

Creating Healthy and Supportive Environments through Policy

Organizations can create healthy environments by implementing policies around healthy behaviors that support the whole child. Focus areas where policies should be established that support health and wellbeing include screentime, food and beverage access, physical activity, role modeling and emotional wellness.

Examples

Below are policy examples that can be added your organization's wellness policy. The subsequent bullets under each example are specific, measurable actions to help guide your actions and policy evaluation.

Food and Beverage

Policy 1: Children and families have access to healthy foods and beverages. Water is available in all facilities and at all events.

- Catered events include healthy options, including at least one fruit or vegetable and fresh drinking water; fried and pre-fried foods are limited to one item, and dessert is limited to holidays or special occasions and are limited to one type of dessert
- 50% of foods in vending machines and concession stands meet nutrition criteria, and all beverage vending machines and concessions include bottled water
- Healthy choices in vending machines and at catered events are clearly identified with signs or special menus
- 75% of fundraisers include non-food or healthy food items
- Meals and snacks provided include at least one fruit or vegetable, and water or low-fat milk; fried or pre-fried foods are not served
- Children have access to water throughout the day and sugary drinks are not served
- Parents are encouraged to provide nutritious meals and snacks for their children

Physical Activity

Policy 2: A variety of physical activities are planned for people of all ages and abilities

- Planned physical activities are available for youth, teens, adults and older adults
- Physical activities are available for people with special needs and disabilities
- Full-day programs provide at least 60 minutes of physical activity; half-day and after-school programs provide at least 30 minutes of physical activity
- Personal electronics are discouraged to limit screen time
- Screen time is limited to 60 minutes or less, and is only used for homework or activities that engage youth in physical activity

Policy 3: Food and physical activity are not used as incentive or punishment

- Active play is not withheld as punishment
- Food is not used to reward good behavior, or taken away to punish behavior
- Children and parents are encouraged to make healthy choices, but children are not rewarded or penalized based on their choices (like the content of their lunch, or their choices at the vending machines)

Policy 4: Staff and volunteers serve as healthy role models to youth

- Staff and volunteers eat the same foods and drink the same beverages kids are being served
- Staff and volunteers will consume only healthy foods and water in front of children
- Staff and volunteers will participate in physical activity with the children
- Staff and volunteers will abstain from personal electronics use in front of children, including cell phones
- Staff and volunteers will exhibit a positive attitude toward healthy eating and physical activity habits in front of children

Policy 5: Staff and volunteers are provided resources to support their role as healthy habits role models

- Staff and volunteer handbooks include information about the wellness policy
- Staff and volunteers working with children are provided training and information about being healthy role models



Staff