible) and avoiding consumption of foods or beverages that are inconsistent with the HEPA standards during program time.	
Infant Feeding	Promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for six months and the continuation of breastfeeding in conjunction with complementary foods for one year or more.	
Physical Activity	Provide children with opportunities for moderate and vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day during a full-day program or 30 minutes per day for a half-day morning or afternoon program. The time can be broken down into smaller increments. Include a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity (activity that increases the heart rate and breathing rate), as well as bone- and muscle-strengthening activities. Take active play outdoors whenever possible.	
	Y staff will model active living by participating in physical activities with children.	
Screen Time	Provide daily opportunities for infants to freely explore their indoor and outdoor environments under adult supervision. Engage with infants on the ground each day to optimize adult–infant interactions. Provide daily tummy time, or time in the prone position, for infants less than 6 months of age.	
	Eliminate screen time (television, movies, cell phone, video games, computer, and other digital devices) for children under 2 years old. For children over 2, limit screen time to less than 30 minutes per day for children in half-day programs and to less than 1 hour per day for those in full-day programs. During screen time, seek to minimize children’s exposure to commercials and ads marketing unhealthy foods.	

For more information or questions related to the Y’s HEPA standards, contact YMCA of the USA at 800-872-9622.