

Move More After School Recipes for Success

Recipe Name: Noodlers

Learn how the Polk County Schools 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program found a way to add more physical activity to their program while keeping the focus on academics.

Ingredients:

The target audience

Participants in the Polk County Schools 21st Century Community Learning Center After School Program.

Resources needed for the project

The resources needed for the project were space for the students to run, staff to serve as cheer leaders and staff that were creative enough to ensure students of all abilities were able to participate. The activities are simple enough to be adjusted based on age group and grade.

Additional resources needed

The only resources needed are basic school supplies. The foam dice are available in school supply catalogues and come either pre-printed or blank. Blank dice are better to customize games for older grades.

Instructions:

The project

Emily Bartlett, the director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program, decided to increase the amount of physical activity provided during their program. Emily wanted to keep the academic focus of her program, while increasing the amount of physical activity provided. So she gathered her staff together to generate ideas about ways to provide physical activity that could be incorporated into their academic focused program.

The staff successfully generated a number of games that incorporated physical activity into the structured academic program. For example, jump rope games to practice spelling words and relay games that involve solving math problems.

Emily and her staff now provide more physical activity without compromising time for academics by finding creative ways to integrate physical activity into their structured academic program.

Two of the activities that Emily and her staff created are posted on the www.MoveMoreAfterschoolNC.com web site under “Physical Activity Resources.” Check out, “Jump Rope” spelling words and “Math Relay Races.”

The basic steps to implementing the project

- Commit to providing more physical activity.
- Set a realistic goal for how much physical activity can be provided.
- Engage staff in creating physically active games and activities that include academic content.

Results:

Project outcomes

Not only were the staff able to create physical activities that reinforced academic concepts, they were able to make creative use out of existing equipment and materials. For example, they created ping pong tables out of their existing tables. All it took was some poster board, ping pong paddles and balls. As the balls were hit from one side of the table to the other, students would count by 2's, 5's, 10's, etc.

An average of 60 participants takes part in the activities each day. Staff have observed improved behavior and increased concentration in academic work among the participants.

Why was it a success?

As an after school provider, we are constantly assessing our programs for effectiveness and often try creative solutions to increase attendance, manage behavior and increase academic performance. Just when we find something that works, it's time to mix things up again to keep students interested; this keeps us on our toes. This project is successful because it engages students in a way that is different from their normal school day. Staff members noticed a difference in student behavior and engagement but, most importantly, it helped us achieve our ultimate goal of providing programming that makes students look forward to attending after school each day.

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