



CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

Unleashing the Power of People Working Together

Healthy Behaviors Afterschool Program Successes

Healthy Behaviors Afterschool programs have made positive achievements in both practice and policy to address the obesity crisis. They are ready to help other programs achieve these same results.

POLICIES

- Program staff model healthy behaviors. Programs have banned foods such as cookies, candy and sodas from consumption by staff and students alike during their program hours.
- They have worked to make sure that the afterschool program is included in school wellness policies to ensure that children get consistent messages all day.
- The YMCA of Silicon Valley, in collaboration with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, developed the *Fit for Learning* afterschool resource, creating a county-wide vision for all county afterschool programs.

PRACTICES

- Programs have hired staff or linked school or health department staff with nutrition and physical activity expertise to support their programs.
- They have adopted research-based nutrition education curricula.
- They have invested in staff development in nutrition and physical activity.
- They involve parents in a variety of ways—communications sent home, healthy parent and family nights and shared activities with children.
- They increasingly use gardens and cooking classes as ways to develop interest in fresh fruits and vegetables and healthy eating.
- They have partnered with organizations like food banks to get access to fresh fruits and vegetables, school food services to improve snack quality and health departments to get training.
- They encourage and support student leadership in school and community work to create healthier environments.

RESULTS

- Children are becoming more fit. At the YMCA of Silicon Valley, 81 percent of students who failed a portion of the state's fitness test at the beginning of the year, passed by the end of the year.
- Children and youth are eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. Mt. Diablo CARES brought in almost 137 tons of fresh fruits and vegetables for its children and families in the past two years through a partnership with the local food bank.
- Children and youth are developing healthy interests that can last a lifetime through activities like swimming, martial arts, dance, tennis, biking and hiking. Fitness 4 Life afterschool program at Pajaro Valley School District holds an annual triathlon with over 3,000 children training for it all year long. After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles trains students who participate in the Los Angeles Marathon.
- Children are influencing their families to be healthier. In a YMCA of Silicon Valley program survey, 46 percent of parents reported that their shopping preferences had changed, and one in three stated that they were using healthy recipes their children brought home.