

Move More After School Recipe for Success

Recipe Name: Staff Training - A Little Bit of Spice and All Is Nice

Learn how staff training can motivate and engage after-school program staff in providing fun, age and developmentally appropriate physical activity.

Ingredients:

- 20 – 40 hours of annual training for after-school program leaders
- Hands-on, interactive trainings that allow program leaders to play the games and engage in the activities they will be leading
- Staff willing to learn ideas, skills and resources to promote physical activity

The target audience

- After-school leaders who work with children in grades K-5

Resources needed for the project

- United Way grant
- Lessons plans for Afterschool Leaders
- Training lead by the wellness staff of the YMCA of Western North Carolina
- Multiple trainings covering activities such as outdoor games

The partners

- The United Way
- YMCA of Western North Carolina health and wellness staff, administration and program leaders

Instructions:

The project

Children enrolled in the YMCA after-school program choose activities through *Challenge by Choice*. Staff members provide a variety of activities daily, some are physically active and others are not. *Challenge by choice* means children get to choose the activity they would like to participate in. Because staff members are well-trained, motivated and energetic, the children are motivated to choose active oriented games and activities. The project emphasizes staff development and training to increase the confidence and ability of staff to offer age and developmentally appropriate activities that the children enjoy. The focus on staff is the key to adding spice to the program and motivating children to make active choices.

Spicing up the afterschool program consists of motivated staff who have a positive attitude and are willing to plan, prepare and measure program outcomes. Spicing up the program helps reduce barriers such as motivation, time and space. A little spice and all is nice.

Spice:

- Staff with a positive attitude generate enthusiasm and reduce resistance among children.
- Staff who are excited and motivated, role model positive attitudes and behaviors for the children. The children, in turn, become excited and motivated.
- Staff who plan lessons, prepare what is needed and measure success can offer physical activities that are age and developmentally appropriate, fun and achieve program outcomes.

The basic steps to implementing the project

- Health and wellness lesson plans are developed.
- Staff are trained on the lessons plans.
- Staff are trained on physically active games that are age and developmentally appropriate and safe.
- Staff trainings are hands-on and interactive. Staff play the games and engage in the activities they are learning to increase their understanding and confidence to lead the activities with the participants.
- Staff have the freedom to alter activities/lesson plans to meet the needs of the groups because they are well-trained and creative.

The timeframe

- 20-40 hours of staff training is provided annually.
- Weekly lesson plans are provided by staff to engage students in both low and high intensity activities.
- The staff members evaluate program outcomes at the beginning of the school year and again half-way through the year to measure change in students' stamina, strength, weight and height.

The results

Staff training increases the confidence of staff to lead physically active games and activities. When staff are confident, involved and engaged, more children choose to be active and involved. Staff are role models - when staff are active and having fun, the children also want to be active.

Why it was a success

By monitoring the children's behaviors and taking tangible measurements like stamina and weight, we have observed a positive change in the youth we serve.

When staff are well-trained and committed to providing appropriate physical activities youth tend to naturally follow. "Energy is contagious."

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