

# Before and After School Activities



The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America) recommends that school-aged children get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.<sup>1</sup> Schools can increase students' daily at-school physical activity levels by incorporating more movement into out-of-school time programs, through intramural activities like sports and clubs or through walk and bike to school programs. Before and after school activities like these provide parents and other community members with lots of ways to get involved.

## Out-of-School Time Programs

Many schools offer “out-of-school” time (OST) programs including Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) for academic support and enrichment and School-Age Child Care (SACC) to support working parents. The National Afterschool Association (NAA) recommends that programs devote at least 20 percent or 30 minutes of before or after school program time to physical activity, and that both strengthening and aerobic activities be included.<sup>2</sup> If your school's program does not meet these standards, try working with the program director to add more movement. The **YMCA** and **Boys & Girls Clubs** partner with schools in some areas. **CATCH Kids Club**, **SPARK PE**, **Playworks** and **Focused Fitness** all have program materials and/or trainings to strengthen your existing program.

## Intramural Activities

Before and after school intramurals can tap into family and community expertise to encourage student involvement:

- Start an exercise club, focused on whatever you enjoy: walking, running, volleyball, yoga, karate, jumping-rope – the possibilities are endless.
- Look for a teacher or other volunteer willing to lead simple dance classes.
- Find a retired coach or athlete to officiate intramural sporting events.
- Ask community bicycle club members to meet after school and talk to kids about bicycle safety and hold a bike rally once a month.
- Ask your school to open up the gym – line students up and get active with fun and easy exercises.
- Bring in an established program through your parks and recreation department or any local business or organization like yoga, Zumba®, martial arts, etc.



### Start a Walking or Running Club

Make it simple – ask the principal, a teacher or other adult to lead students on a regular morning walk or run, or check out some of these established programs to bring to your school:

- New York Road Runners Mighty Milers: [www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools/mighty-milers](http://www.nyrr.org/youth-and-schools/mighty-milers)
- Girls on the Run: [www.girlsontherun.org/](http://www.girlsontherun.org/)
- WorldFit: [www.worldfit.org/](http://www.worldfit.org/)

### Tips for Success: Intramural programs

- Ensure participation in activities and events is voluntary.
- Give every student an equal opportunity to participate regardless of ability or special needs.
- Involve students in selecting and planning activities.
- Promote activities to students and families through flyers, newsletters and websites.
- Make sure activities meet district guidelines for supervision and facility maintenance.

*For more tips:*



[ActionforHealthyKids.org/game-on](http://ActionforHealthyKids.org/game-on)

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## Walk and Bike to School Initiatives

Concern for safety is a major reason kids don't walk to school.



- Organize your school's participation in **National Walk or Bike to School Day**. Walk to School Day is held in October and Bike to School Day is held in May.

**Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train** – a group of students walking or riding their bikes to school with adult “bus drivers.” Have families take turns walking their kids to school or develop a more formal, structured route with meeting points, a timetable and a rotating schedule of trained volunteers.

- Start a **Walk or Bike to School program**. Find factsheets, PowerPoints, program guides and promotional tools through the **Centers for Disease Control's KidsWalk** initiative. Effective programs address safety concerns by:<sup>3</sup>
  - Encouraging children to walk in groups and organizing responsible adults to accompany them.
  - Teaching safe pedestrian behavior on the way to school.
  - Empowering neighborhoods and local agencies to work together to identify and create safe routes to school.
  - Partnering with police to enforce speeds in the neighborhood.
  - Providing crossing guards for the walk to and from school.
- Check out Safe Routes to School (SRTS). Run by the Federal Department of Transportation, SRTS has resources, activities and funding to make walking and biking to school safe and routine in your community.

### Out-of-School Time Programs

- YMCA: [www.ymca.net/](http://www.ymca.net/)
- Boys & Girls Clubs: [www.bgca.org/](http://www.bgca.org/)
- CATCH Kids Club: [www.catchinfo.org/](http://www.catchinfo.org/)
- SPARK PE: [www.sparkpe.org/after-school/](http://www.sparkpe.org/after-school/)
- Playworks: [www.playworks.org/training/](http://www.playworks.org/training/)
- Focused Fitness Fab 5: [www.focusedfitness.org/](http://www.focusedfitness.org/)

### Walk and Bike to School

- National Walk or Bike to School Day: [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org).
- CDC KidsWalk: [www.cdc.gov/kidswalk/](http://www.cdc.gov/kidswalk/)
- Safe Routes to School: [www.saferoutesinfo.org/](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/)
- Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train: [www.walkingschoolbus.org/Walking\\_School\\_Bus\\_Basics.pdf](http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/Walking_School_Bus_Basics.pdf)

### Resources

*In 1969, 48% of children 5-14 years old walked or biked to school. By 2009, that number had decreased to 13%.<sup>4</sup>*



**Action for Healthy Kids®** partners with teachers, students, parents, school wellness experts and more to fight childhood obesity, undernourishment and physical inactivity by helping schools become healthier places so kids can live healthier lives. Our programs, tools and resources make it possible for everyone to play their part in ending the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

[www.ActionforHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionforHealthyKids.org)

The websites listed in this document are provided as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas and resources for creating healthier school cultures. Action for Healthy Kids is not responsible for maintaining these external websites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/paguidelines.cfm>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.ymca.net/news-releases/20110809-afterschool-standards.html>

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/pedestrian\\_safety.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/pedestrian_safety.htm)

<sup>4</sup>The National Center for Safe Routes to School (2011). "How Children Get to School: School Travel Patterns from 1969 to 2009." [http://saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/resources/NHTS\\_school\\_travel\\_report\\_2011\\_0.pdf](http://saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/resources/NHTS_school_travel_report_2011_0.pdf)